

Influences on external stakeholder engagement
and its measurement in Irish HEIs

Ruth Vance Lee

Doctor of Philosophy Candidate

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Influences on external stakeholder engagement
and its measurement in Irish HEIs

Ruth Vance Lee, MBS, ACMA, CGMA

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School of Business

Waterford Institute of Technology

Research Supervisors:

Dr. Rosemarie Kelly and Dr. Thomas O' Toole

Waterford Institute of Technology and Quality and
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DECLARATION

The author hereby declares that, except where duly acknowledged, this thesis is entirely her own work.

Signed: _____

Ruth Vance Lee

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ABSTRACT

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Ruth Vance Lee

Engagement implies thoughtful interaction with the world external to the higher education institutions (HEI) and has been depicted using words such as partnering and mutual benefit. Such engagements occur with stakeholders who are described as any group or individual who can affect or are affected by the achievement of an organisation. HEIs are now engaging with a wide set of stakeholders in a variety of interactions relating to graduate formation, workforce development, research and innovation, social enhancement, and market advancement. However, HEIs cannot attend to all claims on their organisation from external stakeholders.

This study combines stakeholder theory and new institutional sociology (NIS) to explore influences on HEI engagement with external stakeholders and measurement of these interactions. Measurement of engagement interactions has become more prevalent in recent years, driving HEIs to further consider external engagement. Stakeholder salience based on three attributes: power, legitimacy, and urgency is significant in determining stakeholder prioritisation. Correspondingly, NIS proposes that coercive, mimetic and normative isomorphic pressures within the institutional environment shape HEI engagement with external stakeholders. This research adopts a qualitative approach using case study method to collect data from semi-structured interviews and documentary analysis.

Findings from the study highlight the variety of external stakeholders with whom the case HEI engages. They confirm that combined stakeholder and institutional influences have determined the types of HEI engagement interactions and their measurement in HEIs. The results verify both macro influences including institutional, influences such as policy, culture and norms, and micro influences including stakeholder proximate needs such as local employer and prospective students concerns. Institutions can mediate stakeholder pressures by legitimating a stakeholder's claim. Conversely, stakeholders can mediate the isomorphic institutional effects proposed by NIS, by acting as buffers or amplifiers of institutional pressures. Hence, the findings show that institutional and stakeholder pressures have influenced external stakeholder engagement and its measurement.

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TABLE OF ABBREVIATIONS

BSC	Balanced Scorecard
CEIA	Cork Electronics Industry Association
CIPD	Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
Coru	Ireland's multi-profession health regulator (from the Irish word 'cóir' meaning fair)
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DCU	Dublin City University
ECIU	European Consortium of Innovative Universities
EI	Engineering Ireland
EU	European Union
FE	Further Education
GIG	Gas Innovation Group
HE	Higher Education
HEA	Higher Education Authority
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HoD	Heads of Department
HSE	Health Service Executive
IBEC	Irish Business and Employers' Confederation
ICHEME	Institute of Chemical Engineers
ICT	Information and Computer Technology
IEB	Institute's Executive Board
IoT	Institutes of Technology
MNC	Multinational Companies
MSL	Academy of Medical and Laboratory Science
NFQ	National Framework of Qualifications
NIE	Neo Institutional Economics
NIS	New Institutional Sociology
NPM	New Public Management

NSAI	National Standards Authority of Ireland
NUIG	National University of Ireland, Galway
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development
OIE	Old Institutional Economics
PRFS	Performance Related Funding Systems
REAP	Roadmap for Employment-Academic Partnership
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
RTC	Regional Technological Colleges
SFI	Science Foundation Ireland
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
TM	Top (senior) Manager
TQM	Total Quality Management
Túlsa	Child and Family Agency
TY	Transition Year
UCD	University College Dublin
UL	University of Limerick
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation
WBL	Work-Based Learning

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a brief overview of the study. Firstly, the background of this research is presented to explain the context and provide a rationale for the study. This is followed by the research question and objectives. Next, methodology of the study is introduced and the case organisation presented. The contribution of the study is then outlined. Finally, a summary of the structure of the thesis is presented.

1.2 Background of the study

The mission of higher education (HE) comprises three inter-connected elements: teaching and learning; research; and engagement with wider society and internationally (Hunt, 2011; Kitson, 2009; Padfield et al., 2008b; Arbo and Benneworth, 2007; D’Este and Patel, 2007; Pearce et al., 2007; Mueller, 2006; Lester, 2005; Etzkowitz et al., 2000). Teaching and learning is the most fundamental process that lies at the core of all educational systems regardless of institutional level, type, mission or discipline (McAleese et al., 2013). Research too is accepted as a keystone in the HE system as it creates ‘innovations’, ‘new technologies’, ‘knowledge assets’ and ‘intellectual property’ (Keeling, 2006). Higher Education Institution (HEI) engagement activity with its stakeholders is often termed ‘Third Mission’, yet it is not a separate mission at all, but rather a way of doing, or a mind-set for accomplishing the social compact between the HEI and its host societies (Mulvihill et al., 2011a). Engagement is work that provides some benefit to HEI external stakeholders, and at the same time benefits the HEI. An engaged HEI will seek to provide some benefit to its stakeholders that is not an accidental bi-product in the pursuit of some other aim. Such engagement has multiple economic and societal benefits and thus is listed as a strategic mission.

It is not difficult to identify a set of stakeholders that will have an interest in HEIs (Pollard et al., 2013a). The literature review has identified the following external stakeholder groups: business and industry; government and their agencies; prospective students; other HEIs; professional bodies; alumni; and community groups (Cassells et al., 2015; Miller et al., 2014; Lämsiluoto et al., 2013; Maric, 2013; Pollard et al., 2013b; Sayed, 2013; Hart

and Northmore, 2011; Hunt, 2011; Tang and Hussin, 2011; Benneworth and Jongbloed, 2010; Edwards, 2010; Mainardes et al., 2010; Beard, 2009; Charles et al., 2009; Abreu et al., 2008; Acworth, 2008; Garlick and Langworthy, 2008; Jongbloed et al., 2008; Arbo and Benneworth, 2007; D'Este and Patel, 2007; Papenhausen and Einstein, 2006; Lester, 2005; Charles et al., 2003; Burrows, 1999).

The Irish government is seeking to evaluate how HEIs are performing in relation to their engagement mission. It has introduced performance based funding, which measures performance under many criteria: regional clusters; participation, equal access and lifelong learning; excellent teaching and learning, and the quality of the student experience; high quality, internationally competitive research and innovation; enhanced engagement with enterprise and the community and embedded knowledge exchange; and enhanced internationalisation (Performance Compact: case HEI, 2014b). As part of this move to performance based funding, institutional profiles were developed to provide an initial basis for evaluating institutional performance against performance indicators that are reflective of the mission diversity of Irish HEIs (Higher Education Authority, 2013). The indicator framework set the context for the strategic dialogue between the Higher Education Authority (HEA) and publicly-funded educational institutions. From this dialogue, performance compacts for each HEI were agreed so that individual institutional strategies would be aligned with national priorities (O' Brien, 2016; Higher Education Authority, 2013).

During the initial strategic dialogue sessions, between the HEA and HEIs, the focus was on planning and establishing baselines, rather than performance and outcomes. Progressively, over further iterations of strategic dialogue, the HEA intends to move to a stronger focus on performance against agreed targets, which will have funding implications (Higher Education Authority, 2014b). Up to 10% of HEI funding is contingent on performance against these targets (Higher Education Authority, 2014b; Performance Compact: case HEI, 2014b).

1.3 Rationale for the study

This research is an exploratory study, focusing on the engagement element of the HE mission. Up to the recent introduction of the performance compacts there was no baseline for measuring engagement activity in Ireland. Since performance compact

implementation there are still only a limited number of engagement measures in use. The measures were developed by individual HEIs as part of a strategic dialogue process but the HEA ‘guided’ institutions towards Australian and Scottish measurement systems. As a result, the measures selected are not a reflection of the types of engagement that are occurring in the HEI, nor do they cover the varied level of engagement, nor the broad range of stakeholders involved. When considering engagement measurement in HEIs, researchers such as Hart and Northmore (2011) for example, conclude that while there has been considerable progress in developing indicators and benchmarking systems, the rigorous and comprehensive incorporation of community perspectives is almost entirely absent across the HE sector. This study focuses on exploring a small number of stakeholders and aims to develop a comprehensive picture of HEI engagement activity, probing the measurement and strength of that activity with a wide range of stakeholders.

1.4 Research question and objectives

Irish HEIs engage with their stakeholders in many ways but until recently no measurement or benchmarking system existed. Engagement is a key pillar of a HEI’s mission however, to date very little research has been conducted relating to engagement with external stakeholders. The engagement pillar is particularly relevant for Institutes of Technology (IoTs), HEIs who were founded by the Irish government to cater for the needs of their local stakeholders. Therefore, the following research question has been formulated in response to this deficiency:

How do Irish HEIs engage with their external stakeholders and how is the engagement measured?

To address this question the following research objectives have been developed:

- 1: To determine how Irish HEIs engage with external stakeholders.*
- 2: To identify techniques currently used to report engagement practices in a HEI setting.*
- 3: To explore the key influences on engagement practices and on measures selected to report engagement performance.*

1.5 Research methodology

This research may be described as pragmatic, comprising both anti-positivist and positivist aspects. The study requires subjective perspectives from the participants identifying who their stakeholders are, what they consider engagement to be and what practices are being carried out in the case HEI. In other words, it is interested in the importance of the subjective experiences of individuals within the social world of the case HEI. In line with anti-positivist epistemologies, it seeks to understand the ways in which individuals have interpreted the world in which they find themselves. The study also requires objective information and recognises the engagement measurement system and the organisation being studied as existing independently of the participants' perceptions. Thus, the study does not reject positivism as it is also necessary to understand objective information relating to the types of engagement that are measured and reported by the case HEI. This research uses semi-structured interviews to establish participants' opinions and perspectives on engagement (anti-positivism) as well as documentary analysis to identify and define what is measured (positivism). Therefore, neither one extreme ontological, epistemological, human nature or methodological stance nor another seemed wholly appropriate. Hence, a pragmatic philosophy, best describes the researcher's position.

The use of a case study is appropriate for this research as it follows the precedent set in accounting and education disciplines, which this research straddles (Barone et al., 2013; Brown, 2012; Tight, 2011; Adams et al., 2006; Barrachina et al., 2004; Berry and Otley, 2004; Scapens, 2004; Ryan et al., 1992). The researcher also considers the case study design appropriate for this research project as it explores the day-to-day practices of real people, and attempts to study the context in which they work. This research focuses on a large HEI, which is representative of HEIs of its type in Ireland in terms of strategy, structure, funding and performance measurement, quality and qualifications, and mission. The case HEI has embraced the legislation which established its role in supporting the region and considers itself as a leader in external engagement (Case HEI, 2017). This makes it an ideal case for any study of engagement in Irish HEIs.

1.6 Contribution of the study

As discussed above (section 1.3) there has been considerable progress in developing indicators and benchmarking systems, but the rigorous and comprehensive incorporation of stakeholders such as the community is almost entirely absent across the HE sector (Hart and Northmore, 2011). This research responds to this comment and also provides five contributions to the existing body of knowledge.

The first contribution of this research is the development of a theoretical framework combining stakeholder and institutional theories to review stakeholder engagement practices in HEIs. The framework is based on one proposed by Lee (2011) to evaluate corporate social responsibility (CSR) but which has never been empirically tested. As a response to calls by Lee (2011), this study has adapted his framework to evaluate the influences affecting HEI engagement practices. It is the first study to apply any empirical testing to Lee's (2011) framework.

The second contribution is the development of a comprehensive approach to engagement that facilitates linkages with a wide set of external stakeholders across the engagement spectrum. Researchers have called for further work on such a comprehensive approach (Miller et al., 2014; Mainardes et al., 2010; Jongbloed et al., 2008). Prior research has predominantly concentrated on the linkages between one set of stakeholders. For example, many researchers have concentrated on the links between business and the HEI, or between the HEI and its community (Sheridan and Fallon, 2015). Indeed researchers such as Lester (2005) contend that the 'one-size-fits-all' approach pursued by many universities, with a focus on business stakeholders for engagement such as patenting, licensing, and new business formation, should be replaced with a more comprehensive, more differentiated view of the university role (Lester, 2005). This more comprehensive approach would see HEIs consider a much wider set of stakeholders. Therefore, this research aims to fill the gap created by the limited focus on a small number of stakeholders by developing a comprehensive approach that considers linkages between multiple sets of external stakeholders and the HEI.

The third contribution is the coupling of stakeholder salience with engagement. Previous research suggests that HEIs are strongly influenced by a wide range of stakeholders (Cassells et al., 2015; Miller et al., 2014; Lämsiluoto et al., 2013; Maric, 2013; Pollard et al., 2013b; Sayed, 2013; Hart and Northmore, 2011; Hunt, 2011; Tang and Hussin, 2011;

Benneworth and Jongbloed, 2010; Edwards, 2010; Mainardes et al., 2010; Beard, 2009; Charles et al., 2009; Abreu et al., 2008; Acworth, 2008; Garlick and Langworthy, 2008; Jongbloed et al., 2008; Arbo and Benneworth, 2007; D'Este and Patel, 2007; Papenhausen and Einstein, 2006; Lester, 2005; Charles et al., 2003; Burrows, 1999), but there is a lack of knowledge regarding how ongoing stakeholder relationships have shaped HEIs (Miller et al., 2014). This research initially identified HEI external stakeholders before coupling stakeholder salience with engagement. It analyses if higher levels of stakeholder salience influence types of engagement undertaken in Irish HEIs.

The fourth contribution of this study relates to the influence of proximity on stakeholder salience. Most work on stakeholder salience recognises that power, legitimacy, and urgency influence salience. More recently however, some researchers have identified proximity as important in the identification of salient stakeholders (Neville et al., 2011; Driscoll and Starik, 2004). This research proposes that proximity to the case HEI is a key feature in ascribing salience to stakeholders and consequently how managers engage with them.

The fifth contribution of this research is that it improves our understanding of the gap that exists between stakeholder engagement and engagement measurement. At present, it seems that heads of department (HoDs) of the case HEI, which is the subject of this research, have little or no understanding of the measurement system, and those selecting metrics in the case HEI (for evaluation by the HEA) seem to do so without consulting with the HoDs or staff in their departments. The HoDs appear to prioritise engagement based on what their stakeholders require, however the metrics prepared are influenced by environmental pressures. This has caused a decoupling between engagement practice and its measurement. This study will be of use to engagement practitioners in HEIs attempting to benchmark and improve their own engagement activity. It will enable them to be aware of decoupling practices and influences on measurement selection.

1.7 Thesis structure

Having introduced the study the thesis is structured as follows. Chapter 2 provides an introduction to HE and its role in contributing to knowledge and wellbeing, society, employers and the economy as a whole. It discusses HEI homogeneity before outlining HE in Ireland. This is followed by a comparison between universities and IoTs under four

main headings: history and mission, expansion rates, student participation and courses provided. The penultimate sections discuss national priorities for HE in Ireland and funding challenges.

Chapter 3 begins with a discussion on the three elements of the HE mission: teaching and learning, research, and engagement. It then focuses more specifically on engagement. This focus includes a discussion on what engagement is and the types previously reported. It describes engagement under a number of categories: graduate formation, workforce development, research and innovation, social enhancement, and market advancement. The chapter then briefly considers performance measurement, including a discussion on the rationale for its use in HE before reviewing measures in the three elements of the HE mission mentioned above.

Chapter 4 begins by identifying stakeholders in general, and more specifically, HE stakeholders as presented in the literature. Stakeholders are classified as being internal or external, with this research focusing on the seven external stakeholder groupings: business and industry, prospective students, government and their agencies, other HEIs, professional bodies, communities, and alumni. The salience of different stakeholders is then discussed based on the attributes of power, legitimacy and urgency as proposed in the literature. Next, a review of institutional theory is presented. The main three strands of institutional theory: old institutional economics, neo institutional economics and the strand considered most relevant to this study, new institutional sociology (NIS), are discussed. The concepts of legitimacy and decoupling are then considered. Finally, prior research that has used NIS as an explanatory tool for studying various organisational issues, and the importance of coercive, mimetic and normative isomorphism for organisational legitimacy, are outlined.

Chapter 5 outlines the contribution of both stakeholder and institutional theories. It then discusses combining the theories into the ‘configuration of external influences’ (Lee, 2011). The appropriateness of combining these theories to examine stakeholder engagement in HEIs is then discussed, substituting corporate social responsibility with engagement for HEIs. A reconfigured framework is then proposed to explain the influences on engagement practices and measurement in the case HEI.

Chapter 6 describes the methodology that will be applied to this study. The research design, research questions and objectives, philosophical assumptions, research

paradigms, research approaches, research methods and primary and secondary data are outlined. This research comprises a case study of an Irish HEI, using interviews and documentary analysis as the main research methods. The chapter concludes by outlining research validity and reliability, and ethical considerations.

Chapter 7 presents the findings from both the documentary analysis and the semi-structured interviews. The chapter identifies the stakeholders proposed by the case HEI's interviewees before categorising the stakeholders as latent, expectant and definitive based on the interviewees' perceptions of salience. It also examines proximate and distal influences on stakeholder salience. The following section defines engagement and categorises the types of engagement identified by the interviewees. Influences on engagement are then described. Next, engagement measurement is considered and includes an examination of the engagement practices that are measured in the case HEI and what those measures are used for. The chapter then outlines the engagement measures that are currently being reported to the Higher Education Authority (HEA) and interviewee awareness of these measures. It concludes by highlighting influences on the selection of engagement measures and the influence of those measures on engagement activity.

Chapter 8 presents a discussion of the findings, comparing the findings from this research with the findings from literature. It begins by highlighting the identification, importance and salience of each stakeholder group before considering other influences on stakeholder salience. The chapter concludes that the more definitive the stakeholder the more types of engagement the case HEI will undertake with that stakeholder. Engagement measurement is then discussed, with a review of engagement currently being reported internally and to the HEA being provided. Finally, a discussion is presented on engagement measurement and its decoupling from engagement activity.

Finally, Chapter 9 provides conclusions and implications of this study. First the conclusions from this study relating to the research question and objectives are presented. The chapter then discusses the contribution of the study and its implications for HE policy. Limitations of the research are outlined and recommendations and ideas for future research are presented.

1.8 Conclusion

This chapter outlined the background and rationale of this study. It highlighted the research question and objectives, and the research methodology. The contribution of the study was then presented before the thesis structure was outlined. Each of these areas will be discussed in more detail in subsequent chapters. The following chapter outlines higher education in Ireland in context.

CHAPTER 2: THE HIGHER EDUCATION CONTEXT

2.1 Introduction

This chapter locates the study in the Higher Education (HE) sector. It provides the background and context for this exploratory study. First, definitions of HE are provided, followed by a more specific examination of the role and importance of HE for individuals, for society, for employers and for the economy of a region. Then the homogeneity of HE internationally is discussed. A description of HE in Ireland is offered, including management of the sector, European and national policy. National priorities and the goals for HE are reviewed in terms of how they influence institutional priorities. Finally, the distinction between different types of Higher Education Authority (HEA) funded institutions in Ireland in terms of their history, mission and growth, and student profile is then considered.

2.2 What is HE?

HE, within which this study is located, comprises all post-secondary education and training authorised in institutions by state authorities (J.I.C.A., 2005). It refers to the formal component of 'post-school' education which includes a high level of theoretical and applied knowledge. It includes university as well as non-university tertiary education (Delaney and Healy, 2014). European Commission policy stresses that HE should equip graduates with the knowledge and core transferable competences they need to succeed in high-skill occupations (Eurydice Report, 2014). However, HE also gives graduates generic, transferable or key skills, which are not necessarily related to specific professions, but generally enable graduates to find jobs and move around in the labour market (Eurydice Report, 2014). These include communication skills, entrepreneurial skills, 'learning to learn' skills, and being able to work in a team (Eurydice Report, 2014). HE forms 'T-shaped' individual skill profiles: resulting in individuals who combine transversal core skills (the horizontal bar) such as the ability to work quickly, analyse and organise, with the specific skills needed for a job (the vertical bar) such as specialist practitioner skills (Campbell et al., 2010).

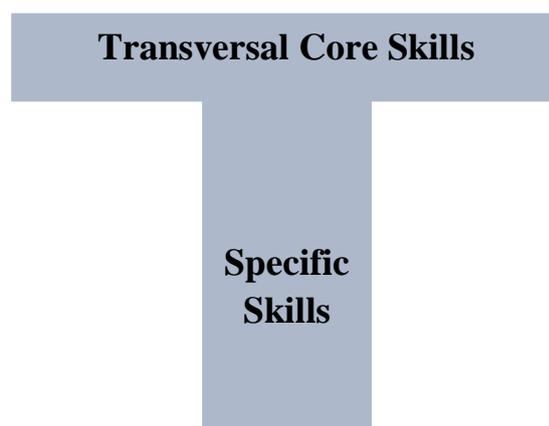


Figure 2.1: T-Shaped individual skill profile
(Source: Adapted from Campbell et al. (2010))

The Republic of Ireland operates education qualifications under a National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). This is a ten-level system, giving an academic or vocational value to qualifications obtained (see Appendix B). HE refers to courses and programmes of formal education which are at a ‘higher’ or advanced level, upwards from level 6 on the NFQ. HE includes all undergraduate and postgraduate courses, full-time and part-time, in institutions funded by the Higher Education Authority (HEA) or the Department of Education and Skills, as well as institutions that are mainly or entirely privately financed (Delaney and Healy, 2014).

Having provided a brief description of HE as a tertiary component in the education system and the skills acquired from HE, the next section will look at the broader role and importance of HE.

2.3 The role of HE

In this section the role and importance of HE for individuals, the economy, employers, and society is discussed. (Cassells et al., 2015). *‘The purpose and value of higher education is its ability to add to the understanding of, and hence the flourishing of, an integrated social, institutional, cultural and economic life. It contributes both to individual fulfilment and the collective good’* (Cassells et al., 2015, p.3). Campbell et al. (2010) suggest that skill development, both transversal core skills and specific skills as discussed in the previous section, has benefits in terms of society, economy, individuals

and employers as shown in the following diagram (see Figure 2.2) and discussed in subsequent paragraphs.

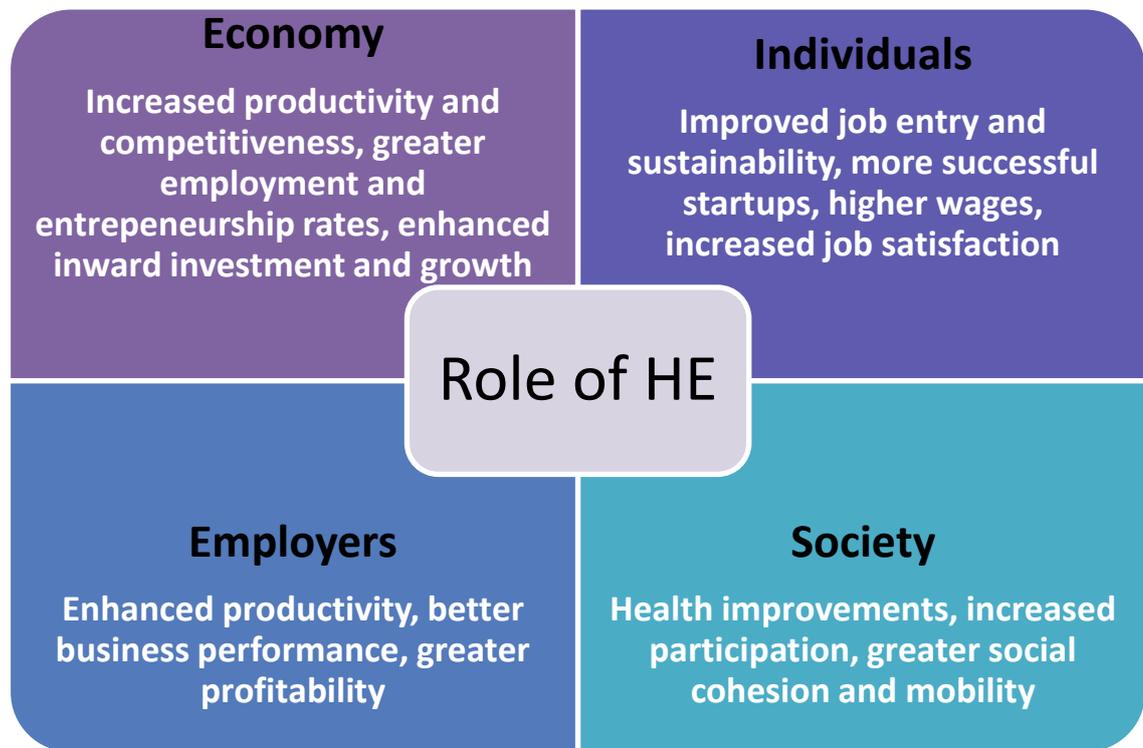


Figure 2.2: The Role of HE
(Source: Researcher)

As will be outlined in the following chapter (section 3.2.3), an increasing focus on these roles has led to renewed interest in how HEIs engage with the outside world.

2.3.1 HE for individuals

Education contributes to the individual’s quality of life. HE in particular, is a force for individual growth. It is a means of self-realisation as people can improve their quality of life through increasing knowledge or skills which expand choices available in life, including those related to work life (J.I.C.A., 2005). Studies show that ‘...compared to high school graduates, college graduates have longer life spans, better access to health care, better dietary and health practices, greater economic stability and security, more prestigious employment and greater job satisfaction, less dependency on government assistance, greater knowledge of government, greater community service and leadership, more volunteer work, more self-confidence, and less criminal activity and incarceration. In addition, college graduates supposedly have greater use of seatbelts, more continuing

education, greater Internet access, greater attendance at live performances, greater participation in leisure and artistic activities, more book purchases, and higher voting rates' (Allen, 2007, p.1). A tertiary-level qualification is associated with a 15.5% decrease in the likelihood of being a smoker and 6.6% reduction in the likelihood of being obese, compared to having a below-second-level education (OECD, 2013). Irish education policy recognises that, through education, graduates find their place in the world, understand that world, and pass on their understanding and values to others (Department of Education, 2011; Hunt, 2011).

Coupled with these quality of life benefits there are also economic benefits to having a third level education. In every EU country, unemployment rates systematically vary with qualification levels (Campbell et al., 2010). The employment rate for those with high skill levels across the EU as a whole is approximately 85%, for medium skill levels 70% and for low skill levels 50% (Campbell et al., 2010). The more highly qualified a person is, the greater the likelihood that they will be employed (Campbell et al., 2010).

The economic contribution education and training makes in advancing the financial standards of graduates is evidenced in Ireland as HE graduates with an honours degree or higher earn 100% more income over their working life than adults whose highest educational attainment is a leaving certificate or equivalent (i.e. the final examination at second level education) (Cassells et al., 2015). HE also confers a long-term benefit in regard to reducing the likelihood of unemployment (Higher Education Authority, 2014b). As a recession continued into 2012, the unemployment rate in Ireland for graduates with Level 8 qualifications (honours bachelors degree) was 7%. This compared to a national average unemployment rate of 14.7% in the same year (HEA, 2014). The relative protection from unemployment afforded by having a HE qualification applies not just to new graduates entering the workforce, but is in evidence for graduates of all ages (Higher Education Authority, 2014b).

The financial benefits for the individual of investing in HE can be calculated through a return on investment calculation. The private return on a tertiary education in Ireland (relative to an individual with non-tertiary education) is currently the highest in the 29 countries studied for men, and the fifth highest for women, at 30% (OECD average 14%) and 21% (OECD average 13%) respectively (Cassells et al., 2015).

In conclusion therefore, the benefits of HE for individuals may be considered twofold: quality of life benefits such as better diet and health, and economic benefits such as increased earnings and lower unemployment.

2.3.2 HE for society

HE also makes significant contributions to society as it transmits social, cultural and economic values. Indeed, European policy documents stress the priority of the social dimension of HE (Eurydice Report, 2014), recognising HE as a means of combating social inequalities (Yeravdekar and Tiwari, 2014). HE has been credited with reforming social systems and cultivating social cohesion, including the spread of democratic values and respect for multiculturalism, the promotion of political participation, the strengthening of civil society, and the promotion of democratic governance (J.I.C.A., 2005). Going to college has a positive impact in terms of promoting social harmony, reducing crime and promoting intergenerational progression by helping to reduce inequalities in society. There are also benefits in terms of arts, music, language and a range of other social capital indicators (Boland, 2014).

In Ireland, HE has been a major agent of positive change and development. HE has supported the creation, development and transmission of social, cultural and economic values (Hunt, 2011). The significant social benefits flowing from HE include growth, productivity and increased income, as well as higher rates of social participation. It is expected that those who enter HE in the coming decades are the job creators, policy-makers, social innovators and business leaders of the future (Hunt, 2011). It may also be expected that as those with HE qualifications benefit from increased wages, it is likely that those without HE will also benefit as wages in the region rise (Hunt, 2011) due to more job vacancies in low skilled positions becoming available and more money being spent in the region.

In conclusion, there are cultural, democratic and social equity gains arising from HE. These were discussed both in general and in an Irish context above. The next section will discuss the contribution HE makes to employers.

2.3.3 HE for employers

As well as making significant contributions to individuals and society, HE is also important for employers. Specific job related competences acquired throughout education

and training, and underpinned by transversal core skills or competences (see Figure 2.1 above), are required by employers. They also require skills in basic numeracy and literacy, and skills such as problem-solving, team-work and creativity, as well as foreign language capabilities. The other transversal competences required include digital and entrepreneurial competences, as well as the ability to be use one's initiative in order to make a contribution to improved business performance (Campbell et al., 2010; Charles et al., 2009). Skills demanded by the labour market include innovation, entrepreneurship and critical thinking (van der Colff, 2004). Employers require an educated and skilled workforce to thrive and HE can provide this (Strehl, 2007).

In Ireland, the provision of graduate labour from undergraduate and postgraduate programmes has made a direct contribution to the development of employers through the transfer of knowledge from HE to employers' enterprises (Hunt, 2011). HE is seen as important for the development of innovative research and the ability to acquire and adopt that research in order to enhance productivity and ensure better enterprise performance (Delaney and Healy, 2014). Qualified graduates can translate research into economic output, thus improving the profitability of the firm (Higher Education Authority, 2014b). This suggests that education, skills and knowledge are supply-side solutions to enduring labour market problems and increased international competition from low-cost economies (Delaney and Healy, 2014).

In conclusion, employing HE graduates can make a significant contribution to enterprise performance. Graduates can bring with them a skill-set that helps their employers enhance productivity, ensure better business performance, and compete internationally leading to improved profitability. The next section outlines how these graduates and other HE outputs contribute to successful local economies.

2.3.4 HE for the economy

HE also makes significant contributions to improving the performance of the local economy. The increasing interest in the role of HEIs in economic development is being fuelled by high-profile examples of successful regional economies in which HEI contribution is easily identified. Such high profile examples of successful HE driven economies include Silicon Valley and the Boston area in the USA, and the region around Cambridge in the UK (Kitson, 2009; Lester, 2005). The competitive advantage of London as a world city, for example, lies in the strength of its HE base (Arbo and Benneworth,

2007). The contribution of HEIs to the success of these economies is threefold in terms of the supply of human resources, adaption through innovation, and the development of commercial technology.

The first contribution HE can make to the economy is in relation to human resources. Where competition clearly transcends national boundaries, an economy's competitive position rests on the quality of its human resources (van der Colff, 2004; Charles et al., 2003). Though many researchers recognise that tertiary education is the lifeblood of human resources (Yeravdekar and Tiwari, 2014), demonstrating the specific impact of graduates on the economy is challenging. However, researchers such as van der Colff (2004), state '*...that skills development directly impacts on possible increased national income*' (van der Colff, 2004, p.506). Others recognise that HE is the foundation for fostering high-tech talent, the main way to upgrade a nation's competitive status (Chen and Chen, 2010). A 2013 study across 15 countries found that 17% of the economic growth over the period 1994-2005 can be attributed to the superior skills graduates bring to the workplace (Cassells et al., 2015).

The HE system's contribution to human resources comprises two aspects. Firstly, HEIs must supply a sufficient number of graduates to satisfy labour market demand; and secondly, the quality of education that graduates receive in those disciplines that are in-demand must be appropriate. Ireland needs as a minimum to maintain its existing student entry, participation and graduate completion rates (Higher Education Authority, 2014a) in order to ensure economic recovery. The sciences, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) are identified as strategically important for their perceived impact on economic development, with Ireland paying particular attention to completion of study in these priority areas (Eurydice Report, 2014). The government of Ireland's Information and Computer Technology (ICT) Action Plan sets targets for improving demand and retention rates for STEM subjects. Before the publication of the first ICT Action Plan in 2012, domestic supply from HE programmes only met 45% of demand from the ICT sector. Domestic supply was estimated to be over 60% by 2014, and a target of meeting three quarters of demand through domestic supply by 2022 was set (Department of Education and Skills, 2018; Department of Education and Skills and Department of Jobs Enterprise and Innovation, 2014).

The second contribution HE can make to the economy is in helping the firms that comprise a local economy, to adapt through innovation. The ability of the firms to adapt to new market and technological opportunities through innovation is the key to sustainable growth and prosperity at local level (Lester, 2005). There is consensus regarding the positive impact of academic research on the development of innovation (Bekkers and Bodas Freitas, 2008). Bekkers and Bodas Freitas (2008) conclude that 10% of the new products and processes introduced by firms would not have been developed (or only with great delay) without the contribution of HE research. The links between innovation, productivity growth and prosperity, as well as the HEI's ability to help strengthen local capabilities, are increasingly more recognised worldwide (Lester, 2005).

Finally, HE can contribute to the development of commercially viable technologies, though the evidence for this is mixed (Yusuf, 2008). A few of the leading research HEIs, almost all in the United States (such as Massachusetts Institute of Technology), derive significant income from licensing fees and royalties through a handful of patents on viable technologies (Lester, 2005). These HEIs are also linked to start-up companies and provide a hub for clusters of firms. Many other HEIs in the United States, Europe and Asia are the source of consulting services and of spin-offs and generate some patents on viable technologies (Yusuf, 2008). However, businesses do not perceive HEIs as the leading sources of technology of commercial significance. Indeed, when ranking the sources of innovation and new technologies, businesses ranked HEIs behind competitors, customers, exhibitions, in house research, suppliers, trade associations and other sources (Yusuf, 2008), demonstrating the mixed perceived contribution of HE.

In Ireland, the HE system has provided a major contribution to the development of the Irish economy. HE has been a key component in broader national development strategies since the late 1950s (Cassells et al., 2015; Irish University Association, 2014; Hunt, 2011). It is increasingly seen as a shop window for national attainment and achievements in the sciences, the arts and business (Hunt, 2011). Rising levels of skills and educational qualifications greatly facilitated inward investment, growth in domestic and foreign enterprises, as well as the development of key high value-added sectors (Delaney and Healy, 2014). In an era of constant global change, future economic success in Ireland is likely to depend even more on the ability to adapt and compete in global markets (Delaney and Healy, 2014), and on the ability to create an innovative knowledge-based economy that will provide sustainable employment opportunities and good standards of living

(Cassells et al., 2015; Hunt, 2011). Labour market and economic forecasts highlight a growing demand for knowledge workers to handle the growing information needs of business, and thus continue to grow Irish gross domestic product (GDP) (Delaney and Healy, 2014).

In conclusion, HE has provided three main contributions to the local economy. Firstly, HE is a source of educated employees. Secondly, HE helps firms adapt through innovation and finally HE contributes to the production of commercially viable technologies. These contributions are evidenced in Ireland by development since the 1950s and government policies that highlight the significant role HE plays in the Irish economy.

To summarise, this section discussed how HE plays an important role in individual graduate development, both from a quality of life and economic perspective. It outlined the importance of HE to society in improving democracy, social cohesion, increased participation and health. HE is important to employers, its benefits including; enhanced productivity, better business performance and greater profitability. The section concluded by presenting the importance of HE to developing a strong economy through the provision of an educated workforce, helping firms adapt through innovation and contributing to the development of viable technologies. Recognition of these benefits has driven engagement between HEIs and the outside world (section 3.2.3).

2.4 HEI Homogeneity

In recent years, in global terms, HEIs have been considered homogenous as they have a uniform structure or composition, including similar strategies and systems (Flynn, 2017; Coates, 2007). Movement towards homogeneity emerged, either spontaneously or through a process of diffusion, because HEIs face the same generic problems and conditions, regardless of their location (Leiter, 2008). Gounko and Smale (2007), in a study of Russian HE practices, concluded that the similarities across national settings and the transformations in the HE sector cannot be understood without an awareness of the global dimension. They state that cost-efficiency, the commercialisation of services and

the measurement of performance is uniformly found on the educational policy agenda in OECD and Central and Eastern European countries (Gounko and Smale, 2007).

The challenging settings in which Irish HEIs operate are similar to the constraints faced in many global jurisdictions and consequently homogeneous HEI systems and structures would be expected. To discuss the homogeneous pressures HEIs face the following headings are utilised: new public management (NPM), accountability, internationalisation and marketisation, funding and quality as shown in Figure 2.3.

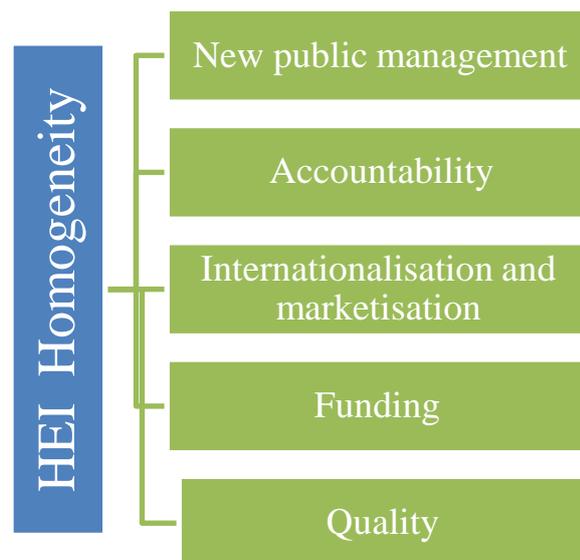


Figure 2.3: Homogeneity pressures in HE

(Source: Researcher)

2.4.1 New public management

New public management is the first pressure considered to influence HEI homogeneity. This section briefly outlines the NPM philosophy and its adoption in many western economies before discussing the role NPM has in the homogenisation of HE.

In the late 1970s, criticism of the traditional bureaucracy of most western governments (Pollitt et al., 2007), coupled with the financial crisis, led to the acceleration of the introduction of new, managerial ideas in the public sector, described as new public management (NPM). NPM is the term which has been given to a philosophy to improve the efficiency and performance of public sector organisations (Pollitt et al., 2007). *The political emphasis placed upon the public sector was to do more with less, which required*

public sector managers to critique their structures, budgets and service delivery processes' (den Heyer, 2011, p.420). The entrepreneurial characteristics inherent in NPM imply that if public bodies perform in the same manner as private sector organisations, they will be effective and more efficient. The underlying philosophy implies that through intelligent adoption, '*...and despite the fundamental contextual differences between the public and the private sector, the same management models might be implemented in both sectors*' (Aljardali et al., 2012, p.99). This philosophy has resulted in major reforms in the public sector emphasising a for-profit sector style of management for organisational effectiveness and economic efficiency (Sayed, 2013). The three "E's" contained in NPM principles: economy, efficiency and effectiveness, have become important indicators for good governance and best management practice (Strehl, 2007). Value for money is seen as an important aspect of public sector management (Kloot and Martin, 2000) with the introduction, and widespread adoption, of NPM (Brignall and Modell, 2000).

However, Arnaboldi and Azzone (2010, p.267), identify four main issues in implementing private sector management techniques in public organisations. These issues are: '*the diverse nature of public sector services, the wide range of stakeholders, the difficulties in defining targets which by the nature of the sector will not be 'for profit', and the lack of competencies*'. den Heyer (2011) and Aljardali et al. (2012) concur, highlighting that the business goals and objectives as well as structures and values of private sector management are so different to those in public sector organisations that implementation is impossible.

Despite the issues noted above, and compounded by globalisation, NPM has been widely adopted in many western economies (Quinn and Warren, 2017; den Heyer, 2011). Hood (1991) proposes four main reasons for this wide acceptance. Firstly, NPM has many of the qualities of a period of *pop management stardom* that is associated with many evanescent fads and fashions. However, Hood (1991) does recognise that being a fad or fashion does not account for the relative endurance of NPM for a long period of time. Secondly, Hood (1991) pondered if NPM could be regarded as a *cult* phenomenon which had seen many rebirths despite repeated failures of the ideas. Hood's third reason for such wide acceptance lies in the unification of opposites. These opposites are the German tradition of state-led economic development on one side and the Anglo-Saxon tradition of liberal economics on the other, which Hood combines into a *synthesis of opposites*, both sides embracing NPM. Hood's final proposition for the wide acceptance of NPM is

in its timing. He contends that NPM was a response to a set of social conditions existing in developed countries since World War II and the unique period of economic growth which accompanied it (Hood, 1991).

den Heyer (2011) contends that one of the primary reasons for implementing NPM reform programmes is to implement a performance measurement system to ensure that managers concentrate on managing resources efficiently and effectively. This aligns with its foundation in institutional economics which argues that institutions exist where benefits exceed costs of creating and maintaining them (Quinn and Warren, 2017). Performance information is considered essential in NPM: *'...it is needed to set targets, to focus on efficiency, to compare the targets and actual performance and to emphasize outputs'* (Jansen, 2008, p.169). As a result, *'The need for an appropriate performance measurement system in the public sector, based on ideas generated in the private sector, has been identified and realised for a long time'* (Sayed, 2013, p.204).

Reforms in European countries under the NPM philosophy include: the introduction of performance indicators in a number of policy sectors (health, welfare, local government), placing executive agencies at arm's length, the use of public private partnerships in infrastructure projects, personnel reforms in national administrations, and the increased use of information and communication technologies, especially in policy implementation and inspection (Pollitt et al., 2007).

In line with NPM thinking, HEIs must balance the need for efficiency with effectiveness (Schobel and Scholey, 2012) as internationally, countries homogeneously seek to steer their HE systems in directions which are consistent with their national policies (Ferlie et al., 2008). For example, HEIs have been encouraged to adopt managerial techniques such as total quality management (TQM) and the balanced scorecard (BSC) (Lawrence and Sharma, 2002). Performance targets and measures have homogeneously been introduced in HEIs to monitor and evaluate the productivity of individual academics and their departments and to introduce more business-like accountabilities and results-oriented management styles (Lawrence and Sharma, 2002). This has resulted in a shift from both the collegium and from professional autonomy (Deem, 1998) and has seen a homogeneous strengthening of HEI governance to ensure a standardised and controllable treatment of the growing burden of teaching and research (Bleiklie, 1998).

NPM and other internationally normalised reforms are evident in HE including, increasing accountability; the introduction and strengthening of internationalisation and marketisation; the introduction of performance funding; and a focus on quality management systems (Enders and Westerheijden, 2014; Gounko and Smale, 2007). The next sections will discuss these issues in a HE homogenisation context.

2.4.2 Accountability

Homogenisation is also evident in the pressure for, and implementation of, systems of accountability in HEIs. Accountability, which is closely related to evaluation of efficiency, effectiveness, and performance, requires proving that the HEI has achieved planned results and performance in an effective manner (Speziale, 2012; Kai, 2009). Public institutions are subject to accountability, justifying how they have spent funds and reporting on their enrolments, staffing and plant and equipment holdings (Dougherty and Hong, 2006). This emphasis on accountability for institutional performance emerged in the early 1990s (Shin, 2009) and since then is on the HE policy agendas in many countries.

However, the accountability emphasis is not universally acceptable, as noted by Huisman and Currie (2004), who state that *'In a number of countries accountability is institutionalised and commonly accepted, in others it is a recent phenomenon, and in others it is a contested issue on the higher education agenda...Some analysts think that governments and other stakeholders do not have the right to make academics formally accountable for their performance.'* (Huisman and Currie, 2004, p.529). Yet, Pollard et al. (2013a) propose that governments need to establish whether the institutions that they fund fulfil their requirements and do so effectively. Establishing whether HEIs are fulfilling specific requirements has led governments to try to steer a wide array of HE affairs (Bleiklie, 2001). Huisman and Currie (2004) conclude that *'... the increasing attention to public, measurable accountability is the logical consequence of governments retreating from closely monitoring higher education ...'* (Huisman and Currie, 2004, p.529). If significant funding is being provided then information on where it is going, and what effect it is having is required (Pollard et al., 2013b) to ensure *'...more bang for the buck'* (Rabovsky, 2012, p.676). Accountability measures are used by *"... political leaders and the general public to evaluate public agency outputs and to impose sanctions when agencies fail to produce desired results"* (Rabovsky, 2012, p.675). Barnett (1992) quoted

in Alexander (2000b) points out that '*...society is not prepared to accept that higher education is self-justifying and wishes to expose the activities of the secret garden*' (Alexander, 2000b, p.411). As a result accountability measures are being used as a means of focusing HEI attention on state priorities (Dougherty and Hong, 2006). This effort to steer HEIs towards fulfilling government requirements is leading to further growth in benchmarks and performance measures designed to enable HEIs to demonstrate their socio-economic and cultural contribution (Hart and Northmore, 2011) and has led to more homogeneous HEI behaviour.

Increasing demand for accountability is also coming from accrediting bodies, and other stakeholders (Katharaki and Katharakis, 2010; Ballantine and Eckles, 2009), including students, prospective students and their advisors, the public, and taxpayers (Cassells et al., 2015; Pollard et al., 2013b; Yu et al., 2009). As well as pressure from stakeholders to be accountable, economic motivation is pressing institutions to become more accountable, more efficient, and more productive in the use of publicly generated resources (Alexander, 2000b). This has driven further accountability across regions and countries.

Despite homogenisation of measures through the widespread implementation of evaluations, many researchers have found that performance-based accountability has not been successful in enhancing HEI performance (Rabovsky, 2012; Shin, 2009; Huisman and Currie, 2004). Yet, ambiguous evidence regarding the success of accountability measures has not prevented the homogenous spread of accountability policies across the HE sector, with such policies now forming a central tenet of the HE system in many countries.

2.4.3 Internationalisation and marketisation of HE

Internationalisation and marketisation are also contributing to HEI homogeneity. Internationalisation is the implementation of policies to cater for globalisation. A variety of such internationalisation policies and programmes have been implemented by HEIs and governments as a result of the increasingly integrated world economy (Speziale, 2012). Internationalisation policies for the academic profession, campuses, curricula and research, has led many researchers to argue that there is an increasing convergence in

national HE policy-making reflecting the growing integration of global economies, politics and cultures (Gallagher, 2014) and resulting in homogenisation of HEIs. The increased interest in the NPM philosophy is an international phenomenon in itself and has meant that national HE systems and HEIs are judged by where they stand in global terms (Higher Education Authority, 2013). This is supported by Hazelkorn (2007) who proposes that '*...worldwide comparisons will become even more significant ... in the future*' (Hazelkorn, 2007, p.107).

Coupled with the international drive towards worldwide comparison, marketisation of HE has also contributed to HEIs' homogeneity. Marketisation is a response by HEIs to market demands and has seen HEIs compete for students, high-quality faculty, and funds on the global stage (Speziale, 2012). It has transformed students into consumers so that performance measurement systems become a source of information, and an attribute of self-pride and peer esteem (Gültekin, 2011; Hazelkorn, 2009). For all HEIs it is becoming imperative to become truly entrepreneurial and adopt a stronger client service culture (Bleiklie, 2001). The marketisation race is further escalating as each institution attempts to be best in class by concentrating efforts, profiling and branding studies, developing alliances, franchising operations, hiring faculty stars, running fund raising campaigns, and extending student amenities (Arbo and Benneworth, 2007). HEIs are involved in increasing competition for bright students, high-quality staff and research funding (Arbo and Benneworth, 2007) and are using international practices in their marketing activities to win over students from domestic and international markets. The spread of such activities has furthered homogenisation of HEIs.

2.4.4 Funding

A common policy used across the HE sector, and resulting in HEIs that are more homogeneous, is the allocation of funding based on performance. This policy has evolved since government funding became the main source of finance in many jurisdictions; HEIs are no longer reliant on the patronage of the church, town councils or local elites. Instead their core funding comes from national governments (Arbo and Benneworth, 2007) and from student fees. Traditionally, most government funding in HE was input based (based on student intake numbers) and normally calculated on an incremental basis (a series of regular additions to the base) (Gallagher, 2014). However, internationally this is changing

to a funding base that is dependent on performance. *‘Over the past three decades policymakers have been seeking new ways to secure improved performance from higher education institutions. One popular approach has been performance funding, which involves use of a formula to tie funding to institutional performance on specified indicators’* (Dougherty and Reddy, 2011, p.1). Therefore, performance funding is where some portion of funding is directly linked to the achievement of performance measures (Rabovsky, 2012). As a policy instrument, performance funding provides an inducement that mimics the profit motive for businesses (Dougherty and Reddy, 2011).

Performance funding systems have had some positive impacts on HEIs. Dougherty and Hong (2006) found that the result of implementing a performance funding system is increasing institutional awareness of state goals for HE. This increased awareness makes HEIs more homogeneous with each other as they adjust behaviours to meet government goals. In addition, many of those interviewed, as part of the Dougherty and Hong (2006) study, listed benefits in self-evaluation and introspection as a result of the performance funding system (Dougherty and Hong, 2006). Other research has concluded that funding systems influence the strategies of HEIs (Lillis and Lynch, 2013; Strehl, 2007) and may have an important role in the diversification, as opposed to homogenisation, of the HEI (Koucký, 2011).

However, the level of funding applied based on performance is generally relatively low as a percentage of the overall budget allocated to HEIs. For example, research conducted by Alexander (2000a), found homogeneity in the approach to funding levels as *‘...most states using performance funding and budgeting systems in the United States allocate less than 6% of operating funding through these mechanisms’* (Alexander, 2000a, p.421). The problem with allocating a low level of funding is that if the funding level is relatively small *‘... some observers saw little impact on the institution’* (Dougherty and Reddy, 2011, p.15) and HEIs did not change their actions (Dougherty and Reddy, 2011). Additionally, Rabovsky (2012) concurs that performance funding policies have had no significant impact on HEIs’ priorities.

Therefore, despite the limited advantages and relative weaknesses of performance funding systems they are commonplace in HEIs (Rabovsky, 2012; Dougherty and Reddy, 2011). Many of the performance funding systems use a low percentage of total funding

to reward good performance. The homogeneity found in the funding systems of HEIs is also leading to a lack of action within many HEIs.

2.4.5 Quality

Government desire to control the quality of HE is also leading to homogenisation of HEIs. Defining quality is difficult as an issue arises in determining different stakeholder perceptions of quality. HE stakeholders may have differing perceptions of quality because they may have incongruent interests in HE (Tang and Hussin, 2011; Sarrico et al., 2010). For example, *'...to the government a high-quality system is one that produces trained scientists, engineers, architects, doctors and so on, in numbers judged to be required by society. However, to an industrialist quality means graduates with wide ranging, flexible minds, readily able to acquire skills and adapt to new methods'* (Sayed, 2013, p.206). Hence, while different stakeholder perspectives may make quality difficult to define (Sahney et al., 2004; Pounder, 1999), *'...that should not impede higher education institutions to improve their quality'* (Sarrico et al., 2010, p.40).

Quality has been an ongoing concern in HE since the early medieval foundations of HEIs (Sarrico et al., 2010). However, it is only since the late 1980s, as a result of the widespread adoption of NPM, that countries have become concerned with HE quality and evaluation (Sarrico et al., 2010). Additionally, catering for larger student numbers with diminishing resources leads to questions about the ability to maintain quality (Hazelkorn and Massaro, 2011; Sarrico et al., 2010; Kai, 2009). The World Bank's *'Lessons of Experience'*, as reported by Johnstone et al. (1998), identified severe quality problems in HEIs resulting from curricula issues, overcrowding, or insufficient control over the quality or behaviour of the teaching staff (Johnstone et al., 1998). As a result, and in response to growing concerns from stakeholders, HEIs internationally are increasingly seeking ways to improve the quality of education (Lawrence and McCollough, 2001). They are being urged to raise both the standards of educational provision, and the quality of their teaching, learning and research outcomes (Deem, 1998).

Responding to the need for quality assured measures for internal performance management (Pollard et al., 2013a), HEIs have developed quality evaluation mechanisms (Sarrico et al., 2010). Without performance evaluation, understanding what success looks like would not be addressed (Pollard et al., 2013b) nor would there be permanent change and improvement in the quality of HE (Azma, 2010). Performance measurement systems

provide a picture of the quality of the institution compared to peers, reporting changes over time (Pollard et al., 2013b) and lead to homogenisation of best practice (Quality and Qualifications Ireland, 2017). Indeed one of the stated aims of Quality and Qualifications Ireland (2017)(the HE quality regulator in Ireland) is to help HEIs ‘... *to not only publicise their own good practices but also to make them aware of good practices in other institutions and, thus, identify common themes across the sector.*’ (Quality and Qualifications Ireland, 2017, p.1). Increasing awareness and commending good performance in quality, encourages HEIs to act homogeneously and facilitates the drive for improved quality leading to similar behaviour.

In summary, this section has outlined that pressures on the HE sector deriving from new public management, accountability, internationalisation and marketisation, performance funding, and quality cause HEIs to become homogenous. Chapter 4 discusses institutional theory, which suggests that organisations who operate in homogeneous environments are subject to isomorphic mechanism causing them to act in certain ways (Claeyé and Jackson, 2012). Having described pressures in the HE environment that cause HEI homogeneity, institutional theory would thus seem an appropriate theoretical lens for this exploratory study.

2.5 The Irish HE landscape

This section begins by describing HE in Ireland and considers how HE is managed, including the role of European and national policies. It then discusses national priorities and goals for HE in Ireland. Next, the various types of state funded institutions are presented.

2.5.1 HE in Ireland

Up until the 1950s young people in Ireland left education after the primary level certificate. This increased in the following decades so that by the 1970s people left education after the leaving certificate (Delaney and Healy, 2014). Now two out of three school leavers enter HE before the age of 23; HE has become the new educational norm in Ireland for young people. Another trend in Irish HE is people returning to HE later in

their work career to top up or broaden their initial qualifications (Delaney and Healy, 2014). Enrolment growth in HE continues, rising from 145,690 in 2009 to 225,628 in 2016/17 (Higher Education Authority, 2017; Delaney and Healy, 2014) (see Figure 2.4 below). The participation rate in Ireland for the academic year 2016/17 was 58%, just 2% away from the 2020 target (Higher Education Authority, 2018).

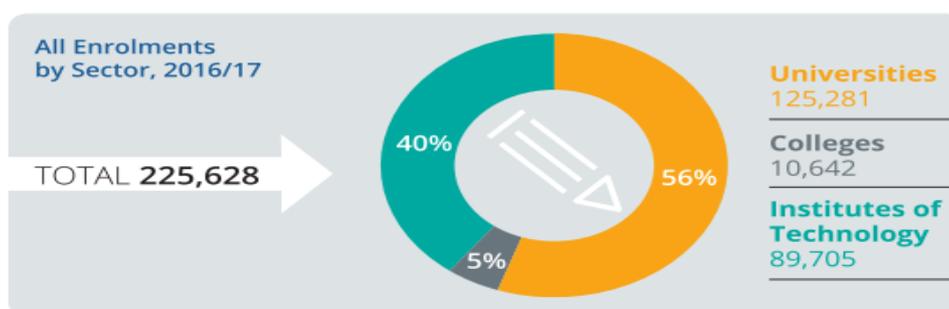


Figure 2.4: Total enrolment in HE 2016/17

(Source: Higher Education Authority (2017))

Irish HE performs well against international benchmarks in tertiary attainment, science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) graduates, student engagement, and employer satisfaction (Higher Education Authority, 2014b).

However, since the beginning of the economic crisis (2007/08), the Irish HE system has been challenged as it has provided thousands of extra places while staffing levels have been reduced. As a result the staff–student ratio has declined from 1:15.6 to 1:19 (Higher Education Authority, 2014b) and was predicted to further reduce to 1:20.6 in the academic year 2016/17 (see Figure 2.5). However, this ratio has declined more than was predicted to 1:23 (Higher Education Authority, 2017)

Staff student ratios			
2007/08	2011/12	2013/14	2016/17
01:15.6	01:19.0	01:19.0	01:23.0

Figure 2.5: Staff student ratios

(Source: Higher Education Authority (2016b) and Higher Education Authority (2017))

In conclusion, Irish higher education shows above average performance in tertiary attainment rates, but is challenged by the rise in numbers of students, without accompanying staff increases. These challenges are common in many jurisdictions.

2.5.2 HE management in Ireland

To describe how HE is managed in Ireland, it is important to recognise the influence of European education policy, national education policy and the HEA. Each of these influences are outlined below.

2.5.2.1 European education policy

National HE arrangements are increasingly affected by external pressures from EU policies. (Keeling, 2006). Currently, the HE sector in Europe is significantly influenced by two European-level policy developments: the HE reforms initiated by the Bologna Declaration, and the research aspects of the European Union's Lisbon Strategy (Keeling, 2006).

Firstly, the Bologna Declaration of 1999 developed the European HE Area with the aim of creating a common structure of qualifications (Martin and Sauvageot, 2011). It suggested standardising the length of study programmes all over Europe (Teichler, 2004). Reforms in degree structures, credit transfers, quality assurance and curricular development have been adopted from the Bologna Declaration by participants in the European HE Area, which includes Ireland (McAleese et al., 2013; Keeling, 2006).

The second major European policy to influence Irish HE provision was the Lisbon Strategy of 2000. The aim of the Strategy was to make Europe the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion. This policy confirmed the importance of research within Europe and provided funding for HEIs in areas such as cooperation initiatives, project based research, research support initiatives, and improving research infrastructure (Keeling, 2006). The Lisbon Strategy was rolled forward into the Europe 2020 Strategy in 2010.

The research agenda derived from the Bologna Declaration and the Lisbon Strategy have assisted the European Commission in disseminating an influential European discourse on HE. Correspondingly, Irish educational policy is required to conform, at least notionally, with the European-level objectives (Keeling, 2006).

2.5.2.2 National education policy

EU membership requires that European education policy is translated into Irish education policy. As the statutory body that advises both the Minister, and Department for Education and Skills, the Higher Education Authority (HEA) is tasked with the translation of European and Irish government policy into HE objectives. As discussed above, the Bologna Declaration aimed to create a European HE area. Part of that process was to allow student access to education systems in a wide range of countries and increase student mobility within the EU. To facilitate such mobility a European wide 10 level framework for qualifications was developed. This was translated in Ireland in 2003 into the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) (Quality and Qualifications Ireland, 2014), as shown in Appendix B. Since 2006 the HEA also has assumed funding responsibility for the HE sector from the Irish Department of Education (Strehl, 2007).

In summary, this section recognised the influence of European and national policy on Irish HE. The HEA translates these policies for HE and controls the funding of public HEIs in Ireland, on behalf of government's Department of Education. These public HEIs as a result are subject to the HEA's performance compacts, which are the focus of this study.

2.5.2.3 State funded institutions

As discussed above, the HEA has funding responsibility for the public HE sector in Ireland, which make up the higher portion of colleges, and cater for the majority of students. There are also a very small number of private HEIs (15 organisations) who are not funded by the HEA (Higher Education Colleges Association, 2019). As the HEA does not fund or control these private HEIs, they are not subject to performance compacts and are therefore outside the remit of this research study.

HE is provided in publicly funded institutions through three types of provider, as shown in Figure 2.6 below. Colleges of Further Education, like privately owned colleges, are not included in the current performance compact legislation.

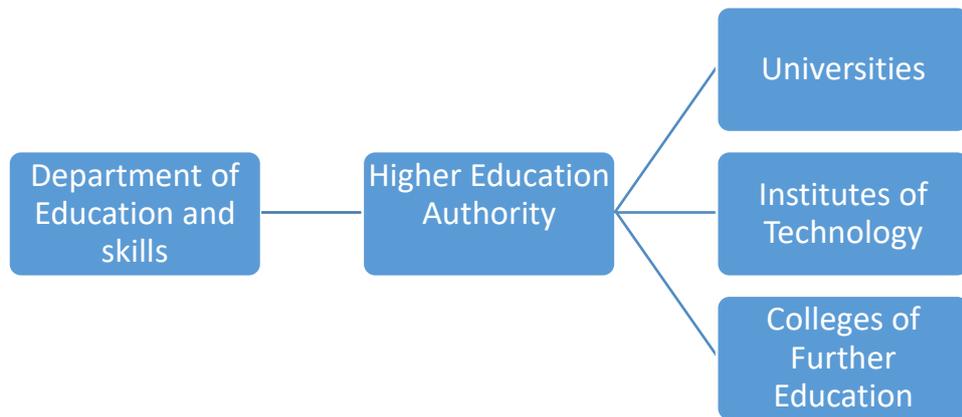


Figure 2.6: HE funding responsibilities

(Source: Researcher)

In Ireland, 95% of all third level students attend HEA funded universities or institutes of technology (IoT) with the remaining 5% attending HEA funded colleges of further education who provide mainly vocational level courses (Higher Education Authority, 2017) (see Figure 2.4). As most students attend universities or IoTs the next section described these types of HE providers under the headings of history, mission and growth, student profile and courses provided.

2.5.2.3.1 History, mission and growth

History, mission and growth are the primary distinctions between universities and IoTs. Universities have a long tradition in Ireland, Trinity College Dublin is over 400 years old, while University College Dublin traces its establishment back 150 years. The IoTs on the other hand are relatively new, dating from the 1970s (Strehl, 2007). Universities are situated in the larger population centres with IoTs being more geographically spread. This has resulted in IoTs being significantly involved in the regional enterprise base in their hinterlands, while also aiming to grow the regional capacity for international exploitation of the region's offering (Higher Education Authority, 2014b).

The IoTs originated as Regional Technical Colleges (RTC), and were established to offer courses at levels 7 (ordinary degree) and level 6: (higher certificates) (see Appendix B: National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ)). Their purpose was to cater for the regional labour market and promote economic development at local level (McCoy and Smyth, 2011). However, IoTs now offer degree courses at level 8 (honours degree) and post-

graduate courses at level 9 (master's degree) and 10 (doctoral degree) on the NFQ, while still continuing to offer courses below level 8. Nationally, the provision of courses at levels 6 and 7 is dominated by Institutes of Technology, with 84% of the national provision at these lower levels being delivered by IoTs (Higher Education Authority, 2014b).

Conversely, universities are stronger in catering for research and international students. Irish universities dominate research provision in Ireland (87% of the system provision is provided by universities). They deliver 64% of level 8 programmes (honours degree) and 75% of level 9 postgraduate level programmes (master's degree). Universities also accommodate 84% of international students. This diversity has broadly been maintained although more recently IoTs have been trying to increase their share of international and research students (Higher Education Authority, 2014b).

In terms of growth, the number of full-time HE places in HEA funded institutions increased from 41,000 in 1980 to 135,000 in 2004 to 225,628 in 2016/17 (Higher Education Authority, 2017; Cassells et al., 2015; McCoy and Smyth, 2011). However, the number of IoT places grew by 388% between 1980 and 2004 while university places grew by less than half (174%) (McCoy and Smyth, 2011). During approximately the same period the number of school leavers continuing to HE increased from under one third, to almost half by 2004, to two out of three by 2012 (Delaney and Healy, 2014). This has led to a rapid increase in the IoT sector which now caters for 40% of all HE places (Higher Education Authority, 2017) (see Figure 2.4 above).

In summary, IoTs are a more recent addition to HE provision in Ireland. They were established to cater for the needs of their regions and offer courses at lower levels of the NFQ. However, there has been a rapid expansion in places provided by IoTs' since their formation such that they now cater for 40% of all third level students. Conversely, universities focus on higher NFQ levels and research programmes and have seen a much slower increase in student numbers.

2.5.2.3.2 Student profile

The profile of students and the types of courses offered are also quite distinct when comparing IoTs and universities. IoTs have a different student profile to universities as they lead the way in providing for part-time and mature students, and entrants from lower

social classes. IoTs cater for 61% of part-time and flexible undergraduate students and 65% of mature students. IoTs have a slightly larger proportion (57%) of disadvantaged entrants (HEA, 2015).

Young people from middle class backgrounds whose parents are working in professional jobs are 6.4 times more likely to enter university than those students whose parents work in semi/unskilled manual jobs, who are more likely to enter IoTs (McCoy and Smyth, 2011). As a result universities comprise a larger proportion of middle-class students from families with professional backgrounds than IoTs. The universities have a much lower percentage of students receiving government financial assistance (ranging from 7% in some universities to 52% in others) compared to IoTs who have a higher percent of students on grants (ranging from 44% to 74%) (O' Brien, 2017). Therefore, IoTs not only cater for more for mature students, but also for students from lower socio-economic backgrounds and students on flexible learning programmes, while universities cater more for international students and students studying at level 8 and above.

As well as differences in social patterns, differences exist in gender patterns between IoTs and universities. Traditionally, IoTs catered mainly for male students (while universities did not have this focus). However, a shift in the types of courses provided in IoTs has resulted in a feminisation of the IoT sector over time. In Ireland, between 1980 and 1998 the proportion of students entering traditionally male engineering and science courses declined, while entrants to more traditionally female areas, such as business, administrative/secretarial studies and hotel, catering and tourism, increased. The IoT sector adapted to this change and began offering these types of courses to cater for female students. As a result, in the traditionally male-dominated IoTs, gender patterns have equalised (McCoy and Smyth, 2011) and are now more in line with patterns in universities.

This section presented a brief outline of the differences between the two main providers of HE in Ireland, IoTs and universities, in terms of history and mission, expansion rates and student profile.

2.5.2.4 National priorities and goals of HE

The *Higher Education System Performance Framework*, provides a roadmap for the most fundamental reform of Irish HE in the history of the State (Higher Education Authority,

2014b). The aim of the framework was to see the creation of a more coherent system, with HEIs working to deliver on national priorities (Higher Education Authority, 2014b). Subsequently, a performance measurement framework was introduced to evaluate HEIs based on these national priorities. The priorities are described in this framework under four main headings, as shown in Figure 2.7 and outlined below:

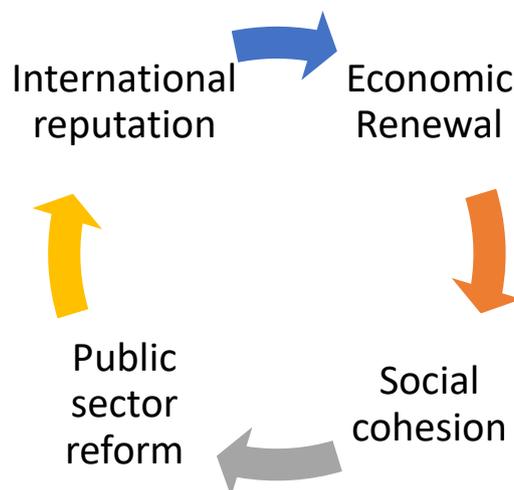


Figure 2.7: Government of Ireland’s national priorities and goals

(Source: Higher Education Authority (2014b))

1. *‘Economic renewal and development at national and regional levels’*
2. *Social cohesion, cultural development and equity at national and regional levels’*
3. *Public sector reform towards greater effectiveness and efficiency levels’*
4. *Restoration of Ireland’s international reputation’* (Higher Education Authority, 2014b, p.7).

These national priorities were translated into HE priorities, and seven key HE system objectives were set. *‘The seven objectives are:*

1. *To meet Ireland’s human capital needs across the spectrum of skills by engaged institutions through a diverse mix of provision across the system and through both core funding and specifically targeted initiatives*
2. *To promote access for disadvantaged groups and to put in place coherent pathways from second level education, from further education and other non-traditional entry routes*
3. *To promote excellence in teaching and learning and assessment to underpin a high quality student experience*
4. *To maintain an open and excellent public research system focused on the government’s priority areas and the achievement of other societal objectives*

and to maximise research collaborations and knowledge exchange between and among public and private sector research actors

5. *To ensure that Ireland's higher education institutions will be globally competitive and internationally oriented, and Ireland will be a world-class centre of international education*
6. *To reform practices and restructure the system for quality and diversity*
7. *To increase accountability of autonomous institutions for public funding and against national priorities.* (Higher Education Authority, 2014b, p.99).

The first steps in implementing the seven priorities for the HE system's performance framework was for the HEA to enter into a set of individual institutional performance agreements or compacts with each HEI (Higher Education Authority, 2014b). Hence in 2014, the HEA introduced performance compacts to align the missions, strategies and profiles of individual HEIs with national HE priorities, and to agree performance indicators against which HEIs would be measured and funding would be allocated. The aim was to '*... to allow the system to deliver on a set of outcomes identified as essential for Ireland's social and economic well-being.*' (Higher Education Authority, 2014b, p.99).

Six categories of performance measures were proposed by the HEA. These are:

1. Development plans and objectives
2. Participation, equal access and lifelong learning
3. Excellent teaching and learning and quality of the student experience
4. High quality, internationally competitive research and innovation
5. Enhanced engagement with enterprise and the community and embedded knowledge exchange
6. Enhanced internationalisation (Performance Compact: case HEI, 2014b).

Each HEI was required to translate these prescribed categories into their own priorities and then propose suitable measures under each category. Recognising that Irish HEIs have differing strategies, the HEA required the formation of a performance compact but allowed individual HEIs to establish their own measures.

'The Compact recognises that there is a tension between providing a transparent framework of public accountability for performance in relation to funding, and risks of unintended behaviours related to measurements. It addresses this tension by requiring higher education institutions themselves to propose the qualitative and quantitative

indicators against which their performance should be assessed by the Higher Education Authority.’ (Performance Compact: case HEI, 2014b, p.3).

The HEIs would subsequently be required to identify and explain any areas where their performance did not meet the objectives outlined in their institutional compact.

Irish HEIs have fully engaged with the new *Higher Education Performance Framework*. In the first year all twenty-six institutions submitted draft compacts setting out their mission, strategies, objectives and performance targets to 2016, and written feedback was provided to each HEI. This feedback informed an agenda for a strategic dialogue with each institution where the national agenda and the HEI’s priorities were discussed. The first round of strategic dialogue concentrated on agreeing the mission, profile and strategy of each HEI, and also the indicators of success by which the institution proposed that it should be measured. Initially, a limited amount of performance funding of €5 million was reserved from the 2014 funding allocation grant for each HEI and was released subject to satisfactory engagement with the strategic dialogue process. HEIs were expected to demonstrate that they had incorporated feedback into their processes for the next year’s performance evaluation (Higher Education Authority, 2014b). Up to 10% of funding is allocated to each HEI based on performance against self-assessment targets and feedback. The performance compacts are the subject of this research and will be discussed in Section 7.5.

Summarising information reported in the performance compacts as well as regional performance the HEA prepares an annual system performance report, so progress in achieving national policy can be assessed. This report is considered an important part of the feedback and is designed to improve overall HE and institution performance. Figure 2.8 below summarises how the national priorities have been implemented, with priorities set by the Minister, and the Department of Education and Skills, performance indicators set by the Department and the HEA, and institutional and regional performance providing feedback into national objectives.

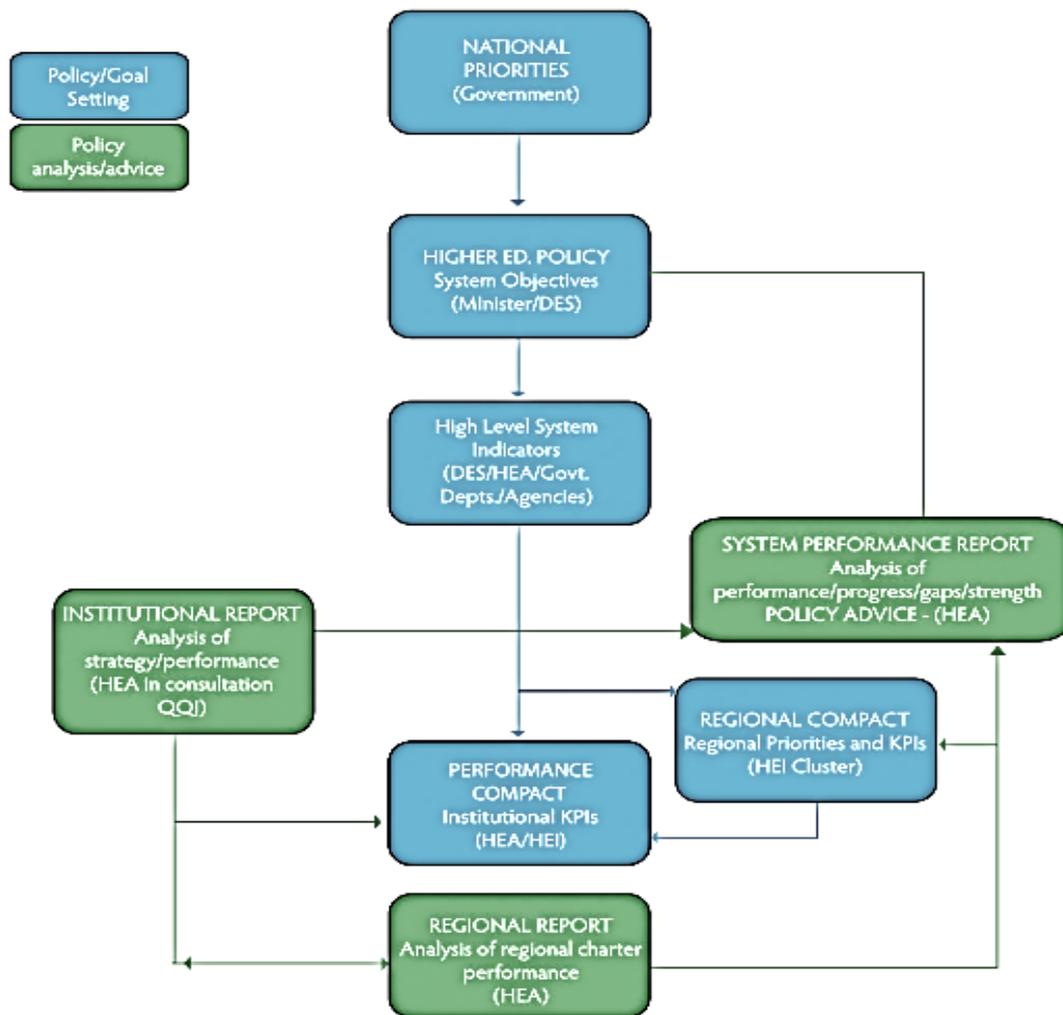


Figure 2.8: Higher education system performance framework
 (Source: Higher Education Authority (2014b))

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter outlined the context for this exploratory study and provided the foundations for subsequent chapters. First, section 2.3 described the role of HE and its importance for individuals, society, employers, and the economy, which links to the purpose of engagement, a key mission of HE presented in Chapter 3. Second, section 2.4 outlined the pressures in the HE environment that cause HEI homogeneity and this provides a parallel to institutional theory, which is used as the theoretical lens for this exploratory study in Chapter 4. Third, section 2.5 introduced the Irish landscape in terms of management structure, concentrating on the publicly funded HEIs as this research is

focused on this type of HEI provider, the IoT. To conclude, the chapter presented the national priorities that underpin education policy and the performance compacts which measure engagement, the core of this study.

CHAPTER 3: ENGAGEMENT

3.1 Introduction

This exploratory study aims to determine how HEIs engage with their external stakeholders and how that engagement is measured. Therefore, this chapter outlines previous literature on engagement and its measurement. It begins with a review of the three elements of the mission of higher education (HE); teaching and learning, research, and engagement, describing the third dimension in detail, as this is the focus of this study. First, engagement is defined and the various types of engagement are outlined. Next, performance measurement in general is considered, including the rationale for measuring. Performance measurement in HE is then outlined, in general and in relation to each of the three elements of the HE mission. Finally, the chapter concludes with a discussion on selecting engagement performance measures.

3.2 Elements of HE mission

The mission of HE comprises three inter-connected elements, as shown in Figure 3.1 below. These elements are teaching and learning, research, and engagement with wider society (Hunt, 2011; Kitson, 2009; Padfield et al., 2008b; Arbo and Benneworth, 2007; D'Este and Patel, 2007; Pearce et al., 2007; Mueller, 2006; Lester, 2005; Etzkowitz et al., 2000). The following sections review each of these three missions of HE.

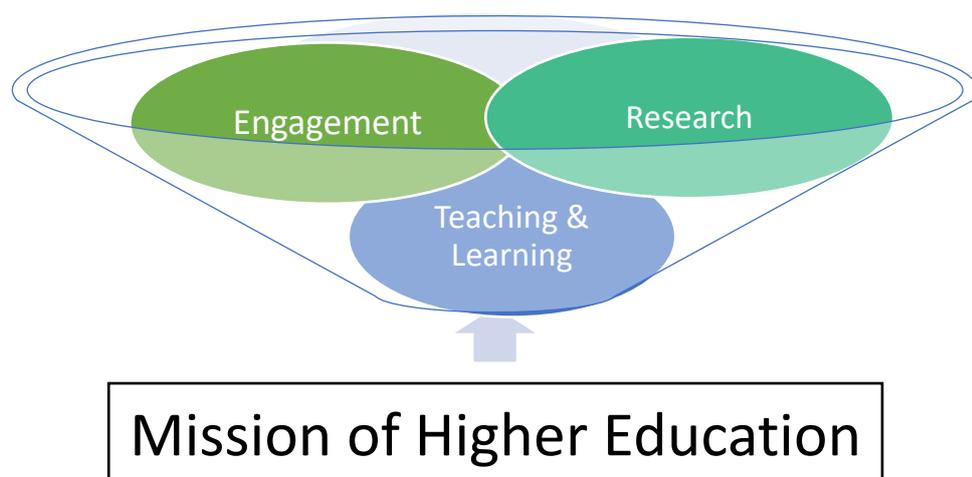


Figure 3.1: Mission of HE

(Source: Researcher)

3.2.1 Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning is the most fundamental process that lies at the core of all educational systems, regardless of institutional level, type, mission or discipline (The International Higher Education Teaching and Learning Association, 2015). This has been the case since the middle ages when European universities facilitated learning by teaching and have a mission to educate (Keeling, 2006). *‘Teaching is a core mission and therefore a core responsibility ...that teaching mission should appear as a resounding priority throughout every institution involved in the delivery of higher education - a daily lived priority and not just worthy words in a mission statement’* (McAleese et al., 2013, p.13). Teaching has become the core mission as learning is of fundamental importance for individual, team, organisational, institutional, and national system success (David et al., 2009).

Excellence in teaching and learning has been accepted as a keystone of any HE system (Higher Education Authority, 2014b). In modern societies increasing importance is being placed on learning and knowledge (Strehl, 2007); the challenge is to ensure that the teaching and learning experience is the best it can possibly be whilst coping with the ambition to greatly increase the numbers who enter and complete HE (McAleese et al., 2013).

3.2.2 Research

The significance and magnitude of knowledge creation through research has an important role in economic development and consequently research is also recognised as a keystone in the HE system (Flanagan et al., 2008). Research creates ‘innovations’, ‘new technologies’, ‘knowledge assets’ and ‘intellectual property’ (Keeling, 2006). Research has increasingly been the formative indicator of HE, playing a critical role in establishing a new educational marketplace. The contribution and prestige of HEIs is being determined more and more by the quality and quantity of their research (Hazelkorn, 2004).

The European Commission recognises HEIs among the ‘key stakeholders’ in European research. European universities employ one-third of European researchers and produce 80% of fundamental or basic research in Europe (Keeling, 2006). Basic or fundamental research has as its main purpose to improve knowledge and understanding without emphasis on application. This is in contrast to applied research, which uses scientific

theories to develop technology or techniques directed primarily towards a specific practical aim or objective (Abreu et al., 2008).

A study by Hazelkorn (2004, p.122) found that HEIs partake in research for the following reasons:

Sustain academic and professional reputation in a knowledge-based economy
Align academic activities with economic development of region
Provide economically useful skills with industrial relevance
Academic excellence in a professional context
Eligibility for specific funding opportunities
Retain and improve position

Figure 3.2: Why do research?

(Source: Hazelkorn (2004))

Hazelkorn (2004) also suggests that some research is conducted for reasons such as prestige, and tenure, and not necessarily to make a meaningful contribution to science, knowledge and understanding (D’Este and Patel, 2007).

3.2.3 Engagement

The interplay between regional industry and society and HEIs is long established. After the French revolution, governments started to reorganise the curricula of the universities. Of the many attempts to reorganise the universities, the Humboldtian reforms at the new University of Berlin, created in 1810, soon came to serve as a model for university reformers all over Europe, America and Japan (Arbo and Benneworth, 2007). Humboldt believed the University should be a place of permanent public exchange between all involved in the scientific process. Following this basic belief, universities were established on both sides of the Atlantic from the mid nineteenth century onwards, whose purpose was greater engagement with society. For example, in the US, the 1862 Morrill

Act established HEIs that focused on teaching practical agriculture, science, military science and engineering (without excluding classical studies). In the UK, the Victorian civic universities adopted the Humboldt University of Berlin model, which emphasised practical knowledge over academic learning. These universities were established to turn knowledge into practice and were distinct from the ancient English universities which concentrated on divinity and the liberal arts (Hart et al., 2009).

More recently, renewed political focus on localism and civic society, social pressures for corporate responsibility and transparency, and technological advances in social networking and knowledge mobilisation are all prompting the HEI to connect with a wider set of stakeholders (Mulvihill et al., 2011e). HEI engagement activity with its stakeholders is often termed ‘third mission’, yet it is often not a separate mission at all, but rather a way of doing, or a mind-set for accomplishing the social compact between the HEI and its host societies (Padfield et al., 2008b). HEIs now appear to be more consciously embracing a variety of different agendas and have open engagement with their community and wider society, which infuses every aspect of their mission. Engaged institutions have outward-facing systems and structures embedded into institutional activity, so that there are inward and outward flows of knowledge, staff, students and ideas between each institution and its external community (Hunt, 2011).

3.3 Defining engagement

This section reviews the definitions of engagement provided in the literature. It begins with broad definitions and concludes with the most appropriate definition for this research.

Definitions of engagement vary widely and often depend on a HEI’s history, location, ethos, administrative structures and leadership (Mulvihill et al., 2011b; Jongbloed et al., 2008). According to the Association of Commonwealth Universities: engagement implies strenuous, thoughtful, argumentative interaction with the non-HEI world in at least four spheres: setting HEIs’ aims, purposes and priorities; relating teaching and learning to the wider world; the back-and-forth dialogue between researchers and practitioners; and taking on wider responsibilities as neighbours and citizens (Hart et al., 2009).

Several overlapping terms have emerged to describe HEI and public engagement activities. These include ‘civic engagement’, ‘public engagement’, ‘community engagement’, ‘community outreach’, ‘community-HEI partnership’, and ‘knowledge exchange’ (Hart et al., 2009), ‘third task’, ‘third mission’, ‘third leg’ or ‘third stream activities’ (Arbo and Benneworth, 2007). In some contexts engagement is also conceptualised as part of other agendas, for example volunteering, widening participation and educational attainment, social inclusion, public engagement with the political process, global citizenship (Charles et al., 2009; Hart et al., 2009), or any activities aimed at transferring technology or knowledge to help either a company or a HEI to further pursue its activities (Ankrah et al., 2013).

Equally, many practitioners believe that engagement activity needs to be embedded as core to HEI’s work and cut across teaching, research, and service (Glass et al., 2010). Rather than an extraneous ‘third stream’, engagement is expected to be an integral part of the HEI’s mission and operation (Mulvihill et al., 2011b) and should seek to shift the mind sets of academics, to encourage them to turn knowledge into practice and policy, and to value community-based knowledge and skills (Pearce et al., 2007). Some researchers believe that turning knowledge into practice is epitomised in the concept of the ‘entrepreneurial HEI’ (Arbo and Benneworth 2007) (Arbo and Benneworth, 2007) allowing community engagement to add to the social capital of the neighbourhood (Pearce et al., 2007).

Engagement involves pooling the abilities, expertise and resources of numerous stakeholders to positively affect community (Granner and Sharpe, 2004). It involves generating, transmitting, applying, and preserving knowledge for the direct benefit of external audiences, in ways that are consistent with HEIs’ and their departments’ missions (Glass et al., 2010). A particular community of stakeholders is relevant for the HEI only if there is expectation on both sides that some service can be rendered or a mutually beneficial exchange can take place (Jongbloed et al., 2008). Engagement therefore is a highly positive step toward re-establishing what the HEI is intended to be, a community of scholars (Jongbloed et al., 2008; Kellogg Commission, 1999). Indeed many researchers contend that engagement activities are characterised by this mutual benefit and learning (Hanover, 2011); that some benefit accrues to the external stakeholders of a HEI, and at the same time benefits the HEI (Hart et al., 2009; Pearce et al., 2007; Kellogg Commission, 1999). Stakeholders listen and respond to the academic communities

(Jongbloed et al., 2008; Arbo and Benneworth, 2007) making it a two-way street, defined by mutual respect among the partners, for what each brings to the table (Kellogg Commission, 1999). The expression partnerships between ‘town and gown’ perhaps best conceptualises the broader engagement concept (Pearce et al., 2007).

Engagement differs from other HEIs’ activities involving local communities by both its goals and by the character of the relationship which the HEI aims to build, i.e. one of partnership and shared objectives based on mutually recognised societal and HEIs’ competences (Jongbloed et al., 2008; Pearce et al., 2007). Embedded in the engagement concept is a commitment to sharing and reciprocity (Kellogg Commission, 1999). Engagement partnerships are likely to be characterised by problems being defined together, sharing of common goals and agendas, definitions of success that are meaningful to both the HEI and their communities of stakeholders and developed together, and some pooling or leveraging of the HEI and public and private funds (Kellogg Commission, 1999). The collaboration arising out of this process is likely to be mutually beneficial (Kellogg Commission, 1999).

In the non-HEI world, engagement may be equated with corporate social responsibility (CSR). CSR may be understood as the need for organisations to consider the good of wider communities, local and global, within which they function in terms of the economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic impact of their way of conducting business. Parallels are found between CSR strategies and engagement strategies in HEIs. Both consider the good of the wider community and the other economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic effects of their activities, and how they conduct their business. *‘In higher education, CSR amongst other things relates to universities contributing to the solving of important problems faced by our society—problems that call for innovation of various kinds: social, economic and cultural.’* (Jongbloed et al., 2008, pp 318-319). As outlined, HEIs contributing to their regions is a key tenet of engagement strategy.

In summary, engagement in its purest form should not be considered a fringe activity as it seeks to provide some benefit to HEI stakeholders that is not an accidental bi-product in the pursuit of some other aim (Pearce et al., 2007). It implies interaction with the non-HEI world in: setting HEIs’ aims, purposes and priorities; relating teaching and learning to the wider world; improving interaction between researchers and practitioners; and taking on wider responsibilities as neighbours and citizens (Hart et al., 2009). For the

purposes of this research, the term engagement is used to describe a partnership relationship between the HEI and its stakeholders, based on mutually recognised benefits.

3.4 Types of engagement

This section explores the various types of engagement that HEIs undertake with external stakeholders, drawing mainly on research from two prior studies. Firstly, a framework proposed by Abreu et al. (2009) to categorise engagement. Secondly, a more recent study by Sheridan and Fallon (2015), focusing on types of engagement interactions. Other types of engagement found in the literature are also presented (Facer et al., 2012; Hart et al., 2009; Jongbloed et al., 2008; Padfield et al., 2008b; Arbo and Benneworth, 2007; Pearce et al., 2007; Charles et al., 2003; Kellogg Commission, 1999).

As part of a research project into the impact of HEIs on the regional economies, having surveyed over twenty two thousand academics, Abreu et al. (2009) conclude that at that point in time academics in the UK are engaged in a wide range of interactions with a wide range of partners. Although they found a high degree of formal technology transfer through patents, licences and spin-outs this was only one part of a wide knowledge exchange spectrum. As a result, these researchers conclude that there are four categories of HEI engagement interaction with external stakeholders: people based activities, community based activities, commercialisation activities, and problem solving activities. Figure 3.3 below summarises the types of activities involved under each of these four categories of engagement interaction.

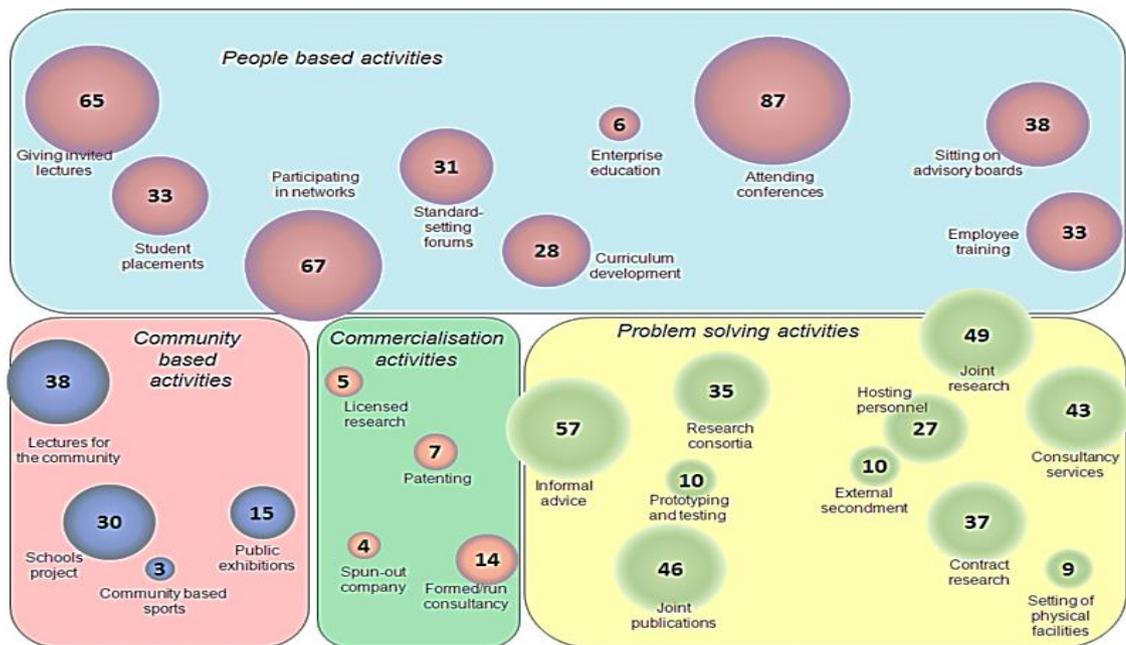


Figure 3.3: Types of engagement interaction

(Source: Abreu et al. (2009))

The numbers in Figure 3.3 indicate the percentage of respondents in each category reporting each type of interaction. As can be seen in the Abreu et al. (2009) framework, higher numbers of respondents highlighted people based activities than other categories of interaction. Therefore an alternative framework that analysed further these people based interactions was considered for this study.

This consideration led to an Irish study by Sheridan and Fallon (2015) that found that many of the same types of engagement are undertaken by Irish HEIs. These researchers whilst evaluating HE response to the need for enhanced engagement with enterprise and communities, recognised that ‘...some commentators focus on the science-based discovery and the development of new enterprises or the bringing of new products to market and measure quantifiable indicators such as spin-outs, licences and patents. This may have resulted in a concentration of effort in the realm of university business cooperation on those aspects which resulted in ‘hard’ outcomes ... Other commentators include the provision of a workforce with relevant skills into the regional labour market as an important element of university-enterprise interaction, while others will focus more on the community-based interactions including service learning and volunteering’ (Sheridan and Fallon, 2015, p.4). Sheridan and Fallon (2015) refined the various types of

engagement in this longitudinal study by tracking the nature of interactions sought by external organisations with the case HEI over a number of years, and analysing the types of interactions experienced in practice. Based on their analysis, Sheridan and Fallon (2015) propose a refinement of engagement interactions into three main categories, graduate formation, workforce development, and research and innovation, see Figure 3.4 below. This refinement sets the study apart from previous studies as it examines engagement interactions from the external stakeholders' point of view.

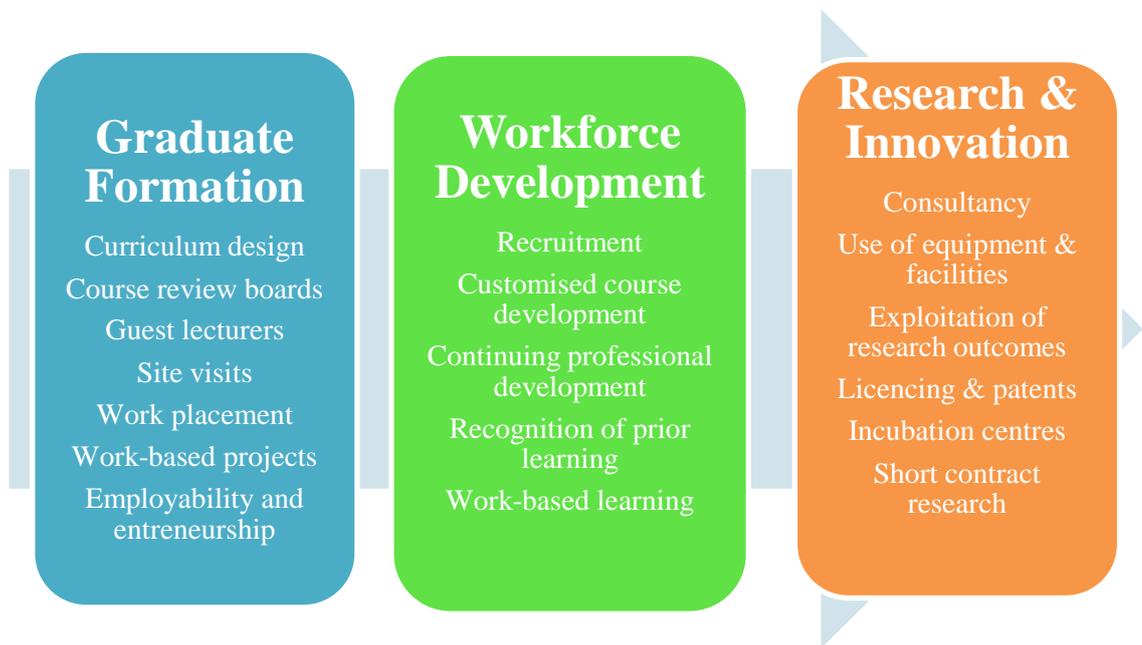


Figure 3.4: Types of interactions

(Source: Sheridan and Fallon (2015))

The framework, developed by Sheridan and Fallon (2015) (see Figure 3.4), is the result of the Roadmap for Employment-Academic Partnership (REAP) project, funded by the Irish government. REAP project is a collaborative project aimed at developing and validating a model for engagement and partnership between HEIs, employers and enterprises (Sheridan and Linehan, 2011). The intention of the REAP project is that enterprises will view HEIs as key service providers and strategic partners. The Sheridan and Fallon (2015) framework has been adopted and included in the National Skills Strategy 2025 (Department of Education and Skills, 2015) and by the case HEI in its engagement strategy.

The Sheridan and Fallon (2015) framework was selected for this research because it is based on a comprehensive study of HEI engagement with stakeholders in an Irish context. The framework was created and refined as part of a longitudinal study to capture the wide variety engagement interactions of Irish HEIs with business and communities stakeholder groups. In recognition of the significance of the Sheridan and Fallon (2015) study, their framework has been used to inform Irish government policy and is being applied by Irish HEIs when preparing their engagement strategy (Sheridan and O'Connor, 2016).

The framework aims to facilitate understanding of the types of interactions between HEIs and two stakeholder groups, enterprise (business and industry) and communities, and therefore focuses specifically on interactions between academic and enterprise stakeholders, both in the for-profit and not-for-profit sectors (Sheridan and Fallon, 2015). However, often engagement is driven by diverse and sometimes conflicting purposes (Facer et al., 2012), which have been excluded by the Sheridan and Fallon (2015) study. It is clear that the social environment is a network within which HEIs must integrate and interact if they want to survive (Magalhaes and Amaral, 2000). As a result, other categories of engagement have been identified in the literature, including types of engagement identified in the Abreu et al. (2009) framework, and described by the researcher as: social enhancement and market advancement. The sections that follow discuss five categories of engagement, comprising the Sheridan and Fallon (2015), and two other categories, social enhancement and market advancement.

3.4.1 Graduate formation

Graduate formation involves equipping students with '*...the employability skills to make a successful and impactful transition into the workplace*' (Sheridan and Linehan, 2013, p.9) and '*...with the academic excellence, practitioner knowledge and entrepreneurial skills and capabilities...*' (Sheridan and Fallon, 2015, p.1). For HEIs this involves providing an enriched student experience by broadening access to internships and various kinds of off-campus learning opportunities (Kellogg Commission, 1999).

The resulting interdisciplinary and situated nature of learning from engaging with stakeholders, provides a rich knowledge development environment for graduates (Sheridan and O'Connor, 2016) as students' learning is enhanced from the social situation in which the learning occurs. Sometimes external learning is a complement to academic knowledge; sometimes non-academic perspectives provide the real world dimension that

would otherwise be absent (Pearce et al., 2007). Forming employable graduates requires HEIs to understand the needs and concerns of industry, or other external stakeholders, and gain access to the tacit knowledge of the ways in which organisations go about their business (Charles et al., 2003).

According to Sheridan and Fallon (2015), the types of engagement that can be classified as graduate formation include engagement on curriculum development, course review panels, guest lectures, site visits, work placement, work-based projects, and employability and entrepreneurship. The Abreu et al. (2009) framework includes graduate formation activities (guest lectures, student placements, curriculum development) as people based activities. Drawn from the literature, Figure 3.5 provides a definition of each type of interaction and the result of such engagement.

Type of Engagement	Definition	Result of engagement
Curriculum development	Designing the content and methods of teaching and learning for socio-economic and labour market needs (Bleiklie, 2001).	Curriculum change including the development of new teaching modules and materials at both undergraduate and postgraduate level (Mulvihill et al., 2011a).
Course review panels	Panels are required to make judgement on the standards, content, relevance and other matters relating to a course (Norton, 2012).	Inform the goals and objectives of programmes (Lillis and Lynch, 2013).
Guest lectures	Delivery of the most up-to-date and relevant expertise by external speakers (Department of Education and Skills, 2015).	Practice experts become partners in the delivery and assessment of learning (Sheridan and Murphy, 2012)
Site visits	HEI staff and students visit employers' sites (Acworth, 2008).	<i>'...to see and learn what we do ... the day to day work of their graduates,understand our organisation better... feel the culture and experience. Get a better understanding of what we do' (McGann and Anderson, 2012, p.96).</i>
Work placement	Gaining experience on the job (Sheridan and Linehan, 2011).	Key skills gained range from personal and social skills, communication, problem solving, creativity and

Type of Engagement	Definition	Result of engagement
		organisational skills, to job specific skills, students learn about the world of work, explore possible career options, develop skills for employability, and network with potential employers (Department of Education and Skills, 2015).
Work based projects	Workplaces play an active role in providing real spaces for learning in real life projects (Campbell et al., 2010).	Opportunities to develop interpersonal and generic skills and the ability to put theoretical knowledge into practice, thereby enhancing future employability prospects (Sheridan and Linehan, 2011).
Employability and entrepreneurship	Attention is given to the professional relevance of programmes and labour market demands (Mora et al., 2010; Magalhaes and Amaral, 2000).	Flexible programmes are developed with enterprises to meet labour market needs (Magalhaes and Amaral, 2000). Entrepreneurship viewed as a viable career option. Entrepreneurship skills learned that develop capacity to organise projects and provide access to networks of people (Pearce et al., 2007)

Figure 3.5: Types of graduate formation engagement interactions

(Source: Researcher - adapted from literature)

In summary, graduate formation is the primary role of any HEI (Sheridan and Fallon, 2015) so unsurprisingly much engagement is done with external stakeholders to this end. External stakeholders are engaged to help HEIs with curriculum development and course review. They are invited into the HEI for guest lectures and equally students visit their sites, for short review visits and for work placement and work based projects. Finally,

HEIs work with stakeholders to provide graduates with employability and entrepreneurship skills.

3.4.2 Workforce development

In terms of workforce development, increased emphasis is being put on education and training, skills of the labour force and lifelong learning (Arbo and Benneworth, 2007). Workforce development is one of the national aims for HE in many European countries, including Ireland (Eurydice Report, 2014). In Ireland education policy states that *'Our long term objectives are to increase the levels of overall educational attainment in the workforce and increase participation of under-represented groups in higher education.'* (Department of Education, 2011, p.12).

The primary source of skilled labour supply is, and will continue to be, achieved through the training, development, and learning of individuals. In effect, from an employer's perspective, the focus is on *'...workforce (or professional) development – the upskilling and reskilling of an organisation's employees at a higher level'* (Sheridan and Murphy, 2012, p.1). According to Sheridan and Fallon (2015), workforce development means exploring and responding to emerging workforce reskilling and upskilling for regional and national needs.

According to Sheridan and Fallon (2015), the types of engagement interaction that can be classified as workforce development include; recruitment of graduates, customised course development, continuing professional development, recognition of prior learning, and work-based learning. These types of engagement interactions (enterprise education, employee training) are included in the Abreu et al. (2009) as people based activities. As before, Figure 3.6 draws from the literature, providing a definition of each type of interaction and the result of such engagement.

Type of Engagement	Definition	Result of engagement
Recruitment of graduates	HEIs as sites for recruiting trained and skilled problem solvers (Bruneel et al., 2009).	Helps companies meet their recruitment objectives as students see those companies as legitimate employer options (Philbin, 2011; The Gallup Organisation, 2010; Bruneel et al., 2009)
Customised course development	Targeted training courses to enhance technical knowledge in different areas (Philbin, 2011; Kellogg Commission, 1999).	<p>Innovative and context sensitive targeted courses can meet specific education and training needs for external stakeholders (Sheridan and Murphy, 2012).</p> <p>Income is generated for the HEI through the sale of specialised courses (Johnstone et al., 1998).</p>
Continuing professional development	<p>Continuing education and professional developments which can be:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Formal, enabling students to retain a licence to practice or gain membership of a professional, statutory or regulatory body; 2. Task-focused, for instance selecting particular modules to tackle a specific business problem (Higher Education Funding Council for England, 2013; Norton, 2012). 	<p>Meet the growing demand from career professionals and contribute to the development of people employed in their region (Charles et al., 2009; Gibbons, 2001).</p> <p>Contribute to people’s wellbeing, to creating a more inclusive society, and to supporting a vibrant and sustainable economy (Department of Education and Skills, 2015).</p>

Type of Engagement	Definition	Result of engagement
Recognition of prior learning	The system for recognising and awarding or transferring credit to learners on the basis of learning that has occurred prior to admission to a particular programme (Department of Education and Skills, 2010).	It affords opportunities to those already in the workforce to engage in lifelong learning in a meaningful sense, building on and not repeating, existing learning (Sheridan and Murphy, 2012). RPL has a key role for unqualified practitioners in the current workforce who want to achieve an academic award and for qualified practitioners who wish to progress to higher levels (Department of Education and Skills, 2010).
Work-based learning	Aims to support the development of specific work related skills and knowledge (Charles et al., 2003), Requires conscious reflection on actual experiences translating and interpreting between the practice and theoretical domains (Sheridan and Murphy, 2012).	Has the potential to contribute significantly to employability and situation-specific skills (Sheridan and Murphy, 2012).

Figure 3.6: Types of workforce development engagement interactions

(Source: Researcher - adapted from literature)

In summary, five types of HEI engagement interactions are considered to be workforce development. The recruitment of graduates, customised courses for stakeholders as well as continuing professional development courses. HEIs also engage for workforce development by recognising prior and work-based learning.

3.4.3 Research & innovation

Involvement in research is an important business engagement activity for HEIs (D’Este and Patel, 2007) as industry and other private and public institutions increasingly demand applicable research results and direct technology transfer according to their needs (Strehl, 2007). Engaging with external stakeholders exposes HEI researchers to a wide range of technological problems identified by industry, opening an array of research avenues that otherwise would not have emerged (D’Este and Patel, 2007). Exposure to frequent and varied types of interactions with industry provides the basis on which researchers acquire the capabilities necessary to bridge the gap between scientific research and application, resulting in further integration between external stakeholders and HEIs (D’Este and Patel, 2007). HEIs play a role in major world issues that resonate in their local and regional communities in creating human capital and carrying out research and innovation (Garlick and Langworthy, 2008).

According to Sheridan and Fallon (2015), the types of engagement interactions that may be classified as research & innovation, can be summarised to include: consultancy, use of equipment and facilities, exploitation of research outcomes, licencing and patents, incubation centres, and contract research. The commercialisation and problem solving activities shown in the Abreu et al. (2009) framework (see Figure 3.3) may be considered as research and innovation type engagements. Figure 3.7 provides a definition of each type of engagement and the result of such interactions, as noted in the literature.

Type of Engagement	Definition	Result of engagement
Consultancy	Intellectual input from the HEI to the client, but with new understanding being the main desired impact (Padfield et al., 2008a). It is the HEIs’ innovative application of existing knowledge on behalf of an outside party (Higher Education Funding Council for England, 2016).	Helps in strategic planning and development, with particular emphasis on business re-engineering, including company benchmarking (Charles et al., 2003).

Type of Engagement	Definition	Result of engagement
Use of equipment and facilities	Sharing and use of existing resources and the creation of new physical facilities such as new laboratories (D'Este and Patel, 2007).	External partner benefits from and gains access to facilities that they may not have the resources to secure in-house. HEIs benefit from understanding the potential real world applications of their research (Higher Education Funding Council for England, 2016).
Exploitation of research outcomes	Can occur through open publication, intellectual property rights, spin outs and technology transfer and the other types of engagement mentioned herein.	Helps to accelerate scientific progress, supports the economic development of the country and preserves its competitiveness, and re-finances future research activities. In 2013, there were 30 spin-out companies, 115 licences and 129 patents from Irish HEIs (Cassells et al., 2015).
Licencing and patents	Licencing refers to university originated technology being volunteered to a company. A patent is a set of rights granted by the State to an inventor in exchange for public disclosure of a technological solution (Abreu et al., 2008).	Licensing income for HEIs (Salter et al., 2010). Academics can benefit financially from patenting and licencing their research (Padfield et al., 2008b).
Incubation centres	The creation of new spin-out ventures and the support of small local start-ups (Miller et al., 2014).	Can stimulate a regular stream of new firms (Charles et al., 2009). Facilitate the development and testing of new technology and the sharing of development costs (Caldera and Debande, 2010).

Type of Engagement	Definition	Result of engagement
Contract research	Commissioned and targeted-research agreements between industry and academic researchers involving formal agreements and paid for by a sponsor (D’Este and Patel, 2007; Lester, 2005; Gibbons, 2001).	Helps develop multi-disciplinary and multi-technology competences (Bekkers and Bodas Freitas, 2008). An increased share of universities’ funds come from contract research (Jongbloed et al., 2008).

Figure 3.7: Research and innovation types of engagement interactions

(Source: Researcher adapted from literature)

In conclusion, engaging with external stakeholders on research and innovation is probably the most talked about form of engagement (Abreu et al., 2009) because of the prestige it brings to academics and the income funding streams for HEIs. Such engagement interaction may involve consultancy, the use of equipment and facilities by external stakeholders, exploitation of research, licencing and patents, the provision of incubation centres and contract research.

3.4.4 Social enhancement

Engagement for social enhancement is undertaken for the good of society and draws on the concept of the social contract proposed by many researchers (Jongbloed et al., 2008; Padfield et al., 2008b; Arbo and Benneworth, 2007). The types of interaction that comprise engaging for social enhancement, relate to social cohesion and improving the economic health of the community (Bologna Follow-Up Group, 2014), and are discussed in detail in the sections that follow.

3.4.4.1 Engaging for social cohesion

Social cohesion includes the spread of democratic values and respect for multiculturalism, the promotion of political participation, the strengthening of civil society and promotion of democratic governance (J.I.C.A., 2005). Social cohesion is important as more cohesive, equitable and democratic local communities, create improved capacity to analyse and address local problems and conflicts (Pearce et al., 2007). The quality of

community life may be enhanced by putting the HEI to work on contemporary problems of the day (Hart et al., 2009; Kellogg Commission, 1999) and may lead to the development of knowledge-based social enterprise spin-outs in the arts and social sciences (Mulvihill et al., 2011a) and entrepreneurial solutions to social problems (Mulvihill et al., 2011b).

HEI-community engagement results in shared services and shared infrastructure (Mulvihill et al., 2011c) and ‘*As social networks and social trust are enhanced over time, social capital will accumulate. This is likely to contribute to more cohesive, equitable and democratic local communities...*’ (Pearce et al., 2007, p.5). Included in this category are the types of engagement interactions involving sharing of resources (Hart and Northmore, 2011; Abreu et al., 2009; Charles et al., 2009; Bromley, 2006; Lester, 2005; Gibbons, 2001), public events and lectures (Abreu et al., 2009), staff volunteering activities, and outreach programmes (Pollard et al., 2013b; Hart and Northmore, 2011; Padfield et al., 2008a). Figure 3.8 below provides a definition of each type of engagement and the result of such interaction as described in the literature.

Type of engagement	Definition	Result of engagement
Sharing of resources	Sharing facilities including sports facilities, libraries, theatre productions, public lectures (Pearce et al., 2007), sharing energies, expertise and cultural ventures, intellectual, architectural, aesthetic, artistic, athletic, recreational and medical resources. Joining in community initiatives, and contributing to regional planning and regeneration (Hart and Northmore, 2011; Abreu et al., 2009; Charles et al., 2009; Lester, 2005; Gibbons, 2001).	HEIs become more useful to society (Bromley, 2006; Gibbons, 2001). (Note: Sharing resources also helps broaden access and compete for students and so is included also in section 3.4.5.2).
Public events and lectures	Dance, drama, performance, film and public lectures (Higher Education Funding Council for England, 2013).	Members of community not involved directly with the HEI feel comfortable

Type of engagement	Definition	Result of engagement
	Public lectures, debates or think-tanks where areas of expertise overlap with areas of public interest or concern (Padfield et al., 2008b).	and worthy to make better use of the resources that the HEI can offer (Pearce et al., 2007).
Staff volunteering activities	A cadre of potential volunteers, and the broader HEIs' community are interlinked (Charles et al., 2003) and undertake activities such as fundraising; service in organisations and community groups; charity events; schools support; disaster relief; and development aid (Padfield et al., 2008a).	A useful resource for community groups (Charles et al., 2003). Community service is evidence of good institutional citizenship and an ingredient in good community and public relations (Holland, 1997).
Outreach programmes	Operation of informal learning programmes (Padfield et al., 2008b), as well as the use of college faculty to support regional education and provide other intellectual support (Papenhausen and Einstein, 2006).	Creates economic development initiatives, supports service and service learning efforts in key areas such as literacy, health care, hunger, homelessness, the environment and senior services (Bromley, 2006).

Figure 3.8: Types of engagement interactions to create social cohesion

(Source: Researcher - adapted from literature)

In summary, HEI involvement in engagement interactions to foster social cohesion is important for their communities. HEIs contribute to social cohesion by sharing resources, providing public activities and lectures, staff volunteering activities and establishment of outreach programmes.

3.4.4.2 Engaging to improve the economic health of the community

The role of the HEI may be viewed as a significant local stakeholder and employer, and provider of a host of intellectual resources that could appreciably improve the social and economic well-being of its community (Mulvihill et al., 2011e; Bromley, 2006). Community wellbeing is the combination of social, economic, environmental, cultural, and political conditions that are essential for communities to flourish and fulfil their potential. Improvements in these conditions may be realised as HEIs are one of the few institutions with the critical mass, spatial presence, focus on knowledge creation and distribution, and international connectivity to contribute to the sustainability of the communities in which they are located (Garlick and Langworthy, 2008). These resources can be put to good use by communities who have fewer available to cope with the impacts of globalisation (Lester, 2005). As a result, HEIs have to engage more and use their resources better in delivering prosperity to their regions (Mulvihill et al., 2011b; Arbo and Benneworth, 2007). Recently, governments have identified the possibilities of better resource usage and have become increasingly active in pressing the HEIs within their jurisdictions to contribute to local economic development (Glass et al., 2010; Bruneel et al., 2009; Hart et al., 2009; Lester, 2005) through innovation, economic growth and wealth creation (Kitson, 2009).

Governments and regulatory authorities are now aware that engaged institutions can help tackle economic disadvantage and promote sustainable development in their region. Engaged HEIs, working in partnership with their regions (Hart et al., 2009), act as an *'engine'*, *'powerhouse'*, *'driver'*, *'dynamo'*, *'booster'*, *'accelerator'* or *'lever'* for community growth and prosperity (Arbo and Benneworth, 2007). Economic disadvantage may also be addressed because HEIs, acting as levers, may attract other key resources to the region, including firms and educated individuals who may want to locate close by, as well as financiers, entrepreneurs and others seeking to exploit new business opportunities emanating from the campus (Bromley, 2006; Lester, 2005). HEIs bring in external resources to regions, which combine with other external resources (for example, government funding, and venture finance), to create a local buzz (Arbo and Benneworth, 2007) that attracts even more resources. New business start-ups, established as a result of HEI student and staff research, are also an important mechanism for economic activity (Di Gregorio and Scott, 2003). Hence, gathering the necessary resources and establishing

a company to exploit new technology is easier when the HEI's support enhances the entrepreneur's credibility (Di Gregorio and Scott, 2003).

From the literature, the types of engagement interactions that may improve the economic health of the community include: engagement to meet regional skill needs and public access to knowledge (Abreu et al., 2009; Lester, 2005). Figure 3.9 provides a definition of each type of engagement and the result of such interaction, as noted in the literature.

Types of Engagement	Definition	Result of engagement
Meet regional skill needs	Upskilling and retraining to remain relevant in the labour market as industries, jobs and required skills and competences are constantly evolving (Cassells, 2016).	Provision of training packages to exploit knowledge bases, such as supporting non-traditional learners and encouraging education in emerging fields (Arbo and Benneworth, 2007).
Public access to knowledge	<p>Creating and transmitting knowledge through established curricula, access to individual experts, or through one-off events such as science fairs (Hart et al., 2009).</p> <p>Recognising the multiple sites of knowledge and bringing these together to address pressing social needs (Mulvihill et al., 2011b).</p>	<p>Generation of ideas that later become the focus of problem-solving both in industry and in HEIs (Lester, 2005).</p> <p>Support participants to share experiences, learn from each other around particular areas of common interest and address those wider conceptual and infrastructural issues that cannot be addressed by academics and community partners alone (Facer et al., 2012).</p>

Figure 3.9: Types of engagement interactions to improve economic health of the community

(Source: Researcher - adapted from literature)

In summary, engaging to improve the economic health of the community has led HEIs to engage in a broad range of interactions to meet the skill needs of their region and allow public access to their resources to help the stakeholders in their region.

Hence, HEIs have a significant role to play in the social environment in which they operate by enhancing social cohesion and improving the economic health of their communities.

3.4.5 Market advancement

The types of engagement interactions that are included in market advancement are those that help the HEI create and maintain a positive impression (Mora et al., 2010). This positive impression can increase the market of available students and broaden the diversity of students choosing a particular HEI. The types of engagement interactions in this category comprise, engaging to justify funding and engaging to broaden access and compete for students.

3.4.5.1 Engaging to justify funding

As discussed in section 2.4.2, there is increasing pressure on HEIs to demonstrate greater accountability for public funding received (Ankrah et al., 2013). The growing emphasis on accountability is coming from trustees, legislators, donors and policymakers (Kellogg Commission, 1999). The drive for accountability has led engagement responsibilities of HEIs to feature increasingly in audit assessments (Garlick and Langworthy, 2008) with phrases such as ‘public benefit’ and ‘impact on society’ dominating HE policy statements (Mulvihill et al., 2011d).

The requirement to justify funding, by linking performance to it, and be accountable for that funding, has been a key driver of engagement with external stakeholders (Hart et al., 2009; Pearce et al., 2007). HEIs gain legitimacy (defined as acceptance/validity) (See also section 4.5.1.1) by working with communities and can become increasingly valued by their communities for their approach to research and scholarship. As a result they become less intimidating, elitist and impenetrable edifices, gaining the trust of their communities, and breaking down barriers to public involvement thus ensuring that they are more relevant to society. The aloofness and impenetrability of the HEI is being slowly reduced (Pearce et al., 2007) ensuring society has a positive impression (Mora et al., 2010).

The types of engagement interactions that HEIs undertake for legitimacy and to justify and guarantee future funding include: allowing public access to their resources such as sports facilities, laboratories and lecture theatres (Abreu et al., 2009; Charles et al., 2009) and; involvement of HEI staff in government regulation and policy committees (Hart and Northmore, 2011; Charles et al., 2009). Figure 3.10 provides a definition of each type of engagement and the result of such interactions, as noted in the literature.

Type of engagement	Definition	Result of engagement
Public access to HEI resources such as sports facilities, laboratories and lecture theatres	HEIs allow access to their substantial physical resources in terms of grounds, residential accommodation, museums, event centres, meeting spaces and high quality sports, arts and science facilities (Hart et al., 2009; Padfield et al., 2008b; Bromley, 2006).	Increased public support for the HEI, a better informed public, and improved health and wellbeing (Hart and Northmore, 2011).
Involvement of HEI staff in government regulation and policy committees	HEI staff join a wide range of government committees that formulate regulation and policy for education and in general (Cassells, 2016; Hart and Northmore, 2011; Charles et al., 2009).	HEIs have become more useful to society ensuring legitimacy and future funding (Bromley, 2006; Gibbons, 2001).

Figure 3.10: Types of engagement interactions to justify funding

(Source: Researcher - adapted from literature)

In summary, engaging to justify funding allows the HEI to gain legitimacy by allowing public access to their resources, and involving their staff in government regulation and policy committees.

3.4.5.2 Engaging to broaden access and compete for students.

As noted in Chapter 2 (section 2.5), broadening access to HE has been a longstanding policy priority in Ireland. European policy documents have set targets for general

participation, as well as targets relating to mature students, disadvantaged socio-economic groups and students with disabilities (Eurydice Report, 2014). The desire to broaden access means HEIs need to respond to the needs of older men and women, minorities, and urban and suburban communities (Kellogg Commission, 1999). Broadening access involves alternate forms of educational delivery, to different types of students in an interdisciplinary fashion with the provision of supports to make the transition to HE easier for disadvantaged groups (Higher Education Authority, 2015a).

Alternate forms of educational delivery, are paralleled by increasing income generating logic (Pearce et al., 2007) as HEIs must become more aggressive in raising funds (Kellogg Commission, 1999) due to significant budget cuts in recent years. With the introduction of higher student fees, a significant cut to teaching budgets and new regulatory roles for HE authorities (Mulvihill et al., 2011d), the HE sector has become even more competitive. *‘Competing successfully depends partly on being able to do the same thing that rivals do only better, and partly on being able to differentiate oneself from one’s rivals’* (Lester, 2005, p.29).

A well-designed, effectively implemented strategy for engaging with the local economy can provide competitive advantage (Lester, 2005). Such engagement offers HEIs extensive access to a wide range of expertise and an enriched student experience (Kitson, 2009) as well as the possibility of attracting students who positively look for the competences in cultural interaction (Hart et al., 2009). Furthermore, association of a HEI with a reputable company (Ankrah et al., 2013), and graduating more employable students, increases the HEI’s prestige and may result in increased new student recruitment in the long term (Mulvihill et al., 2011d).

The types of engagement interactions necessary to broaden access and compete for students include; school projects (Abreu et al., 2009; Padfield et al., 2008a), sharing of resources (Abreu et al., 2009; Lester, 2005), widening participation initiatives such as broadening of entry routes, and engaging directly with prospective students (Charles et al., 2003). It should be noted that, while these types of engagement have a role in community development as advocated by government policy, they also have a role in growing student numbers for HEIs. Figure 3.11 provides a definition of each type of engagement and the result of such interactions, as noted in the literature.

Type of engagement	Definition	Result of engagement
School projects	The provision of specific events for schools on HEIs' campuses, including dedicated facilities for school-level science, visits from HEI staff to schools, and placements for HEI students in the classroom as classroom support and student mentors (Charles et al., 2009).	Broadens access by ensuring that students are encouraged to apply to HE to realise their potential (Charles et al., 2009).
Sharing of resources	See Figure 3.8	
Widening participation	Widening HEI access for new types of learners such as: the first generation in many families from under-represented regions and socio economic groups as well as those already in the workforce, and adults outside of the education system looking to further their education and skills (Cassells, 2016).	Ensures the availability of capabilities, skills and talent across the economy. Provides opportunity for all to reach their full potential (Cassells, 2016).
Prospective students	Provision of good advice to those at a formative stage in their lives where demand for HE is increasing and where many new students have few cultural reference points in their family background to help them set an appropriate academic path (Eurydice Report, 2014).	Better preparation, wiser choices, student retention, and student satisfaction are self-evident (McAleese et al., 2013).

Figure 3.11: Types of engagement interactions to broaden access and compete for students

(Source: Researcher - adapted from literature)

In summary, HEI engagement interactions to broaden access to HE and to compete for students involves school projects, sharing of resources with local stakeholder groups, initiatives to widen participation and advising prospective students.

In conclusion, the types of engagement interactions of HEIs with their external stakeholders are diverse. The framework by Sheridan and Fallon (2015) was used to identify three types of engagement discussed in this section: graduate formation, workforce development and research and innovation. Other types of engagement were identified in the literature and classified by the researcher as social enhancement, and market advancement. These two additional classifications have been added to the Sheridan and Fallon (2015) framework to provide a more comprehensive picture of the types of HEI stakeholder engagement identified in the literature and discussed further in Chapter 4. Figure 3.12 below shows the Sheridan and Fallon (2015) framework extended to include the five types of engagement arising from the literature.

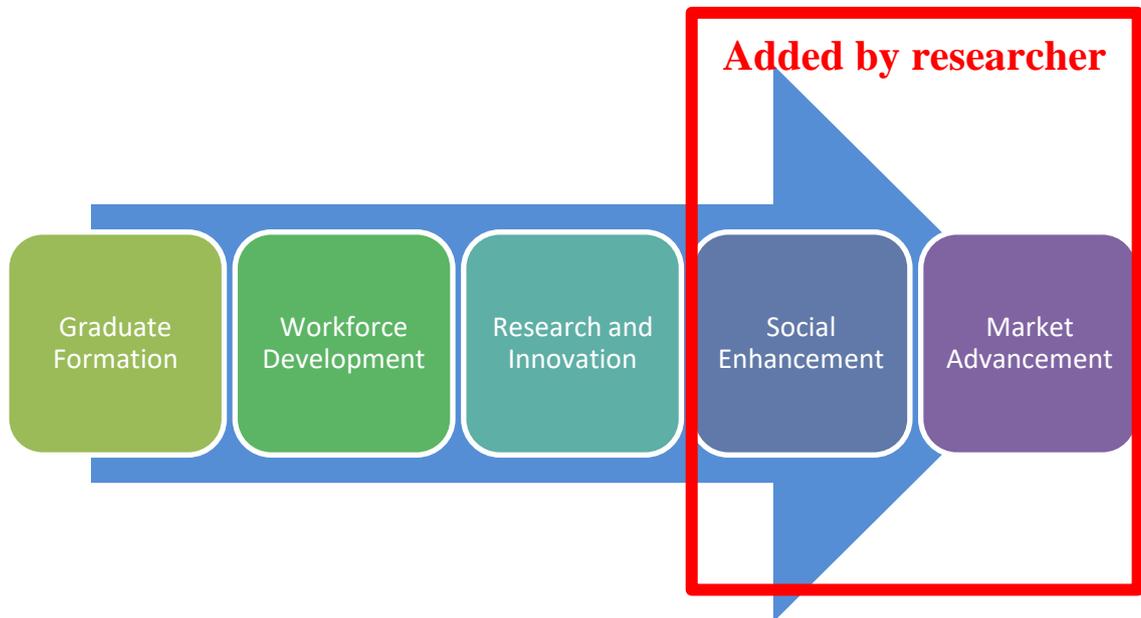


Figure 3.12: Types of interaction - extended framework

(Source: Adapted by Researcher from Sheridan and Fallon (2015))

The next section explores performance measurement in HE in general, and more specifically measurement of engagement performance in HEIs.

3.5 Measuring performance

This section presents an overview of performance measurement in HE. First, performance measurement is distinguished from performance management, outlining their differences

but highlighting their interdependence. Second, the rationale for performance measurement in organisations is considered and there is a brief discussion of measuring performance in relation to HE and its three missions; teaching and learning, research, and engagement. The section concludes with a review of the selection of performance measures.

Performance may be defined as the accomplishment of a given task measured against pre-set known standards (Wadongo and Abdel-Kader, 2014). If the given task is not accomplished or standards are not attained, the appropriate response is to take action to bring performance back to plan (Otley, 2003). Performance management and performance measurement are two actions used to realign this mismatch. They can be viewed as two sides of the same coin that cannot be separated because performance management creates the context for performance measurement but in turn is influenced by the outcomes of the measurement process (Pollard et al., 2013b). In summary, the difference between the two is that performance management systems aim at closing significant performance gaps, while performance measurement systems encompass collecting, analysing, and interpreting performance data.

Yu et al. (2009) describe performance management as activities and processes that provide the environment for assessment and comprises the practices that create the culture for excellence. These practices and culture include activities such as training, management styles, attitudes, and incentives that influence performance (Pollard et al., 2013b). Performance management literature is often used to refer to individual performance management or appraisal schemes, focusing disproportionately on the individual rather than the individual and the organisation (Kloot and Martin, 2000).

On the other hand, the literature on performance measurement is much more extensive than the literature on performance management and is often concerned with the validity of the measurement system rather than how the information will be used to change and improve (Kloot and Martin, 2000). Much literature is in agreement that performance measurement can include both the formal mechanisms, processes, systems, and networks used by organisations, and also the more subtle, yet important, informal controls that are applied (Ferreira and Otley, 2009). Both formal and informal performance measurement is used by organisations for conveying the key objectives and goals, for assisting the strategic process and for ongoing management through analysis, planning, measurement,

control, rewarding, and broadly managing performance, and for supporting and facilitating organisational learning and change (Ferreira and Otley, 2009). Peckham (2014) contends that informal performance measurement systems substitute for and/or complement formal performance measurement, offering rich insights. Furthermore, where the activities of an organisation can be observed, the need for a formal account would decrease (Gray et al., (2006) quoted in McConville and Hyndman (2015)). The wide ranging use of performance measurement systems means that they can help organisations to continuously react and adapt to external changes in demands from stakeholders (Taticchi et al., 2010). Other uses of performance measurement systems are discussed in the next section.

3.5.1 Rationale for measuring performance

The rationale that organisations use for implementing a performance measurement system relates to the system's ability to direct attention to what is important to the organisation. Many studies of organisations have found that things that are measured are considered important, while things that are not measured are generally of less importance (Loch and Tapper, 2002; Waggoner et al., 1999) or, put another way, what gets measured generally gets done. And what is not measured may suffer in comparison (Otley, 2003). Therefore, implementing a performance measurement system helps an organisation meet the targets that it considers important. This view is supported by Otley (2003) who concludes that the purpose of performance measurement is to provide information to help managers manage. Performance measurement can support a broad range of managerial activities through information provision (Ferreira and Otley, 2009), ensuring that decision makers have the information that enables them to take effective actions (Grosswiele et al., 2013).

As well as its information provision function, performance measurement creates understanding, moulds behaviour, and improves competitiveness (Gunasekaran et al., 2005) by allowing an organisation to align its strategic activities to its strategic plan. Atkinson et al. (2001) describe performance measurement as '*a major management accounting and control process used to evaluate the performance of a manager, activity, or organisational unit*' (Atkinson et al., 2001, p.43). Measuring performance is also considered a key element of new public management reforms (see section 2.4.1) and may

be used for various purposes: steering and controlling the organisation, establishing rules of conduct, and disseminating a culture of accountability (Arnaboldi and Azzone, 2010). To align these objectives with the performance measurement system '*...we always have to ask ourselves the question: are those the right measures for us?*' (Pollard et al., 2013b, p.45).

In summary, the main reasons for measuring performance include: directing attention to what is important to the organisation; providing information to managers to support activities; creating understanding and moulding behaviour to improve competitiveness; and aligning activities with strategy.

3.5.2 Performance measurement in HE

The mission of HE, as discussed in Section 3.2 above, encompasses three inter-connected elements: teaching and learning; research; and engagement with wider society (Hunt, 2011). In order to align HEIs' activities with this mission, performance metrics should adequately cover the broad strategic direction under each of these elements and measure progress against their individual strategic objectives (Pollard et al., 2013b; Sayed, 2013). This section discusses the rationale for measuring performance in HE, in general, and more specifically, in relation to teaching and learning, research and engagement.

3.5.2.1 Rationale for measuring performance in HE

There are three reasons for measuring performance in HE. Firstly, performance measurement improves the HEI's self-consciousness allowing for benchmarking and improved decision-making. Secondly, HEIs' departments and faculties are managed primarily on financial budgets hence measures are necessary to assess performance. Finally, through performance measures the HEI can prove its accountability to government. These reasons are discussed in the following paragraphs.

The first reason for measuring performance in HE is that performance measures increase an organisations self-consciousness (Aljardali et al., 2012). If the organisation is better informed of its operations, it will have the capacity to act more efficiently. The increased self-awareness arising from performance measurement helps guide decision-making, allowing HEIs to compare the institution with other institutions, or constituent colleges,

faculties and their programmes, with other constituent colleges, faculties and programmes (Azma, 2010). Pollard et al. (2013b) in a study on performance indicators used in the UK found that HEIs tend to make most use of, or place greatest attention on, performance indicators where they feel they could or should improve. Aljardali et al. (2012) agree, concluding that the primary aim of a performance measurement system in HE is to deliver objective information for reliable decision-making procedures.

The second reason for measuring performance in HE derives from the historical management of HEIs' departments which has focused on the measurement of financial performance (Philbin, 2011). As a result the role of faculty managers significantly revolves around financial resources since they assume responsibility as budget stewards (Deem, 1998). Measurement of financial resources also extends beyond faculties as questions are being asked regarding whether the central services in the institutions are providing value for money (Deem, 1998) and about what parts of the institution are subsidising other parts (Angluin and Scapens, 2000). Financial measures can provide answers to these questions and allow monitoring of the government's investment in the HE sector (Flanagan et al., 2008; Johnes, 2006) and facilitate more rational utilisation of economic resources (Katharaki and Katharakis, 2010), both to a HEI from central funds, and within a HEI to its departments and faculties.

Accountability to stakeholders is the third reason for measuring performance in HEIs. There is a danger that in a HE environment obligations to a wide variety of stakeholders may distort the focus of the HEI more toward satisfying those who pay for the services (fund providers) rather than those stakeholders who actually use the services (Sayed, 2013). A performance measurement system can improve accountability to a wide variety of stakeholders, overcoming this danger. The need for accountability to stakeholders is also observed as, increasingly, HEIs are under pressure to provide external stakeholders, such as communities, alumni and prospective students, with performance indicators that reflect the overall value and excellence of the institute (Brown, 2012). At the same time there is increased scrutiny from accrediting bodies, legislators, and other stakeholders interested in accountability in HE (Ballantine and Eckles, 2009) also supporting the need for performance measures.

In summary, performance measurement has been used in HEIs as a tool to improve self-awareness and decision-making, to assess financial performance of the organisation and

to improve accountability to stakeholders. The following sections consider the measurement of performance under each of the three HE missions: teaching and learning, research and engagement.

3.5.2.2 Measuring teaching & learning performance

In measuring teaching and learning performance, Pollard et al. (2013a) state that to be effective, measures need to accommodate and capture traditional and new modes and levels of learning, such as classroom and online learning, distance delivery and diversity in the range of courses available to students. According to Coates (2007) measures of improvement or value added are the most powerful indicators of educational performance. However, limited data availability, coupled with difficulty in collecting relevant data, has led to the use of proxies in measuring the effectiveness of teaching and learning strategies. For example, Martin and Sauvageot (2011) use non-completion rates and employment rates six months after graduation as proxies to monitor excellence in HE teaching. The challenge for HE managers and authorities is to select a suite of metrics, including proxies, for the evaluation of teaching and learning that will give an insight into HEI performance that is cognisant of their mission diversity (Higher Education Authority, 2013).

3.5.2.3 Measuring research performance

Measuring research performance is difficult as there is no single set of indicators capable of capturing its complexity (Higher Education Authority, 2013). However, efforts to measure research performance have become widespread resulting in profound change in recent decades as performance based research funding systems (PRFSs) are becoming commonplace. PRFSs are national systems of research output evaluation used to distribute research funding to universities (Hicks, 2012). PRFSs have become widespread with at least fourteen countries having implemented such systems by 2010 in response to the knowledge economy, new public management and a universal desire for research excellence on the part of governments (Hicks, 2012). For example, Italy is contemplating how to implement its own research assessment exercise; The United Kingdom, New Zealand, The Netherlands, Hong Kong and Spain have their equivalents; and Australia is moving towards its own research assessment scheme (Broadbent, 2010).

The results of research measurement have proved to be important because of their use in allocating resources and overseeing research activity (Broadbent, 2010). Research measurement systems have a well-established control function, allowing the state to control HEIs and the HEIs to control their academics by identifying the amount of external funds attracted by individual researchers (Lawrence and Sharma, 2002). As well as financial control reasons, PRFSs are important as those HEIs who perform well on national and international research metrics, gain reputation and prestige from favourable public judgments (Hicks, 2012). For individual academics, PRFSs help to confer esteem and produce a market for labour that in turn increases career mobility and salaries for those seen as research assessment exercise assets (Broadbent, 2010).

However, although there are benefits to measuring research performance, evaluating quality research production is difficult to achieve. The most widely available measures of research output are proxies including: publications, patents, and citation data (Langford et al., 2006). These are often combined with the journal impact factor to evaluate the quality of research activity (Avkiran, 2001).

3.5.2.4 Measuring engagement performance

As engagement is a central part of HEI strategy, performance measures are required for monitoring and evaluating its progress (Pollard et al., 2013a; Hart and Northmore, 2011). This is a complex undertaking as each HEI is a unique part of its own regional and national community and has a whole web of interactions with policy makers, industry and commerce, local communities and the wider society (Gibbons, 2001). Such unique histories and patterns of engagement have shaped differences in strategy and attitudes to engagement (including its measurement) across the sector (Bruneel et al., 2009). Coupled with this, international pressure for greater accountability to stakeholders has led to the growth of benchmarks and performance measures designed to enable HEIs demonstrate their contribution through engagement at local and regional level (Hart and Northmore, 2011).

The wide variety of available measures makes it difficult to select those most suitable to evaluate the engagement performance of a HEI. This difficulty is compounded as measuring the impact of engagement interactions at any meaningful level is not in itself easily achieved. While it is possible to look at inputs and activities, it is unfeasible to

measure outcomes and impact (Pollard et al., 2013b). However, the literature shows that a wide range of measures have emerged that propose to measure engagement outcomes and impact (see Appendix C). The table in Appendix C began as a large spreadsheet recording each measure discovered during the review of literature for this study. This review included both journal articles and reports written by government and international agencies, including from the UK, Australia, Asia, the EU and the USA. No country differences in measures and types of engagement were noted though the systems were at various stages of development (Yusuf, 2008). Having reached saturation point, the researcher distinguished the measures into the five categories of engagement that were presented in Section 3.4: graduate formation, workforce development, research and innovation, social enhancement and market advancement. The types of engagement found in each category, as revealed during the literature review, were used by the researcher in distinguishing the measures. A large emphasis on research and innovation measurement is noted. According to Lester (2005) the focus on research and innovation measurement, in particular patenting, licensing, and new business formation, should be replaced with a more comprehensive, more differentiated view of the HEI role. This view needs to expand to include the wider role of HEIs, as discussed in section 2.3.

To summarise, the diverse strategies and webs of engagement interactions of HEIs in different regions and nations have led to a large variety of performance measures emerging. A review of the literature on engagement performance measurement in HE has revealed a large number of measures in use (See Appendix C). This corresponds to the wide range of engagement activities undertaken by HEIs. In assessing engagement interactions, it is not possible to apply all of these performance measures; HEI management must select measures that are most appropriate for their institution (Pollard et al., 2013b). This exploratory research considers the performance measures selected by the case HEI and considers if these measures reflect the engagement activity of the HEI. The selection of engagement performance measures is discussed in the next section.

3.5.3 Selecting engagement performance measures

As Appendix C shows, there is a wide variety of measures that may be used to evaluate engagement performance. The design of a performance measurement system concerns deciding which measures to select and which measures to ignore (Sayed, 2013). According to Pollard et al. (2013b) *‘Measures should not exist just for the sake of*

measurement; they should exist only where there is a clear intended use for obvious benefit' (Pollard et al., 2013b, p.80). Other research concludes that measures must be pertinent to the desired objective, be limited to the most relevant (de Wit, 2010), and be selected based on the aspects that matter rather than those which are easy to measure (Pollard et al., 2013a; Brown, 2012). More specifically, HE research posits that when selecting measures '*...performance indicators ... should be simple and consistent with the activities for which they will be a reference for a decision.*' (Katharaki and Katharakis, 2010, p117).

Performance measures are often chosen because they are readily quantifiable and available (Higher Education Authority, 2013), or because they relate to what makes for an effective process (Hart and Northmore, 2011), or focus on inputs (Avkiran, 2001). Rather, measures should be chosen because they accurately assess performance (Higher Education Authority, 2013), because they measure effective outcomes (Hart and Northmore, 2011), and focus on outputs (Avkiran, 2001). However, the complexity of potential inputs and outputs; the difficulty in quantifying some of the outputs; and the limited knowledge of the relationship between inputs and outputs in the production of educational activity (Katharaki and Katharakis, 2010) leads to the selection of measures based on what information is available, rather than a clear or coherent concept of academic quality.

In summary, there is always a temptation to measure the things that are easy to measure and it is more difficult to measure the things you really want to measure (Pollard et al., 2013b). '*Don't measure anything unless you know why and what you are going to do with the information - 'What are they for? Who is the audience? Work that out before working out what needs to be included.*' (Pollard et al., 2013b, p.79). Hence, the measures or indicators selected should best represent the factors that lead to improved student, operational, and financial performance (Karathanos and Karathanos, 2005).

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter presented the literature identified on engagement and its measurement. It began with a brief review of the three elements of the HE mission; teaching and learning, research, and engagement. Definitions of engagement in the HE context were then

presented and the types of engagement undertaken by HEIs were discussed using five categories: graduate formation, workforce development, research and innovation, social enhancement and market advancement. Next, an overview of performance measurement in HE and how it applies to teaching and learning, research and engagement was provided. Finally, the chapter concluded with a discussion on the selection of engagement performance measures. The literature reviewed in this chapter helped to address the exploratory research question regarding how the case HEI engages with its stakeholders and how that engagement is measured. The next chapter presents the theoretical foundations of this study.

CHAPTER 4: THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

4.1 Introduction

In this exploratory research engagement is viewed through the lens of a framework proposed by Lee (2011). This empirically untested framework uses concepts from both stakeholder and institutional theories. These theories share an important commonality, which is that they are both focused on how institutions and stakeholders induce firms to conform to social demands. Institutional and stakeholder pressures guide HEIs to implement similar strategies to gain social legitimacy and to maintain their access to critical resources. However, on their own these two theoretical perspectives offer only partial explanations of organisational actions (Lee, 2011). Therefore, combining the theories provides a more comprehensive explanation of those actions. de la luz Fernández-Alles and Valle-Cabrera (2006) agree, stating that NIS explains how institutional and competitive pressures shape organisational behaviour, which changes depending on the power relations and legitimacy provided by stakeholders. As neither theory alone seems to explain the wide range of engagements undertaken and the reasons behind the measures adopted by the case HEI, the researcher contends that combining the two theories provides a more holistic understanding. Therefore concepts from both theories help the researcher explore the research objective; what influences engagement practices and measures selected to report engagement performance. The researcher posits a combination of these theories as the appropriate framework for considering engagement in HEIs.

This chapter describes stakeholder theory and institutional theory. It begins by defining stakeholders and identifying those specific to HEIs. Next, a discussion of stakeholder salience, which may influence organisational behaviour through the attributes of power, legitimacy and urgency, is presented. HEI stakeholders previously identified are then classified based on the attributes that they possess. A discussion of institutional theory including, old institutional economics, new institutional economics and new institutional sociology (NIS) follows, before a more focused review of NIS is undertaken. This research occurs at a time when HEIs are implementing an engagement measurement system, which as a result has not yet been institutionalised. It is therefore appropriate to

consider both institutional and stakeholder influences on the system. Having set the scene, the subsequent chapter combines the theories.

4.2 Stakeholders

Stakeholder theory has been applied in research to support strategy development and implementation, and has been observed to contain elements that are particularly suited for solving the complex challenges of public sector managers (Flak and Dertz, 2005), and so would be applicable to understanding HEI management (Kuzu et al., 2013). Stakeholder theory is capable of integrating some business theories: transaction cost, agency and contract theories. It connects capitalism with a social vision of the company, since it does not deny the relative rights of shareholders (Retolaza and San-Jose, 2011). Hence, stakeholder theory would seem an appropriate lens to use in this study, which focuses on stakeholder engagement in an Irish IoT. In applying the theory to this research it is important to understand the meaning of the term ‘stakeholder’ in general and then, more specifically, to identify the stakeholders of a HEI.

The origin of the term ‘stakeholder’ in management literature can be traced back to 1963, when it appeared in an international memorandum at the Stanford Research Institute (Länsiluoto et al., 2013). Stakeholders are defined as all those persons or entities with interest in the activity of an organisation; those that pay for it and/or those that benefit from it, both exerting some form of pressure on the organisation (Ackermann and Eden, 2011; Sarrico et al., 2010; Jongbloed et al., 2008). Länsiluoto et al. (2013), citing Freeman (1984), state that a stakeholder is any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of an organisation (Freeman, 2004). Having conducted an extensive literature review, Mitchell et al. (1997, p.855) propose that *‘Persons, groups, neighbourhoods, organizations, institutions, societies, and even the natural environment are generally thought to qualify as actual or potential stakeholders’*. A detailed chronology describing stakeholders has been prepared by Mitchell et al. (1997) (see Figure 4.1 below).

Source	Stakeholder defined as:
Stanford Research Institute, 1963	<i>‘those groups without whose support the organisation would cease to exist’</i>

Source	Stakeholder defined as:
Rhenman, 1964	<i>'as depending on the firm in order to achieve their personal goals and on whom the firm is depending for its existence'</i>
Ahlstedt & Jahnukainen, 1971	<i>'driven by their own interests and goals are participants in a firm, and thus depending on it and whom for its sake the firm is depending'</i>
Freeman & Reed, 1983:91	<i>Wide [definition] 'can affect the achievement of an organisation's objectives or who is affected by the achievement of an organisation's objectives' Narrow [definition] 'on which the organisation is dependent for its continued survival'</i>
Freeman, 1984:46	<i>'can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organisation's objectives'</i>
Freeman & Gilbert, 1987:397	<i>'can affect or is affected by a business'</i>
Cornell & Shapiro, 1987:5	<i>'claimants' who have 'contracts'</i>
Evan & Freeman, 1988: 75-76	<i>'have a stake in a claim on the firm'</i>
Evan & Freeman, 1988: 79	<i>'benefit from or are harmed by, and whose rights are violated or respected by, corporate actions'</i>
Bowie, 1988: 112, n.2	<i>'without whose support the organisation would cease to exist'</i>
Alkhafaji, 1989:36	<i>'groups to whom the corporation is responsible'</i>
Carroll, 1989:57	<i>'Asserts to have one or more of these kinds of stakes...ranging from an interest to a right (legal or moral) to ownership or legal title to the company's assets or property'</i>
Freeman & Evan, 1990	<i>'contract holders'</i>
Thompson et al., 1991:209	<i>'in relationship with an organisation'</i>
Savage et al., 1991:61	<i>'have an interest in the actions of an organisation and ... the ability to influence it'</i>
Hill & Jones, 1992:133	<i>'constituents who have a legitimate claim on the firm...established through the existence of an exchange relationship' who supply 'the firm with critical resources (contributions) and in exchange each expects its interests to be satisfied (by inducement)'</i>
Brenner, 1993:205	<i>'having some legitimate, non-trivial relationship with an organisation (such as) exchange transactions, action impacts, and moral responsibilities'</i>
Carroll, 1993:60	<i>'asserts to have one or more of the kinds of stakes in business-may be affected or affect...'</i>

Source	Stakeholder defined as:
Freeman, 1994:415	<i>participants in 'the human process of joint value creation'</i>
Wicks et al., 1994:483	<i>'interact with and give meaning and definition to the corporation'</i>
Langtry, 1992:433	<i>'the firm is significantly responsible for their well-being, or they hold a moral or legal claim on the firm'</i>
Starik, 1994:90	<i>'can and are making their actual stakes known'- 'are or might be influenced by, or are or potentially influencers of, some organisation'</i>
Clarkson, 1994:5	<i>'bear some form of risk as a result of having invested some form of capital, human or financial, something of value, in a firm' or 'are placed at risk as a result of a firm's activities'</i>
Clarkson, 1995:106	<i>'have, or claim, ownership, rights or interests in a corporation and its activities'</i>
Nasi, 1995:19	<i>'interact with the firm and thus make its operation possible'</i>
Brenner, 1995:76.n.1	<i>'are or which could impact or be impacted by the firm/organisation'</i>
Donaldson & Preston, 1995:85	<i>'persons or groups with legitimate interests in procedural and/or substantive aspects of corporate activity'</i>

Figure 4.1: Who is a stakeholder? A Chronology

(Source: Mitchell et al. (1997))

4.2.1 HEI stakeholders

As discussed in Chapter 2 (section 2.3) the role of HEIs is diverse. HEIs are not only required to provide the graduates of the future, but they are also required to make social and economic contributions to their regions. As a result they have a very different set of core stakeholders from businesses whose main goal is profit for their shareholders. However, it is not difficult to identify a set of stakeholders having a legitimate interest in HEIs (Pollard et al., 2013b; Sarrico et al., 2010). HEI literature is replete with various categories of stakeholders (Cassells et al., 2015; Miller et al., 2014; Lämsiluoto et al., 2013; Maric, 2013; Pollard et al., 2013b; Sayed, 2013; Hart and Northmore, 2011; Hunt, 2011; Tang and Hussin, 2011; Benneworth and Jongbloed, 2010; Edwards, 2010; Mainardes et al., 2010; Beard, 2009; Charles et al., 2009; Abreu et al., 2008; Acworth, 2008; Garlick and Langworthy, 2008; Jongbloed et al., 2008; Arbo and Benneworth, 2007; D'Este and Patel, 2007; Papenhausen and Einstein, 2006; Lester, 2005; Charles et al., 2003; Burrows, 1999). Based on the literature the researcher has categorised the key

stakeholders as shown in Figure 4.2. Within this categorisation the stakeholders have been subdivided based on the most frequently used classification: internal and external stakeholders (Magalhaes and Amaral, 2000; Burrows, 1999).

Stakeholder group	Stakeholder category	Constitutive groups	Cited by
Internal Stakeholders			
Students	Clients	Students – standard and non-standard	(Mainardes et al., 2010; Jongbloed et al., 2008)
Staff	Management Administrative Staff Teaching and research staff	President, senior administrators Support staff Faculty, administrative staff	(Avci et al., 2015; Salter et al., 2010)
External Stakeholders			
Business and industry	Suppliers Employers Funders	Food purveyors, insurance companies, utilities, contracted services Employers of students Funders/research partners	(Harmon and O’Regan, 2015; Miller et al., 2014; Pollard et al., 2013a; Acworth, 2008; Bekkers and Bodas Freitas, 2008; Jongbloed et al., 2008; De Wit and Verhoeven, 2000)
Prospective students	Clientele	Students Sponsors/parents Feeder schools	(Boland, 2014; Pollard et al., 2013b; Jongbloed et al., 2008)
Government and their agencies	Governing entities Government regulators and government funding agencies	State & federal government, Ministry of education, Higher education authorities, Research agencies, Tax authorities, European Commission , OECD	(Avci et al., 2015; Miller et al., 2014; Länsiluoto et al., 2013; Mainardes et al., 2010; Jongbloed et al., 2008; Magalhaes and Amaral, 2000)
Other HEIs	Competitors	Other HEIs in region/ internationally	(Hazelkorn, 2007; Keeling, 2006; Gibbons, 2001)

Stakeholder group	Stakeholder category	Constitutive groups	Cited by
	Collaborators	Joint research partners, joint venture partners, peer reviewers & networks	
Professional bodies	Accreditors and regulators	Programmatic professional accreditors, validators, auditors and assessors	(Sayed, 2013; Campbell et al., 2010; Christopher, 2010; De Wit and Verhoeven, 2000)
Communities	Communities located near the HEI	Neighbours, social services Community groups	(Avcı et al., 2015; Magalhaes and Amaral, 2000)
Alumni	Past Students	Donors Brand ambassadors	(Nguyen et al., 2012)

Figure 4.2: HEI Stakeholders

(Source: Adapted from Burrows (1999))

Each of the stakeholder categories shown in Figure 4.2 are discussed in more detail in the sections below. The internal/external characterisation is not always easy to apply to groups connected with a HEI, as their position often depends on the distinction in light of the particular issue being considered (Burrows, 1999). However, characterisation using membership of the community of scholars helps to distinguish between stakeholder groups. Those stakeholders who are part of the community of scholars are internal stakeholders; those who are not are external stakeholders. The academic community (HEIs' staff and students) represents the nucleus of scientific production and the main core of the scholarship community. Thus these stakeholders are the basic internal constituency without which the university cannot function properly (Jongbloed et al., 2008). Other stakeholders therefore are external stakeholders.

4.2.1.1 Internal stakeholders

Internal stakeholders, and internal dynamics, often attract more attention than the HEI's relationships with external stakeholders (Alarcon-del-Amo et al., 2016; Magalhaes and Amaral, 2000). The internal stakeholders for HEIs comprise two categories, students and staff. As members of a community of scholars participating in the production and transmission of knowledge, students can and should be viewed as internal stakeholders (Burrows, 1999). HEIs' staff are also members of this community of scholars and, like students, the HEI cannot function without them (Jongbloed et al., 2008).

Students

There is broad recognition that in higher education (HE), the most important or core community is the students (Pollard et al., 2013b; Chapleo and Simms, 2010; Jongbloed et al., 2008). Providing a high quality student experience is the single most important way in which higher education serves and continues to attract students (Avci et al., 2015; Cassells et al., 2015). Resources for the survival of HEIs are dependent on the funding students bring, whether from government sources or from fees paid by students themselves. Research by Mainardes et al. (2010) states that '*...students [are important], as they represent the main source of university financing...*' (p.80). Mainardes et al. (2010) conclude that students were the most important stakeholder group as '*...without students, there is no university...*' (Mainardes et al., 2010, p.80). Students have become even more significant stakeholders since equating students with customers has gained popularity and infused educational institutions (Schwartzman, 2005). Hence, it has become increasingly critical to keep the student voice at the centre of the HEI's discourse (Eurydice Report, 2014).

Staff

According to Avci et al. (2015), HEIs' staff include '*...faculty, instructors, a wide variety of administrative staff such as business managers, grant managers, academic coordinators and financial aid directors. Supportive staff such as clerical and technical employees are also included ...*' (Avci et al., 2015, p.47). The role of professors, lecturers, tutors, instructors and research supervisors is key to HEIs' success (Keeling, 2006). The teaching and research activities of individual academics are core to the HEI and its many missions (Salter et al., 2010), not least of which is attracting and retaining students.

Indeed, the value of HEIs, like many modern companies, is dependent on the knowledge of their professionals (Avci et al., 2015; Jansson, 2005). ‘*Without faculty, students could not be taught and educated.*’ (Avci et al., 2015, p.49). Hence, attracting, developing, and retaining the best staff for their organisation will underpin and improve organisational effectiveness and performance (Cranfield University, 2015).

4.2.1.2 External Stakeholders

External stakeholders have not traditionally been part of the community of scholars and are not the nucleus of scientific production in a HEI context (Burrows, 1999). Moreover, according to Jongbloed et al. (2008), HEIs can function without external stakeholders (Jongbloed et al., 2008). As shown in Figure 4.2, seven external stakeholder groups have been identified in the literature, and classified by the researcher. These include business and industry, prospective students, government and their agencies, other HEIs, professional bodies, communities, and alumni. Each of these external stakeholders is described in more detail in the following sections.

Business and Industry

Business and industry stakeholders interact with HEIs in many ways: as employers of graduates; as providers of student placement opportunities; as sponsors of student events; in collaborative research (Cranfield University, 2015; Bekkers and Bodas Freitas, 2008; Azagra-Caro, 2007; Mueller, 2006; De Wit and Verhoeven, 2000); as investors and funders (Pollard et al., 2013a; Acworth, 2008; Jongbloed et al., 2008); as advisors on module and programme content (Eurydice Report, 2014; Miller et al., 2014; De Wit and Verhoeven, 2000); as guest lecturers; as suppliers of goods and services (Maric, 2013); as part of entrepreneurial activities (Miller et al., 2014; Acworth, 2008); and in providing students for continuous professional development, retraining and reskilling (Jongbloed et al., 2008).

Previous research has found the relationship with business and industry to be ad hoc in nature (Miller et al., 2014) and shaped by features such as the size of the business and the type of industry. For example, according to Abreu et al. (2008) ‘*The patterns, and the importance attached to particular modes of interaction may ... vary by industry, size and life cycle of the business, and the form of production process.*’ (Abreu et al., 2008, p.54).

Though type of industry is considered important by Abreu et al. (2008), work by other researchers has found little difference in levels of collaboration with different industry types. For example, Harmon and O'Regan (2015), in The Irish National Employers Survey, conclude that service and manufacturing industries had similar levels of collaboration with Irish HEIs. An exception was found in collaboration levels with foreign versus indigenous firms. A higher level of collaboration with HE was reported by foreign employers (such as MNC) than by indigenous employers during the Irish National Employers Survey (Harmon and O'Regan, 2015). Research on HE stakeholders in Portugal, by Magalhaes and Amaral (2000), also concludes that industry type does not play a significant role, and proposes that this is because Portuguese industry is mainly composed of small and micro enterprises.

Differences were found when business size was considered with larger businesses having greater interactions with HEIs. Some researchers have concluded that the size of the business matters, as academics prefer working with larger firms (Bekkers and Bodas Freitas, 2008; Azagra-Caro, 2007; Magalhaes and Amaral, 2000). Other researchers contend that: *'Many SME partners also will not have sufficient financial resources to access academic knowledge—in fact they may even lack information about what universities have to offer.'* (Jongbloed et al., 2008, p.315). The Irish National Employers Survey confirm these findings and state that the larger the organisation the higher the level of collaboration (Harmon and O'Regan, 2015).

With regards to life cycle, previous research finds that business is much more likely to engage with HEIs in the early stages of a product lifecycle, at the final stage of product design. Cohen et al. (2002), quoted in Ankrah et al. (2013), state that *"...managers value university inputs somewhat more to help complete existing projects ..."* (Ankrah et al., 2013, p.55). Finally, literature concludes that business and industry with dispersed or networked forms of production are also more likely to engage with HEIs. Their aim is to create competitive advantage from knowledge generated by HEIs (Arbo and Benneworth, 2007).

Prospective students

As discussed in section 4.2.1.1, students are the most important or core stakeholder category in HE (Pollard et al., 2013b; Chapleo and Simms, 2010; Jongbloed et al., 2008). HEIs strive to attract students as they provide its main source of income. As a

consequence, prospective students are recognised as important external stakeholders in the HEI sector (Pollard et al., 2013b). Two broad categories of prospective student are recognised: standard entrants, who enter HE straight from second level education; and non-standard entrants, who enter HE having completed another course or from being in employment (Boland, 2014). To provide information for prospective students it is vital for HEIs to interact with second level schools, as well as engaging with business and industry stakeholders and directly with mature students (Pollard et al., 2013b).

Government and their agencies

Whilst conducting research on the stakeholders of American HE, Avci et al. (2015) found that government organisations have a strong hold on HEIs. Research shows that government and funding agencies are among the most influential stakeholders due to the dependence of the HEI on funding from these sources as well as regulatory and assessment responsibilities (Avci et al., 2015; Miller et al., 2014; Mainardes et al., 2010; Jongbloed et al., 2008). The importance of this stakeholder category is also supported by other extant literature, which proposes that those stakeholders whose resources are the most critical to the organisation will have the strongest impact on the HEI (Lämsiluoto et al., 2013). Other researchers concur that HEIs should be influenced by government and their agencies as they receive generous amounts of public funding.

Government agencies will also impact HEIs. As discussed in section 2.4.1, a trend established since the emergence of new public management is a shift from strict government control to a model of deregulation and autonomy (Magalhaes and Amaral, 2000). The void in control left by such a shift has been filled by governments appointing steering agencies to manage public services such as HE. HEIs are compelled to follow certain practices imposed by these steering bodies if they wish to operate legally or receive government-controlled designations associated with legitimacy (McQuarrie et al., 2013). In Ireland, this involved the establishment of the Higher Education Authority (HEA). Steering agencies, such as the HEA, aim to voice society's interests. They direct HEIs in accordance with societal values and norms so as to achieve particular outcomes, control resources and ensure HEI performance (Broadbent et al., 2010; Magalhaes and Amaral, 2000).

As a result this stakeholder group, government and their agencies, includes political parties, representatives from HE funding and sectoral bodies such as the HEA, Irish

Research Council, Quality & Qualifications Ireland, government departments such as the Department of Education and Skills in Ireland (Department of Education, 2011), international organisations concerned with education such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (Pollard et al., 2013a); and the European Commission (Keeling, 2006).

Other HEIs

Mainardes et al. (2013), having interviewed staff at three hierarchical levels within a case HEI, found '*...disagreement resulted...*' (p.445) in identifying other HEIs as stakeholders. Some of their respondents agreed that '*... other universities are our competitors and, therefore, are stakeholders...*' (p.446) while other respondents took an opposing view and said '*I do not see them as a stakeholder.*' (Mainardes et al., 2013, p.445). Such disagreement confirms the assertion, made by Mitchell et al. (1997), that '*...it is the firm's managers who determine which stakeholders are salient*' (Mitchell et al., 1997, p.871). However, much research contends that other HEIs are stakeholders in terms of benchmarking, collaboration, peer networking, sharing of best practice, and competition (Hazelkorn, 2007; Keeling, 2006; Miclea, 2003; Gibbons, 2001). For example, Hazelkorn (2007) in a study of the impact of league tables and ranking systems found that '*...76% of [HEI] respondents said that they monitored the performance of other HEIs in their country, and almost 50% said they monitored the performance of peer institutions worldwide*' (Hazelkorn, 2007, p.100). In the EU almost 90% of European universities are now formally integrated into Europe's mobility, cooperation and thematic networks (Keeling, 2006), thus further highlighting the importance of other HEIs as stakeholders. In addition, the introduction of joint degrees by multiple EU colleges not only activates the international stakeholder network of a HEI but, at the same time, can be used to transfer reforms from one HEI to its stakeholder group, other HEIs (Miclea, 2003).

The influence of other HEIs as stakeholders is also strengthened because HEIs' staff are often members of discipline specific peer networks where they are exposed to practices in other institutions and engage in knowledge brokerage, networking and promotion and sharing of good practice (Gibbons, 2001). Similarly, researchers view themselves as belonging to a community seeking alliances, recognition and support in their disciplinary field among their peers, such that academic departments often show more affinity to

similar departments in other HEIs than to other departments in their own institution (Jongbloed et al., 2008).

Professional bodies

Professional bodies (including accountants, engineers, and administrative managers) are significant stakeholders for many HEIs as students strive to become part of their networks and staff are associated with them (Bjorkquist, 2010; Christopher, 2010; Jongbloed et al., 2008; De Wit and Verhoeven, 2000). In “...*fields such as law, medicine and engineering, where academics are in continuous dialogue with professional associations to uphold the relevance and legitimacy of their field*” (Jongbloed et al., 2008, p.311). For example, professional bodies can act as accreditors, validators, auditors and assessors (Sayed, 2013). These stakeholders have professional and ethical guidelines and codes of conduct, and membership is governed by strict educational and behavioural standards. It is important for the survival of many HEIs to align their courses with these standards and many syllabi may be determined by, or subject to, the approval of professional bodies (Norton, 2012). The importance of professional bodies for HEIs is likely to endure as EU reports set out strategies for ‘...*greater collaboration between education and training providers, employers and professional bodies...*’ (Campbell et al., 2010, p.22).

Communities

Communities for the purpose of this research include what Rawlins (2006) describes as ‘*publics*’ and incorporate non-governmental organisations, community residents, voters, media and special interest groups. The community is important to HEIs as ‘*No institution can function effectively and remain remote from the life of the community in which it operates.*’ (Avci et al., 2015, p.50). HEIs have learned that good relationships and considerable attention must be devoted to their communities in order to achieve goals and objectives (Rowland (1980) quoted in Avci et al., 2015). As a result the last decade has seen a significant increase in the connections HEIs are making with their local and regional communities, as they increasingly recognise their responsibility to ethically contribute to the public good (Hildebrand and McDavid, 2011; Mulvihill et al., 2011b; Garlick and Langworthy, 2008; Liefner, 2003; Brignall and Modell, 2000).

Research carried out by Mainardes et al. (2010) highlighted the role of the HEI as a means of ‘...*economically developing the local community...*’ (Mainardes et al., 2010, p.80). As

this economic development function is increasingly recognised, HEIs are expected to do more with their communities. Alarcon-del-Amo et al. (2016) concluded that informally, the presence of academic staff in cultural and professional activities of the town and their participation in many local organisations creates links with the outside community. Formally, HEIs' missions are being judged by their communities, taxpayers, the wider public, and other local stakeholders on moral, political, and legal grounds (Hildebrand and McDavid, 2011; Mulvihill et al., 2011b; Liefner, 2003; Brignall and Modell, 2000). For example, Jongbloed et al. (2008) found that teaching and research functions are being reassessed based on the contribution they make to the social-economic well-being of their community. Social obligations or responsibilities require the organisation to consider the good of the wider community, local and global, within which they function in terms of the economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic impact of their way of conducting business (Jongbloed et al., 2008). Therefore, the extant literature recognises communities as HEIs' stakeholders and demonstrates formal and informal actions being taken by HEIs to embrace their communities.

Alumni

The term 'alumni' means graduates or former students of the HEI (Case HEI, 2015). Alumni are important HEI stakeholders as they can have an impact throughout the world, helping to build an international brand and reputation for a HEI (Nguyen et al., 2012). Alumni use their own experiences to share the HEI brand with others and give them exposure to it (Nguyen et al., 2012). Alumni may facilitate access to business and industry stakeholders, who can evaluate the quality of academic processes and provide improvement advice to the case HEI (Leisyte et al., 2013; De Wit and Verhoeven, 2000). Alumni help to spread the HEI's message for research and continuing professional development to prospective students. Also, alumni frequently provide financial support for the development of the HEI (Cranfield University, 2015) and mentoring and work opportunities for current students (Performance Compact: N.U.I.G., 2014).

The HEI's relationship with alumni is a mutually beneficial one. HEIs often provide career advice, mentoring and recruiting opportunities for alumni (Mora et al., 2010). In return, the HEI may get support and advice from alumni in developing teaching and research programmes. The labour market position of alumni is a good way of measuring the socio-economic appreciation of the HEI's courses. Employment levels of alumni, and

the relationship between the types of jobs they have and their qualification, provide important feedback information. Such feedback is essential for quality maintenance and improvement (De Wit and Verhoeven, 2000).

This section described the nine categories of HEI stakeholders classified as internal or external. The internal stakeholders are students and staff while the external stakeholders comprise business and industry, prospective students, government and their agencies, other HEIs, professional bodies, communities, and alumni. Not all HEIs will have the same relationship with the different stakeholder groups. HEIs may have different missions and this may affect the relationship between a HEI and its stakeholders. For example, the mission of IoTs in Ireland is to provide education ‘...with particular reference to the region served by the college...’ (Irish-Statute-Book, 1992). This focus on the region served by the HEI may influence the perceived salience of stakeholder groups resulting in different attitudes towards stakeholders within and outside the HEI’s region. The next section discusses stakeholder salience and its effect on HEI-stakeholder relationships.

4.3 Stakeholder salience

As discussed above, organisations are now under greater external pressure from both social trends and institutional pressure to become stakeholder-orientated (Barone et al., 2013). This has led to a distinction between the ethical approach to stakeholders which posits that all stakeholders should be treated fairly, and the positive approach which posits that an organisation should manage its stakeholders (Clerkin, 2017; Connolly et al., 2013). This positive approach is supported by many authors who have concluded that managers simply cannot attend to all actual or potential claims on their organisation by the wide variety of stakeholders and therefore need to prioritise between them (Connolly et al., 2013; Lämsiluoto et al., 2013; Verbeke and Tung, 2012; Ackermann and Eden, 2011; Mainardes et al., 2010; Jongbloed et al., 2008; Jawahar and McLaughlin, 2001; Mitchell et al., 1997). Devoting appropriate attention to all legitimate stakeholders is important to achieve superior performance (Verbeke and Tung, 2012) and ensure an organisation’s continued survival (Leiter, 2008; Alam, 2006). This requires balancing the conflicting and inconsistent demands of different stakeholders (Lämsiluoto et al., 2013). Barringer and Harrison (2000), in adopting the positive approach, state that the starting point in effective stakeholder management is determining which stakeholders matter

most. Stakeholder salience is the degree to which claims of competing stakeholders are given priority and constitutes an indicator of a stakeholder's importance compared to other stakeholders (Harguem et al., 2014; Ackermann and Eden, 2011). Stakeholder salience is positively related to the cumulative number of stakeholder attributes, comprising power to influence the organisation, legitimacy of the stakeholders' claim on the organisation, and the degree of urgency of the stakeholders' claim (Harguem et al., 2014; Jawahar and McLaughlin, 2001; Mitchell et al., 1997). Managers of an organisation determine which stakeholders are in possession of salience attributes (Mitchell et al., 1997). The existence of each attribute is a matter of perception and is a constructed reality rather than an objective one, with stakeholders included or excluded based on managerial perceptions (Avci et al., 2015; Verbeke and Tung, 2012; Neville et al., 2011; Chapleo and Simms, 2010; Parent and Deephouse, 2007; Driscoll and Starik, 2004; Mitchell et al., 1997). Each of the salience attributes is discussed in more detail in the next section.

4.3.1 Stakeholder attributes

This section examines the salience attributes as noted above. Much research accepts that there are three main salience attributes: power, legitimacy and urgency (Harguem et al., 2014; Ackermann and Eden, 2011; Neville et al., 2011; Mainardes et al., 2010; Parent and Deephouse, 2007; Baskerville-Morley, 2004; Jawahar and McLaughlin, 2001; Mitchell et al., 1997). However, proximity and short-termism are also suggested by some researchers as stakeholder attributes (Neville et al., 2011; Driscoll and Starik, 2004).

Power as an attribute of salience, is described as the (potential) ability of stakeholders to impose their will on a given relationship (Harguem et al., 2014). Power defines a relationship among social actors in which social actor, A, can get another actor, B, to do something that B would not have otherwise done (Jongbloed et al., 2008; Mitchell et al., 1997). Power may also be described as the probability that one actor within a social relationship would be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance (Weber, 1947 quoted in Mitchell et al. (1997)). The notion of power is often seen in terms of authority and the possession of significant resources by the stakeholders (Alam, 2006). The dependence of organisations on stakeholders for resources translates into power for the stakeholder group(s) involved (Mitchell et al., 1997) and gives those stakeholders leverage over organisations (Jawahar and McLaughlin, 2001). Thus, power is often a

function of the organisation's dependence on the stakeholder. Generally, the more dependent the organisation is on the stakeholder, the more powerful the stakeholder (Jawahar and McLaughlin, 2001). Power has been described based '*... on the type of resources used to exercise power: coercive power, based on the physical resources of force, violence or restraint; utilitarian power, based on materials or financial resources; and normative power, based on symbolic resources*' (Etzioni, 1964 quoted in Mitchell et al. (1997, p.865) and Neville et al. (2011); Parent and Deephouse (2007)).

The next attribute of stakeholder salience is legitimacy. Legitimacy is ingrained within the theoretical notions of the social contract between the organisation and society (Moll et al., 2006a). In practice, it is to be expected that organisations will have a series of social contracts with various stakeholder groups and the importance and compliance with particular contracts will in part be dependent on the power of these stakeholders (Deegan, 2006). According to Suchman (1995) a legitimate stakeholder is one whose actions and claims are seen as '*...appropriate, proper and desirable within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs and definitions*' (Suchman, 1995, p.577). Suchman (1995) posits that there are '*...three broad types of legitimacy, which might be termed pragmatic legitimacy, moral legitimacy, and cognitive legitimacy.*' (Suchman, 1995, p.577). Pragmatic legitimacy results from instrumental, or self-interested, evaluations of the organisation by a stakeholder (Neville et al., 2011; Suchman, 1995). In the context of stakeholder salience, organisational managers will grant pragmatic legitimacy to the stakeholder's claim if the stakeholder gains benefits or is somehow supportive of the organisation's interests (Neville et al., 2011). The moral form of legitimacy results from a favourable, normative evaluation of the activities of the organisation by its stakeholders. It rests not on judgments about whether a given activity benefits the stakeholder, but rather on whether the activity is the right thing to do. These judgments, in turn, usually reflect beliefs about whether the activity effectively promotes societal welfare, as defined by the stakeholders' socially constructed value system (Suchman, 1995). Cognitive legitimacy, results from the diffusion of particular beliefs, or knowledge, such that the beliefs are taken for granted and the legitimacy is based on comprehensibility or taken-for-granted-ness (Neville et al., 2011; Suchman, 1995). As a result legitimacy, like any intangible asset, is seen as an operational resource whose value must be maintained to ensure continued support from society. It '*... is expressed, for example, in terms of increased capital inflows, customer and supplier appreciation, labour participation,*

government 'blessing' and community (and media) acceptance through acting as a good ... 'corporate citizen' (Mahadeo et al., 2011, p.160). This suggests that managers are likely to take action to gain and maintain legitimacy (Toylan and Semerciöz, 2012).

The third attribute of stakeholder salience is urgency. Urgency represents the degree to which stakeholders' claims call for immediate attention (Jongbloed et al., 2008; Rawlins, 2006). Mitchell et al. (1997) state that *'...urgency, with synonyms including 'compelling,' 'driving,' and 'imperative,' exists only when two conditions are met: (1) when a relationship or claim is of a time-sensitive nature and (2) when that relationship or claim is important or critical to the stakeholder'* (Mitchell et al., 1997, p.867). The urgency attribute merits its inclusion in stakeholder analysis as it determines the prioritisation of stakeholders as the other two attributes fluctuate. However, urgency alone may not identify the significance of a stakeholder, especially if the other two attributes are missing (Rawlins, 2006). It *'...provides a dynamic dimension to the salience framework, helpful and relevant in the prioritisation of stakeholder claims, but irrelevant in identification of stakeholders'* (Neville et al., 2011, p.6).

Driscoll and Starik (2004) suggest that proximity and short-termism should also be included as stakeholder attributes believing the three attributes posited by Mitchell et al. (1997) are *'...inadequate for incorporating the near and the far, the short- and the long-term, and the actual and the potential.'* (p.61). They define proximity as *'...spatial nearness...'* (p.63) and conclude that *'...the greater the proximity, the greater the likelihood of the development of the stakeholder relationships...'* (Driscoll and Starik, 2004, p.63). The converse to proximity is described as distal (spatial farness). Neville et al. (2011) also consider proximity as a stakeholder attribute. However, Neville et al. (2011) suggest that proximity is not a fourth attribute but an important component of both power and legitimacy. Proximity is subsumed within the power attribute as, when a stakeholder's proximity within a network increases it gains increased power (Neville et al., 2011). Jongbloed et al. (2008) concur with this position and posit that spatial nearness simply provides more opportunities to partner with important stakeholders. Proximity is also subsumed within the legitimacy attribute through the perceived moral legitimacy of a stakeholder's claim (Neville et al., 2011) which sees an organisation doing the right thing for its proximate stakeholders as defined by the stakeholders' and the organisation's socially constructed value system (Suchman, 1995).

Driscoll and Starik (2004) also assert that short-termism affects stakeholder salience and should be included as a separate attribute. They believe that it is valid to include short-termism because some '*...managers focus on short-term economic results rather than on the long-term sustainability of their organisation.*' (Driscoll and Starik, 2004, p.61). However, definitions of urgency include the time sensitivity of claims (Mitchell et al., 1997) and as managers' perceptions of urgency drives most stakeholder models, short-termism is incorporated into the urgency attribute on the Mitchell et al. (1997) framework.

Even discounting the attributes of proximity and short-termism, not all of the three attributes; power, legitimacy and urgency, are considered equal. The salience of individual attributes and the interaction of attributes is also debated in the literature. For example, the salience of one attribute over another is questioned by researchers, some arguing that power is the most salient attribute (Neville et al., 2011; Parent and Deephouse, 2007; Driscoll and Starik, 2004). These authors contend that the more types of power (coercive, utilitarian and normative) attributed to a stakeholder grouping, the greater its level of salience. However, Mitchell et al. (1997) state that '*...power by itself does not guarantee high salience in a stakeholder-manager relationship. Power gains authority through legitimacy, and it gains exercise through urgency.*' (Mitchell et al., 1997, p.869). Even within the power attribute there are doubts as to whether this attribute '*... may be measured in binary terms, such as, for example, dealing equally with stakeholders holding a lot of power and a stakeholder with less power as both actually having power*' (Mainardes et al., 2012, p.1866-67). Parent and Deephouse (2007) challenge the salience of legitimacy and infer that '*...urgency may have a greater impact on perceived stakeholder salience than legitimacy.*' (Parent and Deephouse, 2007, p.15). Mitchell et al. (1997) seem to agree concluding that '*Power and urgency must be attended to if managers are to serve the legal and moral interests of legitimate stakeholders.*' (Mitchell et al., 1997, p.882).

Regardless of the opposing views most authors agree that the three attributes proposed by Mitchell et al. (1997) offer the potential to improve understanding and practices in the management of stakeholders (Neville et al., 2011), hence its status as the most popular approach to stakeholder analysis (Mainardes et al., 2012). Therefore, using the attributes of power, legitimacy and urgency identified by Mitchell et al. (1997), the HEIs' external stakeholders discussed in section 4.2.1.2 are compiled into three main classifications (Mainardes et al., 2010; Jongbloed et al., 2008) and these are discussed in the next section.

4.3.2 Stakeholder typology

The seven types of stakeholder (definitive, dominant, dependent, dangerous, dormant, discretionary and demanding) are shown in Figure 4.3 and may be grouped into three classifications based on the possession of one, two or all three attributes. These classifications are: latent, consisting of stakeholders with only one attribute, expectant, consisting of stakeholders with two attributes, and definitive stakeholders who have all three attributes (Mitchell et al., 1997).

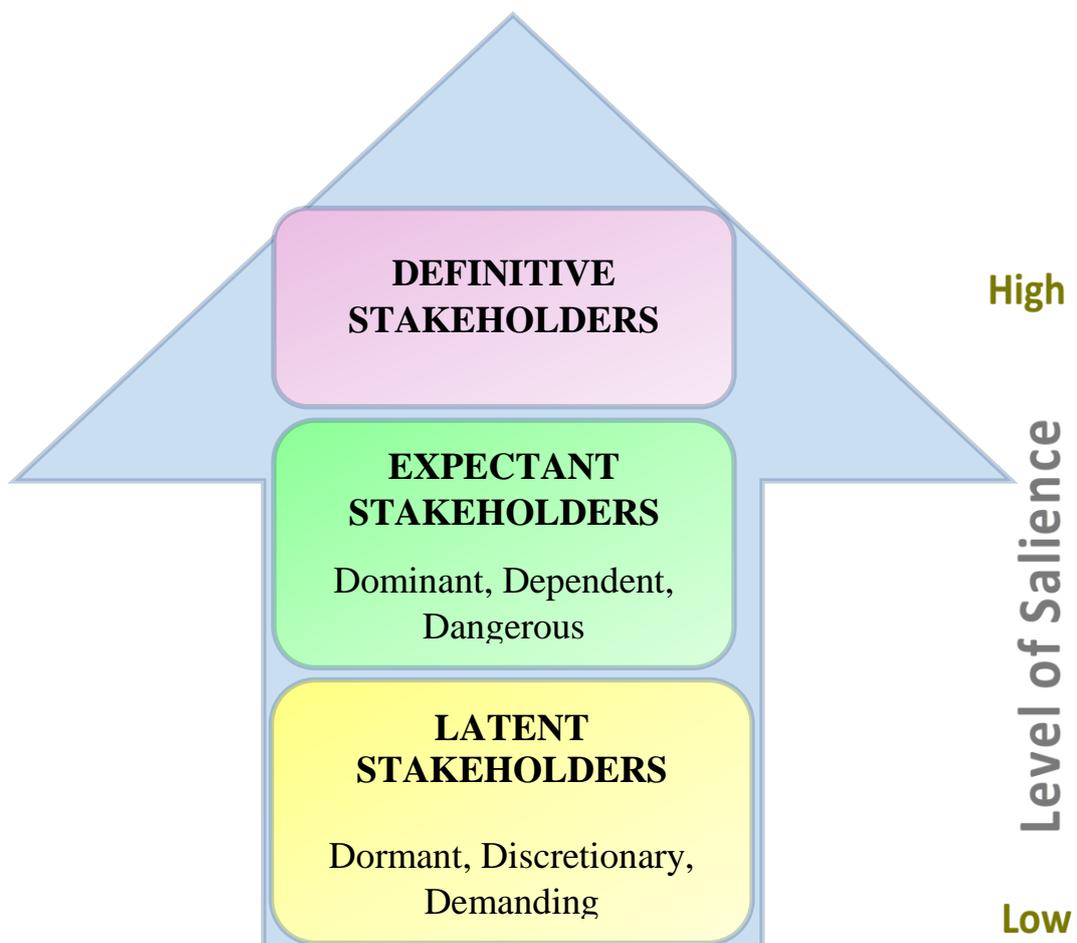


Figure 4.3: Stakeholder typology

(Source: Researcher – adapted from Mitchell et al. (1997))

Latent stakeholders

Latent stakeholders only possess one attribute and include dormant stakeholders (who have power only), discretionary stakeholders (who have legitimacy only) and demanding stakeholders (who have urgency only) (Jongbloed et al., 2008). The importance of this stakeholder classification is low overall and the different attributes cause stakeholders to interact with the organisation in different ways: *‘... Where the attribute represents power, there is the tendency to remain inactive as, while holding the power to impose its will, the entity does not hold the legitimacy for such actions or has no urgent demand. Where the attribute is legitimacy, the relationship remains discretionary. Here, while holding legitimacy, there is not the power to influence the HEI and often even no sense of urgency. In turn, where the prevailing relational characteristic is urgency, stakeholders tend to the demanding. However, these demands are left unmet as there lacks both the power and the legitimacy necessary to influence the HEI’* (Mainardes et al., 2010, p.78). As a result latent stakeholders are given little priority by managers (Mitchell et al., 1997).

Expectant stakeholders

Of more importance to the organisation than latent stakeholders are expectant stakeholders, who possess two attributes (Mitchell et al., 1997), and include dominant stakeholders (who have power and legitimacy), dependent stakeholders (who have legitimacy and urgency), and dangerous stakeholders (who have power and urgency) (Jongbloed et al., 2008). Different attributes cause stakeholders to interact with the organisation in different ways. Dominant stakeholders, having power and legitimacy, can act on claims they make on the organisation, and thus receive much of managements’ attention (Rawlins, 2006). For dependent stakeholders where the predominant attributes are legitimacy and urgency, *‘... these stakeholders are left in a dependent position as they depend on either other stakeholders or on institutional management to be able to achieve their demands.’* (Mainardes et al., 2010, p.78). Finally, dangerous stakeholders have power and urgency, but lack legitimacy. *‘When the attributes are power and urgency, then the stakeholders pose a threat as, despite lacking legitimacy, these stakeholders will attempt to resort to coercive means so as to meet their needs’* (Mainardes et al., 2010, p.78). Therefore, an expectant stakeholder *‘... is that which begins to become important to the HEI.’* (Mainardes et al., 2010, p.78). Managers should give some attention to this stakeholder classification (Rawlins, 2006).

Definitive stakeholders

The most salient stakeholders, definitive stakeholders, possess all three attributes of power, legitimacy and urgency (Mitchell et al., 1997) and are highly salient in the stakeholder typology, shown in Figure 4.3 above. Whenever these stakeholders have an urgent need, the institution not only should, but must take this into consideration as they also hold both power and legitimacy (Mainardes et al., 2010). Therefore, definitive stakeholders should be given the highest priority (Leisyte et al., 2013; Rawlins, 2006). They are the stakeholders who really count (Connolly et al., 2013) and the organisation needs to respond to their needs rapidly (Mainardes et al., 2010).

In summary, research indicates that latent stakeholders have low salience, expectant stakeholders have moderate salience and definitive stakeholders have high salience (Jongbloed et al., 2008). This suggests that the level of managerial attention given to stakeholders should correspond to their salience. Figure 4.4 below summarises the salience of various stakeholder groups based on the number of attributes they hold. The diagram suggests that the closer the stakeholders are located to the centre of the diagram, the more salient they are.

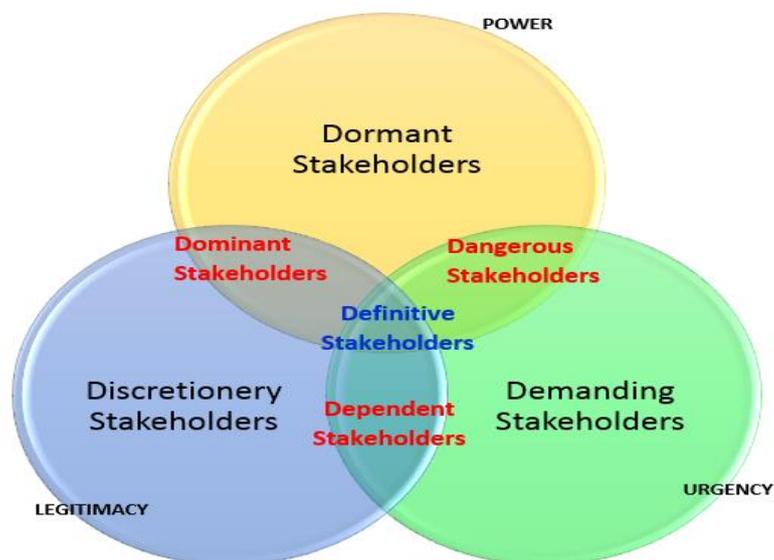


Figure 4.4: Stakeholder Salience

(Source: Mitchell et al. (1997))

Managers are advised to prioritise based on the salience that each stakeholder possesses. However, it is suggested that none of the stakeholder attributes of power, legitimacy and urgency are static so that stakeholder salience is dynamic (Mitchell et al., 1997). Hence, as no stakeholder holds a static position, the level of importance of stakeholders evolves over the course of time (Mainardes et al., 2010). This implies that particular stakeholders can move from one group to another by gaining or losing particular attributes (Jongbloed et al., 2008; Rawlins, 2006). The stakeholder position varies depending on the situation and the environment in which the salience is being assessed (Rawlins, 2006). For example, for HEIs, increased demand for retraining employees moves businesses and employers' organisations from the expectant toward the definitive stakeholder status (Jongbloed et al., 2008). By paying attention to these dynamics over time, managers focus on the most important stakeholders and thereby attempt to secure the future survival and growth of their organisation (Ackermann and Eden, 2011).

4.4 HEIs' Stakeholder analysis

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are being required to engage with a range of stakeholders on a community, regional, national and international basis (Cassells et al., 2015). As a result they are increasingly evaluated by the level and quality of their commitment to their stakeholders (Jongbloed et al., 2008). The suggestion is that, to be successful, it is important for HEIs to analyse their stakeholders and understand their salience (Avci et al., 2015). This section presents the stakeholder groups from the literature that are associated with HEIs (see Figure 4.2 above) and considers their typology in light of the discussion on stakeholder salience in Section 4.3 above.

4.4.1 HEIs' stakeholder salience

Stakeholder analysis is proposed by Jongbloed et al. (2008) '*...as a tool to assist universities in classifying stakeholders and determining stakeholder salience*' (Jongbloed et al., 2008, p.303). These authors suggest that such analysis may be useful to HEIs in explaining both the attention being paid to various communities in the environment, and the relationship between a HEI and its communities.

Figure 4.5 depicts the HEIs' stakeholders identified in Section 4.2.1 above and provides a summary classification based on the number of attributes that the stakeholders possess. It is worth noting that no stakeholder holds a static position, their level of importance evolves over time and also it is manager perceptions that determine which stakeholders are salient (Neville et al., 2011; Mainardes et al., 2010; Mitchell et al., 1997).

HEIs' External Stakeholder	Stakeholder Attributes			Stakeholder Classification
	Power	Legitimacy	Urgency	
Government and their agencies	√	√	√	Definitive
Business and industry	√	√	√	Definitive
Prospective students		√	√	Expectant
Professional bodies	√	√		Expectant
Other HEIs		√		Latent
Alumni		√		Latent
Communities		√		Latent

Figure 4.5: HEIs' Stakeholder Salience

(Source: Researcher based on literature reviewed)

Figure 4.5 shows that Government and their agencies are the most salient stakeholders, possessing all three attributes as confirmed by Jongbloed et al. (2008) who state that '*...since the government is the most important source of funds for universities it is a definitive stakeholder*' (Jongbloed et al., 2008, pp.310-11). Government and their agencies have the power to influence everything the HEI does in all three tenets of their mission (teaching and learning, research and engagement). Government and their agencies possess legitimacy as the legislator (indicating coercive power) and, as funding allocator (indicating utilitarian power), HEIs must pay attention to their claims if they wish to operate legally under government-controlled designations as a nominated HEI provider and access the resulting resources (McQuarrie et al., 2013). For the HEI, the urgency of government claims call for immediate action (Avci et al., 2015). A good example suggested by Jongbloed et al. (2008) is the greater emphasis in national policy

on research in health/life science fields at the expense of research in other scientific areas in recent years, causing HEIs to focus on these fields. Therefore, in a HEIs' context '*...government may have more power in influencing the strategic direction of the university because of their power, legitimacy and urgency.*' (Miller et al., 2014, p.269).

As a result of researching different types of HE providers De Wit and Verhoeven (2000) conclude that business and industry stakeholders are the most influential of the external stakeholders. Businesses and industry are represented on HEIs' boards, panels and committees, which gives them the attributes of legitimacy and power. They also provide funding for HEIs which is further increasing their importance (Chapleo and Simms, 2010). Jongbloed et al. (2008) posit that business and industry are definitive as employers, because they are already members of HEIs' boards and they fund HEIs' activities: '*...increased demand for retraining and retooling their employees moves businesses and employers' organisations toward the definitive stakeholder status. The emergence of the new, knowledge-driven economy has added the attribute urgency to the attributes legitimacy and power that this stakeholder already possessed because of the representation that businesses and industry have on boards of trustees, faculty boards and accreditation committees. Combined with the fact that an increased share of universities' funds come from contract research and that government expects universities to contribute (through teaching and research) to economic development and society in general, this transforms some businesses into definitive stakeholders*' (Jongbloed et al., 2008, pp.310-11). Arbo and Benneworth (2007) agree stating that there are benefits for all stakeholders (including internal stakeholders such as students) if HEIs engage with employers. This is recognised by European education policy which advocates engagement with employers to ensure the correct skills for graduates (Eurydice Report, 2014). Therefore, considering their role and importance as funders and employers, business and industry are classified as definitive stakeholders.

Prospective students and professional bodies are classified as expectant stakeholders, as shown in Figure 4.5, as they possess two attributes. These two groups have legitimate claims on the HEI because of their position as clients or accreditors respectively. Prospective students also possess the attribute of urgency (Avci et al., 2015) because they represent the future intake for a HEI (Mainardes et al., 2013) and so are a compelling stakeholder making their claims urgent. As clients, prospective students primarily rely on economic influence from fees paid and individually have little formal influence on or

power over the institution (Burrows, 1999) leaving them short one of the three attributes; power. As a result, prospective students' ability to demonstrate power will depend on their ability to form coalitions among themselves and with other groups (Burrows, 1999). Hence, prospective students do not have power as an attribute and thus are expectant stakeholders for HEIs' managers.

Professional bodies are also expectant stakeholders having the attributes of legitimacy coupled with power over the HEI. Legitimacy is realised as academics in fields such as accounting, law, medicine and engineering are in continuous dialogue with professional associations to uphold the relevance and legitimacy of their field (Jongbloed et al., 2008). Professional bodies also have normative power as they must accredit HE courses in order to legitimise the HEI's offerings (Martin and Sauvageot, 2011; Mainardes et al., 2010). Indeed, according to McQuarrie et al. (2013) professional associations are characterised as one of the primary sources of power.

In Figure 4.5, the remaining three groups, other HEIs, alumni and communities, have only one attribute, legitimacy, and thus are latent stakeholders. This group of external stakeholders have what Rawlins (2006) describes as 'diffused linkages' and include stakeholders who do not have frequent interactions with the organisation. Where the only stakeholder salience attribute is legitimacy, the relationship remains at the discretion of the HEI (Mainardes et al., 2010). Research conducted by Mainardes et al. (2010) ranked '*...former students [alumni], European professional organisations, non-academic society in general [communities], and other universities*' (Mainardes et al., 2010, p.81) as the least salient stakeholders.

In other words, these stakeholders have a legitimate interest in the HEI but it is up to HEIs' managers as to whether they consider their claims or not. Engaging with these stakeholders is '*...socially accepted and expected...*' (Mitchell et al., 1997, p.866) as their legitimacy is based on some taken for granted norms in society (Brignall and Modell, 2000). Hence, it is suggested that, though not compulsory or required, managers will engage with these stakeholder because as a minimum it is socially expected.

This chapter began with a general discussion on stakeholders: outlining both internal and external stakeholders; their salience based on the attributes of power, legitimacy, and urgency; and presented a typology based on possession of those attributes. The next

section considered HEIs' stakeholders, classifying them based on the literature and positing their salience.

Having described stakeholder analysis and salience, the next section outlines institutional theory. Subsequently, a comprehensive framework, which combines stakeholder and institutional theories, to explain HEIs' engagement with external stakeholders is proposed.

4.5 Institutional theory

This section initially establishes that institutional forces are present in the case HEI before providing an overview of the three main strands of institutional theory; old institutional economics, neo institutional economics, and new institutional sociology. Then, a more detailed examination of new institutional sociology (NIS), which is considered most pertinent to this exploratory study, is presented.

Institutions are defined as '*...settled ways of thinking and doing in a social system*' (Ribeiro and Scapens, 2006, p.98). "*Education is one of the most significant institutions in the world, across all levels and especially higher education.*" (Flynn, 2017, p.9). This implies the HEI sector can be viewed as an institution, making institutional theory appropriate for this study.

Old institutional economics (OIE) proposes a holistic and interdisciplinary view of the organisation drawing inspiration from sociology, politics and law (Moll et al., 2006a). The premise is that the understanding of the organisation should go beyond efficiency; that the organisation itself is not simply a machine of efficiency meeting technical requirements (Cai and Mehari, 2015). OIE generally considers why and how particular behaviours or structures within an organisation emerge, sustain and change over time and rejects the assumption of rational-optimising individuals (Moll et al., 2006a; Ribeiro and Scapens, 2006). The insights of OIE have been used to explain how accounting practices within an organisation evolve over time and why they evolve in a certain way, that is the emergence, continuity and change of institutions (Robalo, 2014; Burns, 2000). In particular, OIE stresses the importance of power and politics, learning and innovation for shaping processes over time and highlights that routines can eventually comprise generally accepted ways of thinking and doing (Moll et al., 2006a). However, OIE focuses

on details of internal behaviour ignoring impacts of the organisation's environment (Franco et al., 2017; Cai and Mehari, 2015). As a result OIE lacks an explanation of what causes innovations to enter an organisation and is rather vague about the reasons and processes that lead to the introduction of such innovations (Ribeiro and Scapens, 2006). The researcher rejected this form of institutional theory as pertinent to this study for two main reasons; Firstly, OIE focuses on shaping processes over time (Contrafattoa and Burns, 2013; Moll et al., 2006a; Burns, 2000). As HE performance measurement is in the early development phase in Ireland the system has scarcely been established and therefore has not been shaped within the institutions over time. Secondly, this research is concerned with how the measurement system was initially adopted in the case HEI, rather than looking at the emergence, continuity and change of the system through time, as considered in OIE studies.

Rather than comprising a single paradigm, there are a mesh of different theories and sub theories that have collectively become known as neo institutional economics (NIE) (Robalo, 2014; Moll et al., 2006a). NIE originated from transaction cost theory and principal-agent theory and was further developed by subsequent work to its current form (Hood, 1991). The objective of NIE is to provide a micro-analytical approach to the study of economic organisations (Moll et al., 2006a), by highlighting the routinised enactment of rules and practices in organisations, and resistance to change (Ribeiro and Scapens, 2006). NIE accepts the notion of a restricted rationality in which, decision-making is confined as the decision-maker cannot manage all the factors that could interfere with the decision being made (Robalo, 2014). Moreover, NIE focuses on the economic rationalisation of decisions whilst ignoring the social impact on decision-making (Heugens and Lander, 2009). According to the European School on New Institutional Economics (2017) *'New Institutional Economics (NIE) focuses on the analysis of the economic impact and on the evolution of co-ordination devices: institutions, organisations and contracts'*. NIE seeks to explain the existence or appearance of some organisations and the non-existence or disappearance of others. According to NIE, organisations exist where their benefits exceed the cost involved in creating and maintaining them. Most extant accounting literature that uses NIE describes the existence of accounting configurations in cost minimising/efficiency terms (Moll et al., 2006a). The researcher rejected this form of institutional theory as suitable for this research based on two tenets. Firstly, the neoclassical theories of the firm on which NIE is founded do not

fit HEIs as they are not established solely for economic reasons. Secondly, NIE focuses on economic impact and has an under-socialised conception of organisational behaviour that ignores the influence of social forces on organisational action and decision making (Heugens and Lander, 2009). However, this study focuses on the broader impact of social forces on organisational action.

New institutional sociology (NIS) focusing primarily on the organisation (Franco et al., 2017) assumes that inter-organisational structures and procedures are largely shaped by external factors rather than cost-minimising objectives (Moll et al., 2006a). It proposes that organisations that operate in a comparable environment are subject to similar demands. NIS is concerned with organisations at a more macro level (Burns, 2000) and is a powerful theory when it comes to explaining the adoption of innovations by institutional organisations (Ribeiro and Scapens, 2006). It is the emphasis of NIS on institutionalism as a process occurring in the environment of organisations (Clerkin, 2017) and the elaboration of the macro environment perspective by contributors such as DiMaggio and Powell (1991) that make NIS appropriate for this study. One of the aims of this research is to explore the influence of the institutional environment on the engagement measurement system in the case HEI, making NIS an appropriate lens. NIS is discussed in detail below.

4.5.1 New institutional sociology

NIS provides an enriched conceptualisation of the environment and how this may affect organisations (Ribeiro and Scapens, 2006). It is particularly well equipped to address homogeneity across organisations, as it emphasises the adoption of common practices (Verbeke and Tung, 2012; Heugens and Lander, 2009; Dacin, 1997). The following sections include a discussion of NIS based on three characteristics commonly found in the literature: legitimacy, decoupling, and isomorphism (Mulligan, 2012). It also briefly notes HE research that has applied NIS. First, there is a discussion of the role of NIS in legitimising an organisation. Next, the concept of decoupling is outlined and the external pressures on an organisation, classified as coercive, mimetic and normative isomorphism are described. Finally, a brief outline of previous HE research that has applied a NIS lens is presented.

4.5.1.1 Legitimacy

Legitimacy is a resource that an organisation requires in order to operate (Mahadeo et al., 2011; de la luz Fernández-Alles and Valle-Cabrera, 2006; Tilling, 2004; Suchman, 1995). It has been defined as ‘... a generalised perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions’ (Suchman, 1995, p.574). Previous research concluded that in order to survive organisations need to appear legitimate by conforming to prevailing social norms, rules and requirements (Covaleski and Dirsmith, 2012; Barringer and Harrison, 2000). Low levels of legitimacy may ultimately lead to the forfeiture of the right to operate. Consequently, organisations adopt a range of mechanisms in order to improve their legitimacy (Lodge and Wegrich, 2005; Tilling, 2004). The mechanisms themselves are seen as legitimating characteristics which establish appropriateness and rationality (Mulligan, 2012). The variability of legitimacy is influenced by both time and place (Deegan, 2006). As a result of this variability, a legitimacy gap may arise between how society believes an organisation should act, and how it is perceived that the organisation has acted (Deegan, 2006). In order to improve legitimacy, organisations attempt to influence perception by acting in certain ways. For example, some organisations buffer internal operations from external pressures, allowing them to operate independently of these pressures (Fogarty and Dirsmith, 2001). In order to avoid dysfunction, this independence from external pressures results in actual organisational structures and procedures that are decoupled from external expectations (Janićijević, 2015; Pache and Santos, 2013; Mulligan, 2012; Moll et al., 2006a; Fogarty and Dirsmith, 2001). This decoupling is discussed further in the following section.

4.5.1.2 Decoupling

There are three types of coupling recognised in the literature; decoupled systems, loosely coupled systems, and tightly coupled systems. Decoupled systems have been described by Orton and Weick (1990) as a system where there is distinctiveness (work processes reflecting indeterminate task technologies) without responsiveness (work processes not reflecting formal structure or the institutional environment). Loosely coupled systems occur where there is distinctiveness and responsiveness (as opposed to decoupled systems where there is distinctiveness but not responsiveness) (Orton and Weick, 1990). Tightly coupled systems are responsive, but not distinctive (Jansen, 2008)

Mulligan (2012) elaborates on decoupled systems stating that decoupling '*...refers to the situation in which the formal organisational structure or practice is separate and distinct [distinctiveness] from actual organisational practice i.e. the practice is not integrated into the organisation's managerial and operational processes [responsiveness]*' (Mulligan, 2012, p.85). NIS studies, as proposed by Meyer and Rowan (1977) (quoted in Orton and Weick (1990)) contend that organisations that have to reconcile incompatibilities between institutional pressure and technical pressure respond by loosely coupling or decoupling formal structures and procedures, adopted in order to acquire legitimacy and guarantee the resources required for the survival of the organisation, from the everyday organisational practices so as not to disturb the normal processes of daily operations (Ribeiro and Scapens, 2006; Orton and Weick, 1990).

Decoupling is particularly adopted in situations where a policy prescribed by external institutional stakeholders conflicts with an institutionalised practice promoted internally by an organisation's members (Pache and Santos, 2013). For example, such policies might include policies imposed by government or professional bodies for the case HEI. To comply with such externally prescribed policies, institutions and individuals often display '*...regulatory ritualism: reports are produced, assessments performed, performance indicators reported*' (Jarvis, 2014, p.249). The HEI undertakes work processes reflecting indeterminate task technologies (distinctiveness) but these work processes do not reflect formal structure or the HEIs' environment (responsiveness). Compliance with the regulation occurs, but in a manner that is disconnected from the culture, practices and the behaviours of individuals and institutions (Jarvis, 2014); Hildebrand and McDavid (2011) concur with this finding, concluding that externally imposed performance reporting policies will tend to be '*...done in ways that avoid acknowledging programme or service shortcomings – to avoid acknowledging anything that could become a political liability.*' (Hildebrand and McDavid, 2011, p.67). Implementation of these types of externally imposed policies is easier when formal structures are decoupled from backstage routines (Heugens and Lander, 2009). This is because preparation of documents for internal and external purposes are separated and their contents are not linked (Jansen, 2008).

Decoupling may be a successful strategy for ensuring legitimacy in the short-term. However, its assumption that organisations are able to avoid the scrutiny of external stakeholders, who are not aware of the misalignment between organisational policies and

practices, cannot be sustained in the long-term (Pache and Santos, 2013). Another issue, is that decoupling carries strong ‘...*intellectual and affective baggage, striking many critics (e.g. Perrow 1985; Hall, 1992) as connoting deception, duplicity, and merely “ceremonial” conformity*’ (Scott, 2005, p.14). In the medium to longer term, decoupling results in a negative effect on improved legitimacy, the reason the decoupling strategy was undertaken in the first place. Not only does decoupling result in a loss of legitimacy, it also leads to formal structures and procedures that are not effective or efficient, but ceremonial in an attempt to signal conformity (Janićijević, 2015; Mulligan, 2012; Lester, 2005). The aim is to appear loyal to the institutionalised rules, while in reality these rules are not applied, because in practice more effective solutions are being used (Janićijević, 2015).

Previous research on HEIs has concluded that decoupling is evident between HE activities and external reporting. For example, Flynn (2017) found that art school staff coped with the ceremonialised nature of HE qualifications (the rules and evaluation adopted by school management) by decoupling, or at best only loosely coupling, from the actualities of how the job is really carried out i.e. catering for students’ need for studio time for the creation of art from personal necessity, not for academic grades to get a job in the creative industries, or to become a researcher. In their study, Ferlie et al. (2008) also highlight decoupling that occurs between HE core activities and external pressures, stating that ‘*The professional bureaucratic core of higher education institutions insulate themselves from external pressures by decoupling the centre of the University from policy demands*’ (Ferlie et al., 2008, p.341). Finally, Habersam et al. (2013), whilst conducting research on Austrian HEIs, found evidence of decoupling where performance measures were presented to the outside ‘...*but played a minor role in internal management processes*’ (Habersam et al., 2013, p.332).

4.5.1.3 Isomorphism

NIS assumes that organisations sharing the same environment will employ similar practices and thus become isomorphic (similar or corresponding) to each other (Claeyé and Jackson, 2012). NIS has been used by researchers to study how information is sometimes used ceremonially and how practices conform to external pressures (Robalo, 2014). These external pressures have been classified as coercive, mimetic and normative isomorphism (DiMaggio and Powell (1983) quoted in Nanka-Bruce (2009)). According to NIS, organisations are socially rewarded by legitimacy, resources, and survival based

on their acceptance of these coercive, mimetic and normative isomorphic mechanisms (de la luz Fernández-Alles and Valle-Cabrera, 2006), as shown in Figure 4.6 and discussed below.

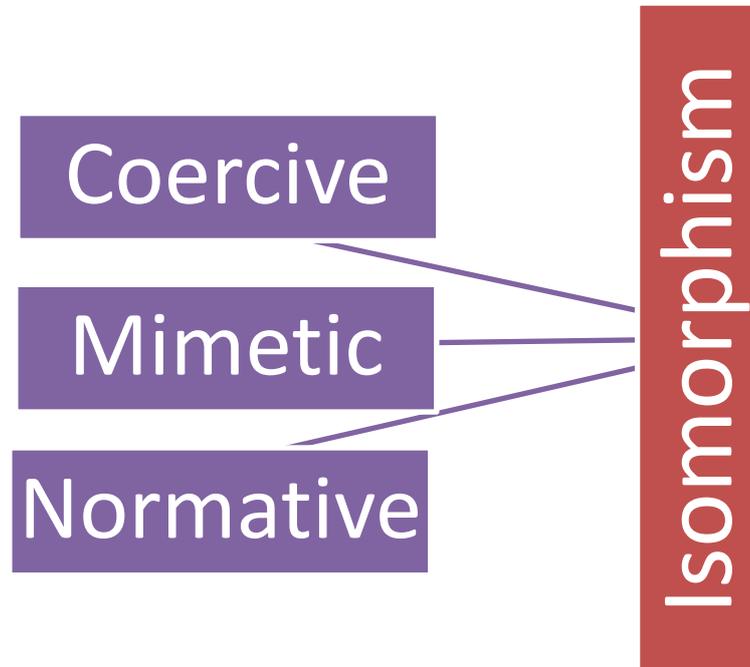


Figure 4.6: Isomorphic mechanisms

(Source: Researcher)

Coercive isomorphism

This section considers the first external pressure on organisations as suggested by NIS; coercive isomorphism. Coercive isomorphism proposes that external bodies exert formal and informal force on an organisation to adopt specific procedures (Moll et al., 2006a). These coercive pressures can force an organisation to behave and to structure itself in a certain way (Collin et al., 2009). Institutions may experience these pressures as economic control, force or persuasion (Gounko and Smale, 2007). McQuarrie et al. (2013) propose two types of coercion: regulatory and social.

Regulatory Coercion

Regulatory coercion is described as ‘...*the force by which government sets boundaries for the category of legally operating organisations...*’ (McQuarrie et al., 2013, p.156) through the formal authority of legislation and by controlling resources on which the

organisation depends (McQuarrie et al., 2013). Government and other strong organisations upon which the focal organisation is dependant can apply coercive pressures (Arbo and Benneworth, 2007; Csizmadia et al., 2007). Research by Jawahar and McLaughlin (2001) indicates that organisations will pay more attention to stakeholders ‘...*who control resources critical to the organization than to stakeholders who do not control such critical resources*’ (Jawahar and McLaughlin, 2001, p.402). The consequence of operating outside the regulatory boundary will result in the organisation not gaining the needed resources or suffering from sanctions imposed by the regulatory authority (Collin et al., 2009).

Governments ensure their policies are implemented within HEIs through regulation (Gornitzka and Stensaker, 2014; Broadbent et al., 2010) and funding arrangements meaning that coercive pressures are typically made and enforced by the state and public authorities (Nanka-Bruce, 2009). Governments use regulatory coercion to ‘...*command and control...*’ (Clemens and Douglas, 2006, p.485). In HE, government, their agencies, and policies, are an important formal external force exerting pressure on HEIs to engage with wider society and to measure that engagement (Pollard et al., 2013b).

In a study of HE regulation in Hong Kong, Jarvis (2014) found that regulatory coercion was designed to reposition the sector in line with the economic vision articulated by governments. He contends that bureaucratic encroachment into the operating environments of HEIs has led to reporting disclosures reaching into virtually every academic and managerial activity. However, Jarvis (2014) also concludes that ‘...*coercive regulatory practices...keeps sector participants in a constant state of metric fetishism*’ (Jarvis, 2014, pp.248-9). The result is a tendency toward compliance in terms of data collection and reporting but the regulatory impact on behaviours and sector outcomes is less clear. Institutions and individuals in the sector often display ‘...*regulatory ritualism: reports are produced, assessments performed, performance indicators reported*’ (Jarvis, 2014, p.249), but in a manner that is disconnected from the culture, practices and the behaviours of individuals and institutions. As a result, coercive state-led development is not always destined to success and can sometimes generate forms of regulatory performance, or even organisational performance, that are decoupled from practice and that comply without meaningful compliance (Jarvis, 2014).

In general, compliance with regulation, and thus conformance with coercion, provides the legitimacy associated with legal status and confers government-controlled resources on an organisation. However, such compliance may not confer reputation or legitimacy in the eyes of other stakeholders (McQuarrie et al., 2013). Other stakeholders, such as communities, confer legitimacy on an organisation by ensuring their requirements are met through social coercion, as discussed in the next section.

Social Coercion

McQuarrie et al. (2013) propose that legitimacy associated with other stakeholders' social judgement and norms cannot be conferred by government but instead can be achieved through social coercion. Social coercion is based on a perceived social contract between the organisation and the society in which it operates. This social contract has been referred to by various philosophers over hundreds of years (Deegan, 2006). The concept of the social contract is reinforced by Langford et al. (2006) and Gounko and Smale (2007) who posit that informal pressure may arise from cultural expectations in the society within which organisations function, and by Claeys and Jackson (2012) and Connolly et al. (2013) who conclude that stakeholder requirements might, explicitly or implicitly, coerce organisations into adopting certain practices. Implicit social coercion is also found in research on voluntary environmental protection which concludes that many voluntary initiatives have gone further than legislative requirements (regulatory coercion) and have been implemented as a result of societal expectations. Indeed it may be in the organisation's best interest to adopt voluntary initiatives due to social coercion, rather than coercion by government, as the organisation will be rewarded with competitive advantage (Clemens and Douglas, 2006) due to increasing finance from investors and customers (King, 2008).

In conclusion, organisations are subject to coercion from both regulation and the larger social system. Regulatory coercion provides the legitimacy associated with legal status and confers government-controlled resources on the organisation. Social coercion is based on the perceived social contract between the organisation and society and confers legitimacy through cultural expectations. Both forms of coercion influence how an organisation behaves and adopts practices as well as how it structures itself.

Mimetic isomorphism

This section reviews the second external pressure on organisations, as proposed by NIS; mimetic isomorphism. Mimetic isomorphism refers to the processes of imitation that organisations take to become similar to other organisations in their environments (Di Maggio and Powel (1983) quoted in Yang and Hyland (2012)). Inter-organisational imitation within a sector reinforces regulatory and social coercion (Claeyé and Jackson, 2012; Gounko and Smale, 2007). Inter-organisational imitation strategies often involve imitating or mimicking industry norms where managers, either consciously or unconsciously, copy the strategies of successful organisations (Gounko and Smale, 2007; Barringer and Harrison, 2000). In using such strategies, organisations hope to perform successful activities sometimes without really realising that they have done so; they will be regarded as legitimate since they act in accordance with the expectations of other entities (Collin et al., 2009). DiMaggio and Powell (1983), quoted in Arbo and Benneworth (2007) and Langford et al. (2006), contend that when organisational technologies are poorly understood, goals are ambiguous or environments create symbolic uncertainty, organisations are under pressure to model themselves on others in their field that they perceive as more legitimate and successful. Once enough institutions do things a certain way, that particular course of action becomes taken for granted, or institutionalised, and thereafter, other institutions will undertake that course of action (Haveman, 1993).

Haunschild and Miner (1997) suggest that there are three standards for imitation: frequency imitation (copying very common practices), trait imitation (copying practices of other organisations with certain features), and outcome imitation (imitation based on a practice's apparent impact on others). Their findings show that all three imitation modes occur independently, and that uncertainty enhances frequency imitation, but only some trait and outcome imitation (Haunschild and Miner, 1997).

The literature suggests that there are a number of flaws associated with a strategy based on adopting mimetic isomorphism. Firstly, mimetic isomorphism at an institutional level may lead to under-performance (Nanka-Bruce, 2009) as fools rush in, engage in a herd mentality (Langford et al., 2006) and emulate to show legitimacy rather than conduct a full evaluation of all the options and the potential impact for that particular organisation (Lodge and Wegrich, 2005). This concurs with Haunschild and Miner's (1997) research which showed an increase in frequency imitation in times of uncertainty as organisations

imitate to show legitimacy rather than improvement in organisational performance. A second issue with mimetic isomorphism is that decision-makers will tend to downplay, or may even ignore the actions of organisations in other industries, viewing organisations in the same industry as more important (Haveman, 1993). This ignorance of best practices available elsewhere (Haveman, 1993) raises questions about the usefulness of mimetic isomorphism across industries and geographical borders (Enders and Westerheijden, 2014).

As discussed above, when facing uncertainty organisations tend to mimic entities that are considered both similar and successful in their organisational field (Collin et al., 2009; Langford et al., 2006; Haveman, 1993). This also occurs in HE. For example, Gounko and Smale (2007), while investigating the adoption of admissions and funding policies in Russian HE, found that HEIs model themselves on other HEIs that they perceive as more prestigious or innovative. In his study on diversity in HE systems, Marginson, (quoted in Bothwell (2017) Times Higher Education online), also concluded that HEIs imitate each other. He stated that ‘...*there has been a decline in the diversity of institutional types and increased convergence of missions through isomorphistic imitation*’.

Normative isomorphism

This section outlines the third external pressure on an entity; normative isomorphism (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991). Normative isomorphism suggests that legitimacy and acceptance are achieved through conformity to usual or expected behaviour i.e. the norm. This form of isomorphism stems primarily from professionalisation as members try to establish a cognitive base and legitimisation for their occupational autonomy (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991). NIS theorists contend that managers make decisions based on the normative rationality for their profession, which is rooted in historical precedents and trajectories, social justification, norms, and habits (Verbeke and Tung, 2012).

Normative pressures to conform are primarily to acquire professionalism within an organisational segment, division or department (Nanka-Bruce, 2009; Lodge and Wegrich, 2005) by becoming more business-like and market-orientated (Claeyé and Jackson, 2012). Lodge and Wegrich (2005) contend that normative pressures to acquire professionalism ‘...*emerge both as a result from shared educational experiences (and the values instilled through shared experiences or common curricula), biased selection of personnel, and close networks of communication among policy professionals regardless*

of formal jurisdictional boundaries' (Lodge and Wegrich, 2005, p.217). According to DiMaggio and Powell (1991) two aspects of professionalisation are important sources of isomorphism. One aspect relates to formal education and the legitimisation of education produced by HEI specialists (including universities and professional training institutions); the second aspect is the growth and elaboration of professional networks (including professional and trade associations) that span organisations and across which new models diffuse rapidly. Both aspects lead to an understanding among professionals about the way things are done and are important in the diffusion of this understanding.

In HEIs many professions are represented from lecturers, to researchers, to professionals in specific fields such as accountants and engineers, and professional administrators. HEIs develop ways of thinking and norms, which are further diffused by professional associations and participation by HE professionals in inter-organisational stakeholder networks (Arbo and Benneworth, 2007). The aim for these professional groups is to promote their competence in society (Collin et al., 2009). As a result, normative pressure occurs in the presence of a strong professional culture that is united in two ways. Firstly, the professional culture is united to the core principles of how policy should be conducted (Lodge and Wegrich, 2005). Secondly, the professional culture is united in acknowledging that the future of the organisation and the future of the professionals are inextricably linked (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991). In the field of HE, accreditation agencies, professional certification boards and training institutions reinforce normative expectations and impose standards, rules and values on the HEI. Practices are disseminated through global policy actors (e.g. EU and OECD), professional associations, conferences, exchange programmes, expert reports and publications, information technology, and academic journals (Gounko and Smale, 2007).

In conclusion, any of the three mechanisms discussed above may lead to isomorphic behaviour by organisations. While these isomorphic effects can be distinguished conceptually, in empirical reality they may prove difficult to disentangle, DiMaggio and Powell (quoted in (Mizruchi and Fein, 1999)) '*...took pains to point out that these three mechanisms through which institutional isomorphism is diffused are not necessarily empirically distinguishable*' (Mizruchi and Fein, 1999, p.657). Each mechanism involves a separate process, but two or more could operate simultaneously and their effects will not always be clearly identifiable (Mizruchi and Fein, 1999).

4.5.1.4 NIS Research

Institutional theory has become a popular and powerful explanatory tool for studying various organisational issues, including those in the context of HE (Cai and Mehari, 2015). Much education research has analysed HEIs by applying a NIS lens (Habersam et al., 2013; Covaleski and Dirsmith, 2012; Gounko and Smale, 2007; Modell, 2003). The relevance of using NIS is supported because HEIs, being public institutions, are vulnerable to interest groups and reform movements, and are expected to reflect societal values and goals (Gounko and Smale, 2007). Moreover, NIS not only dominates the application of institutional theory to HE, but has moved to centre stage in HE research since the turn of the new millennium (Cai and Mehari, 2015). The domination of NIS in HE research parallels the increasing homogeneity in HE internationally (Hazelkorn, 2007) as discussed in the homogeneity in HE section of chapter 2 (section 2.4). Likewise, in recent years NIS has also been prominent in extending the study of accounting to include social and institutional dimensions of organisations and their environment (Clerkin, 2017; Hopper et al., 2015; Moll et al., 2006a; Ribeiro and Scapens, 2006).

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter commenced by defining stakeholders introducing HEIs' stakeholders and presenting them as those persons or entities with an interest in the activity of the HEI. The concept of stakeholder salience was outlined based on the attributes of power, legitimacy and urgency. Stakeholders may be classified as latent, expectant or definitive depending on whether they possess one, two or three attributes. Latent stakeholders have low levels of salience and thus the HEI can engage with them at their own discretion. Expectant stakeholders have medium levels of salience and therefore have some expectation of engaging with the HEI. Definitive stakeholders have high levels of salience and consequently the HEI must engage with them. Next, the various strands of institutional theory were described with particular focus on NIS. This involved a discussion of the three main characteristics of NIS found in the literature; legitimacy, decoupling and isomorphism. A more detailed discussion of coercive, mimetic and normative pressures on organisations was then presented as NIS posits that these pressures influence institutions to become isomorphic with each other.

This exploratory research, in examining the external influences on engagement and engagement measurement in the case HEI, uses both stakeholder and NIS theories. The next chapter combines these theories, proposing a model to examine HEIs' engagement.

CHAPTER 5: THEORETICAL MODEL

5.1 Introduction

This exploratory research, in examining the external influences on engagement and its measurement in the case HEI, applies concepts from both stakeholder and new institutional theories. It posits that stakeholders and institutions comprise the main external influences on an organisation, in particular the main external influences on HEIs. This chapter combines both theories and proposes a model or configuration of external influences. It begins by discussing commonalities and differences between stakeholder and institutional theories. Next, an empirically untested model proposed by Lee (2011) to configure external influences in CSR strategy is outlined and an adaptation of this model, focusing on engagement in HEIs, is proposed. The next section suggests how concepts from both stakeholders and new institutional theories can contribute to an examination of the influences on engagement and its measurement in HEIs.

5.2 Combining stakeholder and institutional theory

The following paragraphs present the concepts of NIS and stakeholder theory that may be applied in the examination of HEI engagement with external stakeholders and measurement of this interaction. There are four areas where NIS and stakeholder theories combined provide a more holistic explanation of organisational behaviour. These include: issues of agency actors; proximate and distal influences; heterogeneous and homogeneous actions by an organisation; and stakeholder induced change and stability from isomorphic pressures.

The issue of agency actors is the first area where the combination of both NIS and stakeholder theories may contribute to a more holistic explanation of organisational behaviour. Immergut (1998) contends that institutions do not determine behaviour, they simply provide a context for action that helps us to understand why actors make the choices that they do. Other researchers agree that although institutions have had enormous influence on the behaviour of organisations, organisational actors are unlikely to blindly conform to isomorphic pressures without due consideration of its effects on the organisation (Alarcon-del-Amo et al., 2016; Heugens and Lander, 2009). Despite this,

NIS lacks consideration of such agency actors (Cai and Mehari, 2015). Many NIS researchers have attempted to address this lack of consideration of organisational actors by combining theories. Research by Cai and Mehari (2015) on the use of institutional theory in HE research found that over a third of the papers they reviewed (39 of 93 papers reviewed) had combined institutional theory with other theories in an attempt to fill this agency gap because '*...the sole use of the theory is not enough to comprehensively grasp the nature of HEIs*' (Cai and Mehari, 2015, p.11). Recognising the lack of attention paid to agency actors in institutional theory, and the importance of the influence of external actors in HE research (Brint et al., 2009), stakeholder theory is proposed to address this gap. Stakeholder theory is appropriate as '*...some actors, including governmental and professional organisations, have the potential to change the institutionalised rules through their actions*' (Cai and Mehari, 2015, p.15). In summary, stakeholder theory provides actors for NIS research while also confirming how institutions are subject to stakeholders/actors influences (Jongbloed et al., 2008).

Secondly, both theories consider distal versus proximate influences differently. Ignoring actors, as is the case in NIS, means that institutions remain a distal mechanism that can be ignored by organisations leading to decoupling between rhetoric and practices (Lee, 2011). This occurs because institutional mechanisms require actors to interpret and transmit the institutional meaning for the focal organisation (Lee, 2011). Therefore, without such actors the institutional mechanism remains distal. As noted in section 4.5.1.2, a decoupled system is one where there is distinctiveness (work processes reflecting indeterminate task technologies) without responsiveness (work processes not reflecting formal structure or the institutional environment) (Orton and Weick, 1990). Decoupling has been considered a natural response to the requirement to provide information to a broad range of actors, such as stakeholders (Modell, 2003). NIS studies, by ignoring the influence of actors, look to the macro or distal (arms-length) factors such as policy, cultural norms, and routines as the main aspects shaping organisational behaviour (Burns, 2000). Since the behaviour of organisations is to a large extent shaped by their institutional environments, it is natural to pay attention to the macro concerns that may be identified at a national/system level and that affect behaviour, such as rules, regulations, quality assessment procedures, accountability standards and incentive schemes (Jongbloed et al., 2008). However, more proximate concerns also influence organisational behaviour. Stakeholder influences represent more proximate, immediate

and micro-level influences. Stakeholder theory claims that organisations can change their social behaviour in response to the pressure of salient stakeholder groups (Lee, 2011) who can moderate the isomorphic pressures (Heugens and Lander, 2009). In relation to this study, applying NIS posits that as regulations, social norms and cultural preferences favour engagement, a growing number of HEIs will embrace engagement to assure their continued legitimacy. Applying stakeholder theory posits that the micro concerns of salient stakeholders have the strongest influence on that engagement (Lee, 2011).

Thirdly, NIS and stakeholder theories view the organisational environment differently. NIS assumes homogeneous environments and is founded on the premise that organisations respond in a homogeneous way to the same sets of environmental conditions and as a result increasingly resemble each other (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991). NIS argues that institutional environments account for homogeneous organisational actions as a result of abstract institutional pressures such as ‘forces’, ‘templates’, ‘scripts’, ‘cultural repertoires’, ‘cultural frameworks’, ‘facts’, and ‘shared meaning systems’, which have no easily identifiable sender (Pedersen and Gwozdz, 2014). However, ‘...*institutional environments are multiple, enormously diverse and variable over time...*’ (Scott, 1987, p.508). Accordingly, Scott (1987) suggests that to neglect the presence and power of multiple environments is to ignore significant factors shaping organisational structures and practices. Conversely, stakeholder theory embraces the concept of multiple institutional environments and has highlighted the selective adoption of competing environmental demands which has resulted in heterogeneous responses (Ackermann and Eden, 2011). Stakeholder theory contends that salience accounts for heterogeneous actions as a result of concrete demands of market and non-market stakeholders, such as customers, regulators and local communities (Pedersen and Gwozdz, 2014). However, the dominant direction of stakeholder pressures can also change, namely, from supporting heterogeneity at the organisation level to fostering industry homogeneity, and vice versa. Therefore, stakeholders not only contribute to inter-entity heterogeneity but through isomorphic pressures can also contribute to inter-entity homogeneity (in line with NIS thinking) (Cai and Mehari, 2015; Verbeke and Tung, 2012). The question raised therefore is how stakeholders and institutions have interacted to shape entities (McQuarrie et al., 2013; Brignall and Ballantine, 2004). The model developed in this research aims to address this question.

Finally, the change versus stability dichotomy of stakeholder theory and NIS may impact engagement and its measurement. Stability and change are endemic to social systems and organisations (Hopper et al., 2015), including HEIs. In HEIs, the existence and importance of a wide set of stakeholders is recognised in the literature (Alarcon-del-Amo et al., 2016; Avci et al., 2015; Maric, 2013; Tang and Hussin, 2011; Burrows, 1999; Reavill, 1997). Stakeholder theory proposes that satisfying this large number of stakeholders, whose interests and importance are constantly evolving, can induce change (Brignall and Modell, 2000). The theory posits that stakeholders constantly reinterpret and challenge rules that are not in line with their interests (Bjorkquist, 2010). Stakeholder salience and interactions lead to changes within HEIs (Miller et al., 2014), as organisations change their social behaviour in response to the pressure of salient stakeholder groups (Lee, 2011). In conflict with the impetus to change is the stability that is induced by institutional effects. According to NIS, institutions are resilient social structures that provide stability and meaning in social life (Pedersen and Gwozdz, 2014). Scott (2005) summarises the role of institutional effects on organisational stability when he postulates ‘...*that institutions are variously comprised of cultural-cognitive, normative and regulative elements that, together with associated activities and resources, provide stability and meaning to social life*’ (Scott, 2005, p.8). Therefore, change implementation, such as the implementation of an engagement measurement system, may be championed by stakeholders and resisted by institutional pressures, or vice versa.

Figure 5.1 summarises the aspects of stakeholder theory and NIS pertinent to this study, as discussed in the preceding paragraphs.

Stakeholder Theory	New Institutional Sociology (NIS)
Encompasses the influence of actors including the dependency relationship between organisations and stakeholders (Lee, 2011; Brint et al., 2009; Jongbloed et al., 2008).	Devoid of agency and concrete actors to activate institutional mechanisms proposing passive conformance across all institutional conditions (Cai and Mehari, 2015; Lee, 2011; Burns, 2000; Immergut, 1998).
Offers a micro, proximate view of organisations (Lee, 2011; Heugens and Lander, 2009).	Offers a macro, distal view of organisations (Clerkin, 2017; Lee, 2011; Benneworth and Jongbloed, 2009).
Stakeholder salience accounts for both heterogeneous and homogeneous organisational actions (Cai and Mehari, 2015; Pedersen and Gwozdz, 2014; Verbeke and Tung, 2012; Ackermann and Eden, 2011).	Institutional environments account for homogeneous organisational actions (Pedersen and Gwozdz, 2014; DiMaggio and Powell, 1991).
Change is induced by satisfying the interests of different stakeholders (Miller et al., 2014; Lee, 2011; Bjorkquist, 2010; Brignall and Modell, 2000).	Stability is induced by isomorphic institutional pressures (Cai and Mehari, 2015; Pedersen and Gwozdz, 2014; Scott, 1987).

Figure 5.1: Pertinent aspects of stakeholder theory and NIS

(Source: Researcher)

In conclusion, this exploratory research requires two theories to present a more holistic view of external influences on the case organisation. This is achieved by combining stakeholder theory and NIS. This combination of theories means; the influence of external actors/agency may be incorporated; organisations may be viewed at both macro and micro levels; the effect of homogeneous and heterogeneous environments may be considered; and change or stability due to stakeholders or arising from the institutional environment may be examined. The combination of these theories is discussed further in the next section, which outlines Lee’s (2011) model of the configuration of external influences in a corporate social responsibility (CSR) setting. For this study, the researcher proposes an adaptation to this model, substituting HE engagement strategy for CSR. The adapted model is described in subsequent sections.

5.3 Configuration of external influences

When addressing the question of how an organisation's corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategy is shaped, Lee (2011) proposes a model of the configuration of external influences that combines institutional and stakeholder theories. He contends that when constructing their CSR strategies organisations scan for different signals in the environment and generally pay attention to the signal with the highest intensity and coherence. The strength of the signal from the environment depends on the degree of alignment in the configuration of external forces related to the particular social or environmental issue. Lee (2011) proposes that different elements of an organisation's institutional and stakeholder environment often shift and combine to create a unique configuration of external influences on CSR-related issues. Sometimes, these external influences can send conflicting signals, diminishing the intensity and urgency of both signals. However, when the two signals are aligned, they reinforce each other and are amplified as shown in Figure 5.2 below.

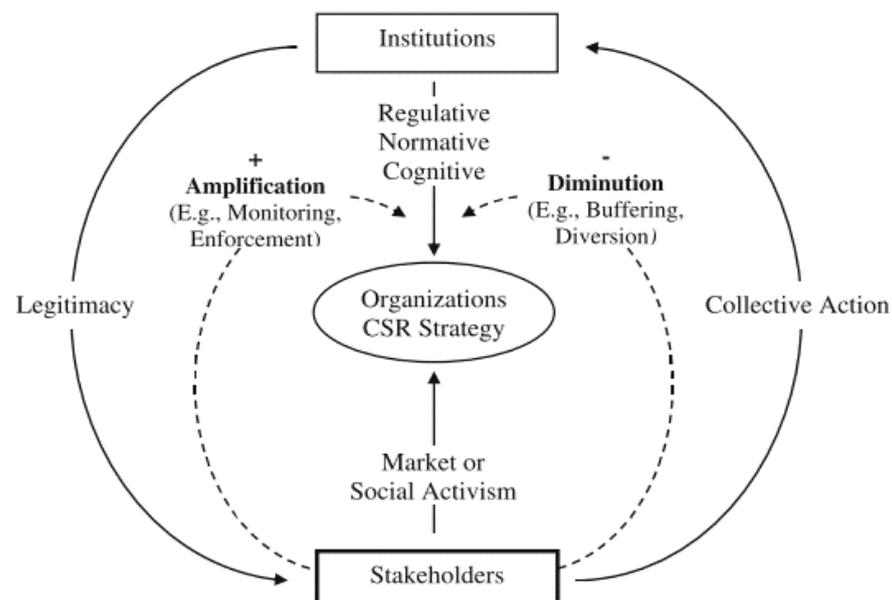


Figure 5.2: A model of the configuration of external influences

(Source: Lee (2011))

In describing his configuration, Lee (2011) explains each section in detail, strengthening the value of the model. Firstly, he contends that institutions influence stakeholders and

stakeholders influence institutions, through legitimacy and collective action respectively. Lee (2011) states that stakeholders depend on institutions for their legitimacy and that institutional legitimacy is a pre-condition for effective stakeholder mobilisation and salience. Institutions may legitimise and empower some particular stakeholder groups over others by providing the necessary authority as well as policy tools, while stakeholders can affect the construction of new institutions through collective action. Collective action binds individual stakeholders together, assists in the formation of a common identity and interests, and provides the means for stakeholder strategic action (King, 2008).

Secondly, Lee (2011) states that direct contributions to CSR strategy are made by regulative, normative, and cognitive influences emanating from institutions, and market and social activism pressures arising from stakeholders. Lee (2011) posits that the configuration of external influences, that shapes corporate CSR strategies relating to a particular social or environmental issue, consists of two interdependent social mechanisms. On the one hand, institutions constitute what evolutionary psychologists and economic sociologists call distal mechanisms, which are macro-level factors that shape organisational incentives and social preferences. By providing regulative, normative and cognitive structures, institutions give stability and meaning to social behaviour (Scott, 1987). Regulative, normative, and cognitive social systems have all been identified by theorists as central elements of institutions (Scott, 1987). Palthe (2014) contends that, *'Theorists emphasising the regulative view of institutions (e.g. Barnett & Carroll, 1993) are likely to view organisational change as fundamentally a product of market forces and regulative organisational elements such as new policies driven through coercive means. Normative theorists (e.g. Selznick, 1948) emphasise the role of social obligation and are likely to focus on informal structures rather than formal structures in organisational change. They are also likely to emphasise the immediate environment of organisations rather than the more general cultural rules of the society at large in driving such organisational change. Cognitive theorists, or those examining changes in the cognitive aspects of organisations (e.g. Powell & DiMaggio, 1991), are likely to focus on changes in conceptual beliefs, mental models, and interpretations of shared meanings when organisations go through significant change.'* (Palthe, 2014, p.61).

On the other hand, stakeholder pressures in the model also emanate from market and social activism. Lee (2011) contends that stakeholders constitute proximate mechanisms,

which refer to more immediate and often micro-level influences. By drawing on available power and legitimacy, stakeholders can serve their own or social interests by directly pressuring firms. For example, some community stakeholder groups use social activism to influence targeted firms (King, 2008), while other stakeholder groups use market and/or legal mechanisms to influence firms (Lee and Lounsbury, 2015). At the same time, intense competition makes firms more sensitive to stakeholder concerns as they search for new ways to differentiate themselves from competitors (King, 2008). Stakeholders can harness social activism to direct attention toward good corporate citizenship through increased employment, local corporate philanthropy, and a reduction in negative externalities such as pollution. Market mechanisms, that prioritise profit, competitive advantage, and cost reduction can also be harnessed by stakeholders to influence firms (Lee and Lounsbury, 2015). McConville and Hyndman (2015) contend that market pressures can lead organisations to build relationships with stakeholders that exhibit closeness, possibly through the experience or visibility of the organisation's activities.

Finally, the model suggests that stakeholders can mediate institutional effects by acting as either buffers or amplifiers of institutional influences. Stakeholders can amplify institutional pressure by directly channelling the message to organisational decision-makers. Alternatively, they can diminish the institutional effects by acting as buffers between organisations and institutional pressures. From the perspective of the organisation, the strength of the external influences on CSR strategy will be significantly greater when institutional and stakeholder pressures are aligned and reinforce each other. Under such circumstances, organisations are mostly likely to choose CSR strategies to maintain legitimacy and reduce uncertainty stemming from potential adverse collective actions by stakeholders. On the contrary, if both institutional and stakeholder pressures on a particular CSR issue are absent, organisations have very little incentive (except perhaps managers cognitive pro-environmental logic) to consider their stakeholders and act with social responsibility. If stakeholder support is absent, an organisation is likely to respond to the requirements of regulation or appease normative pressures out of self-interest. If institutional legitimacy is absent organisations are likely to respond with an accommodative strategy to the stakeholder pressure but their response will be passive and minimal (Lee, 2011).

In summary, the model of the configuration of external influences clearly demonstrates that the intensity of the external influences on CSR strategy can vary significantly

depending on how institutional and stakeholder forces interact. Not only do stakeholders mediate institutional pressures but institutions can also mediate stakeholder effects by legitimating or de-legitimating a stakeholder group's claim. Consequently, an organisation's behaviour, and resulting CSR strategy, will vary depending on the nature and strength of combined external pressures stemming from institutional and stakeholder forces, at both the macro and micro level (Lee, 2011).

5.4 Applying Lee's (2011) model

As discussed when defining engagement in Chapter 3 (section 3.3), there are many similarities between CSR strategies in organisations and engagement strategies in HEIs. CSR may be described as the need for organisations to consider the good of the wider communities, local and global, within which they function (Jongbloed et al., 2008). HEI engagement on the other hand has been defined as pooling the abilities, expertise and resources of numerous stakeholders to positively affect the community (Granner and Sharpe, 2004). Therefore, both CSR and engagement strategies consider the good of the wider community and the other economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic impacts of their business conduct. Aside from this similarity of definition, there are other commonalities between CSR in the organisations considered by Lee (2011) and engagement in HEIs. For example, the widest definition of stakeholders is used for both CSR and engagement activities resulting in the identification of a large number of stakeholders in both types of organisation. Also, CSR reporting provides a vehicle for companies to engage in an indirect way with these diverse stakeholder groups, which benefits the organisation in terms of available resources and superior performance (Barone et al., 2013; Verbeke and Tung, 2012) and similar benefits accrue to HEIs (Mulvihill et al., 2011b). These similarities suggest that Lee's (2011) model of the configuration of external influences on CSR strategy may be modified and applied to HEIs' engagement strategy.

This model is also appropriate as the literature recognises that multiple stakeholders attempt to exert influence over the field (Brint et al., 2009). This is especially true during what Kezar and Sam (2013) call the implementation stage, when outside stakeholders can amplify or impede implementation of a reform. Kezar and Sam (2013) distinguished three stages of reforms in higher education: mobilisation (the system is prepared for change);

implementation (the change is introduced); and institutionalisation (the system is stabilised in its changed state). This research occurs at a time when HEIs are implementing an engagement measurement system, which as a result has not yet been institutionalised. It is therefore appropriate to consider both institutional and stakeholder influences on the system.

Figure 5.3 shows the proposed modification to reflect HEIs' engagement strategy.

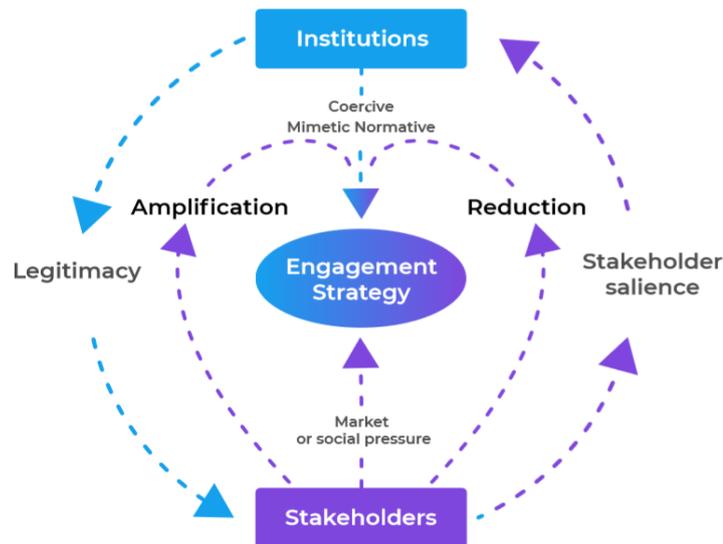


Figure 5.3: A model of the configuration of external influences on HEI engagement (Source: Adapted from Lee (2011))

The sections that follow reconstruct Lee's model and apply it to HEIs' engagement. Each element of the revised model is carefully described so as to strengthen the argument for its application to HEIs' engagement. Firstly, Lee (2011) contends that institutions influence stakeholders and stakeholders influence institutions. He posits that institutional legitimacy is a pre-condition for effective stakeholder mobilisation and salience, and that institutions give legitimacy to stakeholders because of the perceived benefits accrued from engaging with them. The reconstructed model proposes that for a HEI the benefits of external engagement include; legitimacy, and sustained resource allocation both from the public purse and specific stakeholders. Lee (2011) further proposes that empowering some particular stakeholder groups over others is achieved by providing the necessary authority as well as policy tools (Lee, 2011). Because this empowerment gives some stakeholders salience, as collective action empowers CSR stakeholders, the researcher

has replaced collective action in Lee's model with stakeholder salience, broadening its use beyond CSR in the HE sector. Research by King (2008) supports this replacement as he states '*...we should conceive of collective action as an important factor underlying stakeholder influence*' (King, 2008, p.5). This recognises that stakeholder influence (or salience) empowers stakeholders and thus replacing collective action with stakeholder salience is appropriate. Therefore, in the reconstructed model, salient stakeholder groups, who have legitimacy, power and urgency, legitimise HEIs by giving them value and relevance (Verbeke and Tung, 2012). For example, if HEIs supply graduates with the right skills to employers, who in turn can build their business based on these graduates, the employers are not only likely to advocate for continued funding for the HEI, but may themselves provide funding for specific courses or other uses. Collective action by stakeholders may, for example, bring salient stakeholder groups such as government and their agencies and business and industry together, providing the means for strategic action, for example, a focus on a specific area of education (such as science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM)).

Lee (2011) states that direct contributions to institutional CSR strategy are made by regulative (have to change), normative (expected/ought to change) and cognitive (want to change) influences. Applying this proposition, it is suggested that HE engagement is shaped by institutional environments at a macro level through the isomorphic mechanisms of coercive, normative and mimetic forces. Hence, in the reconstructed model these three isomorphic influences replace Lee's regulative, normative and cognitive influences because they are broader. For example, researchers recognise that regulative aspects of institutions include rules and processes, constraints, and enforcement mechanisms (Palthe, 2014). Likewise, coercive pressures can also force an organisation to behave and to structure itself in a certain way (Collin et al., 2009). However, when discussing external influences on an organisation, regulative aspects are just one part of coercive isomorphism, as discussed in section 4.5.1.3; social coercion (based on a perceived social contract) also influences organisations. Normative pressures identified in Lee's (2011) model include work norms, and habits. Cognitive pressures include beliefs and values (Palthe, 2014). In the reconstructed model these norms and beliefs are combined into normative pressures because legitimacy and acceptance are achieved through conformity, which is rooted in historical precedents and trajectories, social justification, and habits (Verbeke and Tung, 2012). This removes the need for two

separate descriptions for normative and cognitive pressures. The third isomorphic influence is absent in Lee's configuration. In the reconstructed model mimetic isomorphism is included as an external influence because HEIs influence each other and are each influenced by similar educational values (Palthe, 2014).

Similar to Lee's (2011) model, market and social (activism) pressures are also included in the reconstructed model, as they can mediate institutional effects by acting as either buffers or amplifiers. Stakeholders play an important role in selecting and channelling engagement at a micro proximate level by using social and market pressures to influence the [organisation's CSR] HEI's engagement strategy (Lee, 2011). Social pressures from renewed political focus on localism and civic society, for corporate responsibility and transparency, and technological advances in social networking and knowledge mobilisation are all prompting the HEI to connect with a wider set of stakeholders (Mulvihill et al., 2011e). As a result, HEIs now appear to be more consciously embracing a variety of different social agendas and have greater interaction with their community and wider society, which infuses every aspect of their engagement mission (Hunt, 2011). Market pressures from stakeholders have also influenced the engagement strategy of HEIs. For example, increasingly, students are being seen as customers for HEIs and education as a result is a private good from which students (customers) expect a pay-off from their investment. Consequently, students demand vocationally oriented courses (Lawrence and Sharma, 2002) which require HEIs to work more closely with employers to meet this demand. Students as customers also require more business-like accountabilities in HEIs, not least in measuring performance, in order to show customers that they meet their expectations (Chen et al., 2006; Lawrence and Sharma, 2002).

Finally, Lee states that stakeholders can amplify or reduce institutional pressures on an organisation's CSR strategy. Similarly, in HEIs stakeholders can amplify and/or reduce the effect of institutional pressures that shape their engagement strategy. Stakeholders may amplify HEIs' engagement interactions when they are in agreement with institutional forces derived, for example, from policy or regulation. Therefore, the strength of the external pressure on the organisation will be much greater if stakeholder and institutional pressures are aligned. Alignment of pressures gives the HEI more impetus to engage in order to maintain legitimacy, as posited in Lee's (2011) configuration. Conversely, sometimes stakeholders may send signals to the organisation that conflict with institutional signals thus diminishing isomorphic institutional pressures (coercive,

normative and mimetic) on HEIs' engagement strategy. For example, demands from local employers for graduates with certain skills, that are not part of national policy, may result in the HEI not acting on that local demand because the institutional pressures to provide for national skill requirements are in conflict with the local employers demand. This ability for stakeholder groups to amplify/buffer institutional pressures is also referred to in other research (Verbeke and Tung, 2012; Heugens and Lander, 2009).

5.5 Conclusion

The chapter posits that stakeholder theory does not fully describe HEIs' engagement behaviour and proposes the addition of NIS to provide a more comprehensive explanation. The chapter begins by outlining the contribution that each theory may bring to this research. It then describes Lee's (2011) model of the configuration of external influences on CSR strategy, which combines stakeholder and institutional theories. The researcher proposes that combining these theories provides an appropriate foundation for exploring and analysing engagement practices and measurement in Irish HEIs. Hence, this model has been adapted for use in this study to explore Irish HEIs' engagement with external stakeholders.

CHAPTER 6: METHODOLOGY

6.1 Introduction

The first section of this chapter outlines the research design process. It presents research design as a road map that guides the researcher. This is followed by an overview of the research question and objectives, research paradigm, philosophical assumptions, the resulting research approaches and the research methods available. This exploratory research study is pragmatic in nature and adopts a qualitative research approach based on a case study. Details relating to secondary and primary data collection methods used, the sample selection process, and data analysis are described. Finally, issues relating to research validity and reliability, and ethical issues are addressed.

6.2 Research design

A research design may be described as a road map that the researcher decides to follow during their research journey to find answers to the research question as validly, objectively, accurately, and economically as possible (Kumar, 2014). Some researchers contend that the focus of the research design is on different frameworks for collecting and analysing data (Bryman, 2008). However, Easterby-Smith et al. (2008) propose that research design concerns more than the methods by which data are collected and analysed. Rather, it is suggested that design concerns the overall configuration of the research, considering what type of evidence is gathered and where it is sourced from (Bryman, 2008). Creswell (2007) provides a more comprehensive definition when he defines research design as the *'...process of research from conceptualizing a problem to writing research questions, and on to data collection, analysis, interpretation, and report writing ... [in a] logical sequence that connects the empirical data to a study's initial research questions and, ultimately, to its conclusions'* Creswell (2007, p.5). In short, the research design turns a research question into a research project (Saunders et al., 2007). Figure 6.1 provides an overview of the research design process. It shows how the research process begins with the development of research questions and objectives. How these questions are addressed evolves from the researcher's philosophical assumptions and beliefs (paradigms). These assumptions and beliefs influence the research approach that is adopted and the resulting methods of data collection used.

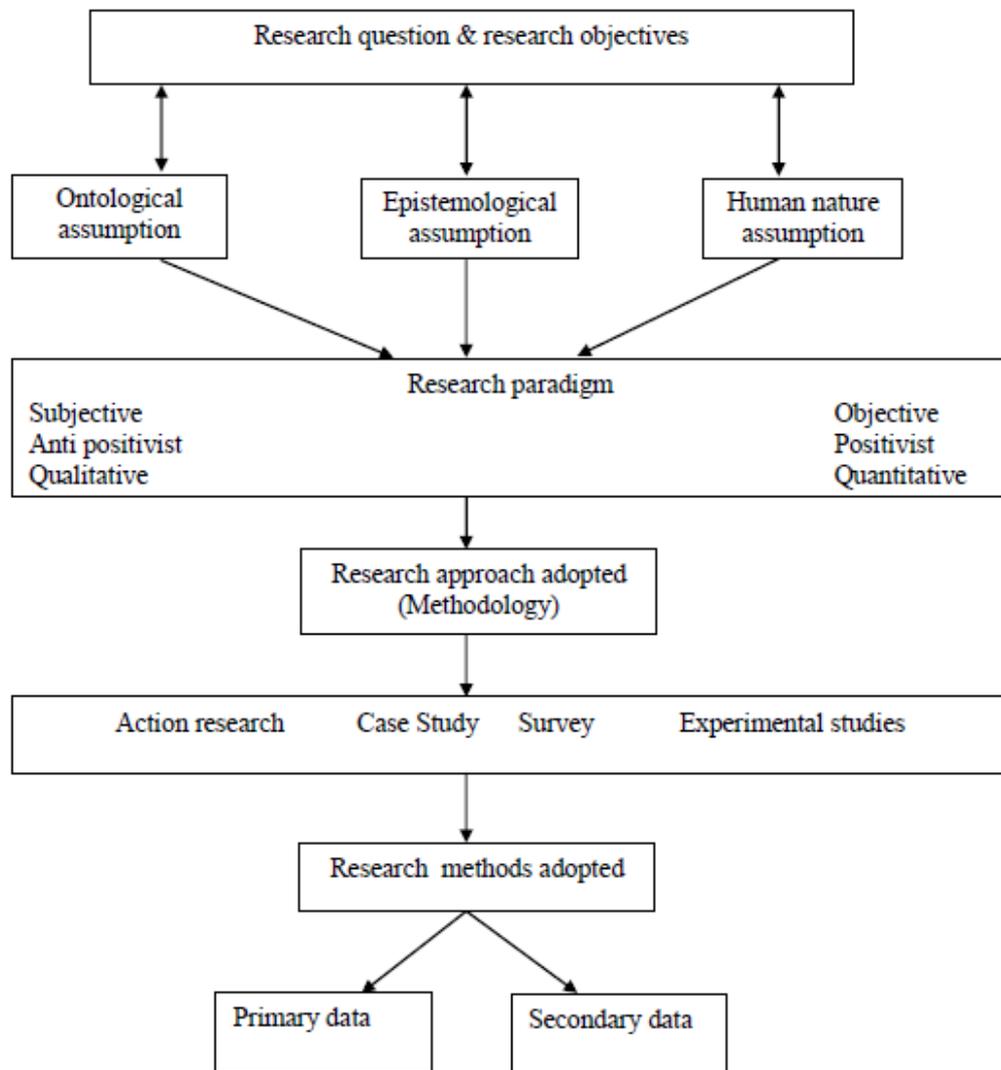


Figure 6.1: The Research Design Process

(Source: Kelly (2013))

The elements of this diagram as well as this researcher’s choices and philosophical positioning are discussed in the following sections.

6.2.1 Research questions and objectives

The initial stage in the overall research design process is the identification of the research question (Ryan et al., 1992). All research projects are conceived in order that some underlying research question may be answered (Ryan et al., 1992). Defining clear research questions at the beginning of the research process is paramount and cannot be over-emphasised for the success of the research project (Saunders et al., 2007). The

research question usually emanates from the first major phase of the literature review, in conjunction with the early stages of the fieldwork. This process involves a progressive focusing, to move from a general research area to specific questions (Bryman, 2008). The pitfall that must be avoided is asking research questions that will not generate new insights (Saunders et al., 2007). In summary, according to Bryman (2008), research questions should: be clear, be researchable, have some connection with established theory and research, be linked to each other, hold out the prospect of being able to make an original contribution, and be neither too broad nor too narrow. Arising from the research question, the research objectives define the research in measurable terms and create boundaries and scope to the study, in order to ensure that the research is both manageable and achievable in terms of size (Kumar, 2014; Milner, 2007). This supports Hackley's (2003) assertion that research objectives are important as they serve to indicate that the research in question has a focus and can be a measure of the success of the research.

The following research question and associated objectives attempt to reflect this instrumentality, in terms of the focus and scope of this study,

How do Irish HEIs engage with their external stakeholders and how is the engagement measured?

To address this question the following research objectives have been developed:

1: To determine how Irish HEIs engage with external stakeholders

2: To identify techniques currently in use to report on engagement practice in a HEI setting

3: To explore the key influences on engagement practices and on measures selected to report engagement performance

There is plenty of anecdotal evidence to show that Irish Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) engage with their stakeholders in many ways, but until recently, no measurement or benchmarking system existed. Engagement is a key pillar of the HEI's mission, which consists of teaching and learning, research and engagement, as discussed in Chapter 3 (Section 3.2). However, to date very little research has been conducted relating to engagement of HEIs with external stakeholders. The research question and objectives have been formulated in response to this deficiency. They aim to determine the perceptions of HEIs on engagement with external stakeholders. They were informed and

developed by reference to the philosophical assumptions of the researcher which are presented in the next section.

6.2.2 Research paradigm

A research paradigm is a cluster of beliefs which influence what should be studied, how research should be done, and how results should be interpreted (Bryman, 2008). This section discusses the two extreme paradigms, positivism and anti-positivism. Easterby-Smith et al. (2008) note that positivism and anti-positivism have been placed against each other as opposites making this method of discussion appropriate.

The nature of science, or the scientific approach, emerged during the enlightenment period at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Phillips (1976) described it as: '*An effort to achieve increased understanding of phenomena by (1) defining problems so as to build on available knowledge, (2) obtaining information essential for dealing with these problems, (3) analyzing and interpreting these data in accordance with clearly defined rules, and (4) communicating the results of these efforts to others.*' (Phillips, 1976, p.4). It was during this period that the distinction was made between positivist and anti-positivist traditions. These traditions have been variously labelled in the literature. Alternative paradigm names for the positivist approach include objectivist, quantitative, scientific, experimentalist, and traditionalist, with alternatives for the anti-positivism approach including qualitative, interpretivist, phenomenological or humanistic (Hussey and Hussey, 1997). The positivist and anti-positivist approaches are seen by many researchers as two extremes on a continuum, with various philosophical positions aligned between them (Holden and Lynch, 2004).

Positivism is an epistemological consideration that advocates the application of the methods of the natural sciences to the study of social reality (Bryman, 2008). Positivism (or objectivism) and anti-positivism (or subjectivism/interpretivism) comprise two of the major theoretical perspectives on research in the social sciences (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008; Holden and Lynch, 2004). Positivism assumes an external, objective reality (Holden and Lynch, 2004). Scientific endeavour of a positivistic nature, is a view of the social world which is likely to focus upon analysis of relationships and regularities between the various elements which it comprises (Morgan and Smircich, 1980; Burrell and Morgan, 1979). The concern is with the identification and definition of these elements

and with the discovery of ways in which these relationships can be expressed (Burrell and Morgan, 1979).

Alternatively, anti-positivism is a term given to a contrasting epistemology to positivism (Bryman, 2008). Anti-positivism (or interpretivism/subjectivism) assumes a socially constructed reality which is a projection of the human imagination (Holden and Lynch, 2004), and stresses the importance of subjective experiences of individuals in the creation of the social world (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). Reality is thus determined by people and not objective external factors (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). This view favours an epistemology that emphasises the importance of understanding processes through which human beings conceptualise their relationship to the world (Morgan and Smircich, 1980). The principal concern is with an understanding of the way in which the individual creates, modifies and interprets the world in which he or she finds himself or herself (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). The focus is on what people, individually and collectively, are thinking and feeling and the way in which they communicate with each other (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008).

The early dominance of rationalistic, realist and positivist approaches in accounting research addressed cause-and-effect questions (Ittner, 2013), explaining why accounting is what it is, why accountants do what they do, and what effects these phenomena have on people and resource utilisation (Christenson, 1983). More recently, it has however, been suggested that using positivistic approaches means that the researcher knows little about accounting in actual practice, how it interacts within the organisation, its effectiveness and its adaptability (Hoque, 2006). This has led to the anti-positivist approach becoming more common, with much accounting research focused on understanding context specific accounting practices in recent years (Moll et al., 2006a; Berry and Otley, 2004).

The pragmatic approach, neither positivist nor anti-positivist, but instead straddling the position between objective and subjective (Lukka and Modell, 2010) was first discussed in the US by philosophers such as Charles Sanders Peirce, William James and John Dewey at the turn of twentieth century (Hookway, 2016; Ormston et al., 2013; Barnes, 2008; Creswell and Garrett, 2008). William James presented pragmatism as a '*...method*

for settling metaphysical disputes that might otherwise be interminable.' (1907: 28) by becoming reflectively clear about the contents of concepts and hypotheses; that is, we clarify a hypothesis by identifying its practical consequences (quoted in Hookway (2016)). Barnes (2008) concurs with this sentiment stating that pragmatism is '*... a philosophy of practical enhancement...*' (Barnes, 2008, p. 1544). He cites work by James (1920) and Dewey (1929) to underpin his position that truth is assigned by actors (Barnes, 2008) and can be rationally justified in our belief system (Lukka and Modell, 2010). Pragmatists do not see rationality as a strict singularity, but as something that has developed in the belief system of a social setting and is therefore changeable as well (Lukka and Modell, 2010).

Pragmatism forces researchers to be cautious and self-conscious (Ormston et al., 2013), resulting in pragmatic clarification that disambiguates the question, and once that is done, all dispute comes to an end (Hookway, 2016). Pragmatism means that the focus of research is on the research question and that different methods can be employed to answer this question (Creswell and Garrett, 2008). Ormston et al. (2013) support this position contending that '*...combining different research methods is often necessary in answering the research questions posed.*' (Ormston et al., 2013, p.22). Hence, the validity of specific theories and methods in studying such phenomena is primarily seen as a matter of arriving at some socially negotiated consensus concerning what works in terms of answering specific research questions in a particular research setting. Researchers arrive at some shared conception of workability, without automatically focusing on any particular method or theory (Modell, 2009). Pragmatic studies often have a degree of qualitative orientation that may be informed by existing knowledge, theory and the development of a conceptual framework (Milner, 2007). Researchers, such as Lukka and Modell (2010), who studied the application of the pragmatic approach in accounting research, consider this role of theory as central in pragmatism. Pragmatic studies facilitate interdisciplinary research and allow the integration of more macro elements relating to social, economic, political and policy contexts (Ormston et al., 2013).

This exploratory research is probably best described as pragmatic and demonstrates both positivist and anti-positivist tendencies. There are four reasons why the pragmatic paradigm is reflected within this research. Firstly, it requires subjective comment from participants regarding the identification of external stakeholders and their perspectives on

engagement interactions in the case HEI. In other words, the study focuses on the subjective experiences of individuals within the social world of the case HEI. In line with anti-positivist epistemologies, the research seeks to understand the ways in which individuals have interpreted the world in which they find themselves. As the researcher is part of this social world, being part of the case HEI, she can, according to Lukka and Modell (2010) ‘...*explain or make-sense of what is going on...*’ (Lukka and Modell, 2010, p.466). However, the study does not reject positivism as it also seeks to understand objective information regarding the measurement and reporting of engagement interactions by the case HEI. This research uses semi-structured interviews to establish participants’ opinions and perspectives on stakeholders and engagement (anti-positivism) as well as documentary analysis to identify how engagement practices are measured and reported (positivism). Secondly, this study clarifies the research question by identifying the practical consequences of the research outcomes. It is intended that this research will inform education policy in relation to engagement and its measurement in HEIs. Thirdly, the study is informed by existing knowledge in the form of the conceptual framework adopted from Lee (2011) and discussed in the previous chapter. Fourthly, this research is interdisciplinary in nature straddling education and accounting research. Its focus on external stakeholders and incorporates the social, economic, political and policy contexts. Therefore, the position taken in relation to the philosophical assumptions is neither at one extreme nor the other; hence a mid-point on the continuum, a pragmatic philosophy, best describes the researcher’s position. These assumptions will be discussed in the next section.

6.2.3 Philosophical Assumptions

This section begins by reviewing the literature on philosophical assumptions before discussing the researcher’s philosophical stance. When undertaking a study, researchers must adopt a philosophical perspective or stance, which informs and guides their work. Researchers also have their own paradigms or worldviews, which, in turn, narrow the theoretical or interpretive stances adopted. These interpretive stances shape the individuals studied; the types of questions and problems examined; the approaches to data collection, data analysis, writing, and evaluation; and the use of information to change society or add to social justice (Creswell, 2007). Developing a philosophical perspective requires that the researcher make several core assumptions concerning two dimensions: the nature of society and the nature of science (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). Sociologically

there are two views of society and how it has evolved, namely the rational/regulatory view and the radical change view. In the rational view it is assumed that society is unified and cohesive (Holden and Lynch, 2004) and evolves rationally (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). The contrasting radical view is constant conflict between the individual and the societal system (Holden and Lynch, 2004).

The current research study is based on HEIs, which are essentially social systems and, in order to develop a philosophical perspective, the researcher must make a number of assumptions regarding the nature of society as well as the nature of science (Gallagher, 2014). This philosophical stance was established in line with Hoque et al. (2015) by the researcher recognising her '*...own potentially active role in the research setting...*' (Hoque et al., 2015, p.1155) and continually self-reflecting upon it. There are four philosophical assumptions regarding the nature of social science; ontology, epistemology, human nature and methodology (see Figure 6.2). These assumptions distinguish the anti-positivist and positivist paradigms. They are consequential to each other, that is, a researcher's view of ontology affects their epistemological persuasion, which in turn, affects their view of human nature. Consequently, choice of methodology logically follows the assumptions that the researcher has already made (Holden and Lynch, 2004). Morgan and Smircich (1980) propose the following continuum in considering the anti-positivist –positivist debate.

Philosophical Assumptions	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> Anti-positivist (subjectivist) approaches to social science Positivist (objectivist) approaches to social science </div> <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 5px;"> </div>					
	Ontology	reality as a projection of human imagination	reality as a social construction	reality as a realm of symbolic discourse	reality as a contextual field of information	reality as a concrete process
Epistemology	to obtain phenomenological insight, revelation	to understand how social reality is created	to understand patterns of symbolic discourse	to map contexts	to study systems, process, change	to construct a positivist science
Human Nature	man as pure spirit, consciousness being	man as social constructor, the symbol creator	man as an actor, the symbol user	man as an information processor	man as an adaptor	man as a responder
Research Methods	exploration of pure subjectivity	Hermeneutics	symbolic analysis	contextual analysis of Gestalten*	Historical analysis	lab experiments

*Gestalt denotes experiences that require more than the basic sensory capacities to comprehend.

Figure 6.2: Basic assumptions characterising the subjective-objective debate

(Source: adapted from Morgan and Smircich (1980))

The first philosophical position relates to ontology, the nature or truth of reality (Creswell, 2007). This assumption varies from the idea that an objective reality exists (positivist end of continuum) to the notion that reality exists only in the mind of the observer (anti-positivist end of continuum) (Holden and Lynch, 2004). Morgan and Smircich (1980) state that the core ontological assumption, from the positivist point of view, is that reality is a concrete structure. From the anti-positivist view, reality represents projections of human imagination. The positions in between positivism and anti-positivism are shown in Figure 6.2 above. The researcher's view of reality is the cornerstone of all other assumptions, that is, what is assumed here predicates the researcher's other assumptions (Holden and Lynch, 2004). This researcher, considers herself to be a pragmatist, recognising that participants' own interpretations of the issues researched, and their varying vantage points, will yield different types of understanding (Ormston et al., 2013). For pragmatists, rather than conceiving of reality as constituted by strictly subjective experiences, there is room for an ontological position recognising that some socially negotiated consensus concerning the nature of the world is indeed possible (Modell,

2009). This means that ontologically, pragmatists see reality as something that exists independently of those who observe it, but that reality is only accessible through the perceptions and interpretations of individuals (Ormston et al., 2013). The researcher does not believe that reality is in the mind of the observer and cannot dismiss the existence of reality completely. Conversely, she does not believe that an objective reality, without human influence, is plausible. The researcher's perspective therefore lies in between the philosophical assumptions of positivism and anti-positivism, on the Morgan and Smircich (1980) continuum. She positions her ontological assumptions somewhere in between what is described in Figure 6.2 as 'reality as a social construction' and 'reality as a contextual field of information', recognising reality incorporates some socially negotiated consensus which gives context to an objective reality.

The ontological assumption underpins epistemology, which concerns the question of what is (or should be) regarded as acceptable knowledge about the social world (Bryman, 2008; Saunders et al., 2007). Epistemology is concerned with ways of knowing and learning about the world and focuses on issues such as how we can learn about reality and what forms the basis of our knowledge (Ormston et al., 2013). It has to do with the nature, and limits of inquiry (Holden and Lynch (2004) quoting Rosenau, (1992)) and underlies the validity of the research results (Gallagher, 2014). Morgan and Smircich (1980) describe the two extreme views on the continuum. At one-end, objectivists view the social world as a concrete structure, with the emphasis on the empirical analysis of concrete relationships in the external world. At the other end, subjectivists view reality as a projection of individual imagination, emphasising the importance of understanding the process through which human beings establish their relationships to the world (Morgan and Smircich, 1980). In terms of epistemology, the pragmatist position leads to a view of researchers as actively involved in the construction of knowledge and guided by theories emerging through their interactions with the researched as well as the larger research community of which they are part (Modell, 2009). In this research, the engagement measurement system and the organisation being studied are recognised as existing independently of a participant's perception. The study focuses on the heads of department (HoD) and members of the top management team (TM) in an Irish HEI; their perspectives and interpretations of reality, specifically, stakeholder engagement in their organisation. The positivist aspect of the research relates to engagement measurement as a technique. The anti-positivist aspect relates to the case HEI, as a social organisation, and to the

experiences and viewpoints of the HoD and TM interviewed. This suggests that, in line with the ontological assumption, the epistemological assumption underlying the study is not positioned at one extreme or the other, but rather lies between the subjective/objective ends of the continuum of research paradigms. More specifically this research seeks to understand how the social reality of engagement is created whilst mapping the context of and influences on the engagement measurement system.

A third assumption, human nature, relates to whether man is controlled or controlling (Burrell and Morgan, 1979), a volunteer or pre-determined, a conscious being or a responder (Morgan and Smircich, 1980). The positivist end of the continuum, as shown in Figure 6.2, proposes that an individual's relationship with society is deterministic and that causal rules exist which dictate one's behaviour (Holden and Lynch, 2004). The anti-positivist view, at the extreme opposite end of the continuum, is that reality does not exist outside oneself, that one's mind is one's world, hence reality is a projection of individual imagination (Morgan and Smircich, 1980). In relation to the assumptions about human nature, this study does not fit with a purely determinist approach whereby activities are definite and defined without any independence of action. Neither does a purely voluntarist approach seem appropriate where there is complete free will and autonomy of action. There is some structure and there are defined activities in relation to stakeholder engagement and its measurement, the HEI setting, and HoD roles, and the roles of the TM. However, these roles are assigned to individuals who have some autonomy in the discharge of their responsibilities and duties. This would suggest that the researcher's assumption in relation to human nature lies somewhere in between the two extremes; that is, where man is a social constructor, an actor, a symbol user and information processor.

Finally, the research methodology assumption is the toolkit of investigation representing all the methods available to the researcher (Gallagher, 2014; Holden and Lynch, 2004). Methodology refers to the theoretical, political and philosophical backgrounds to social research, and their implications for research practice and for the use of particular research methods (Robson and McCartan, 2011). Burrell and Morgan (1979) suggest that the extreme ends of the continuum in relation to methodology are nomothetic and idiographic. The nomothetic approach is objective and is epitomised in the approach and methods employed in the natural sciences. Nomothetic methods include surveys, statistical testing of large samples (Collin et al., 2009), questionnaires, and the use of quantitative techniques for analysing data. The idiographic approach emphasises the

analysis of subjective accounts and '*...stresses the importance of letting one's subject unfold its nature and characteristics during the process of investigation*' (Burrell and Morgan, 1979, p.6). Idiographic methods include case studies, unstructured interviews, self-reports, autobiographies and personal documents. Therefore, the methodological assumption restricts the toolkit available to the researcher. This researcher, in line with many other researchers, believes that the best research will combine both nomothetic and idiographic approaches (Cole, 2017). This research combines subjective accounts of engagement (idiographic) with some data analysis of objective engagement reporting measures (nomothetic). This combination of approaches sets the research methodology between the two extremes of the objective/subjective continuum, where interpretation (hermeneutics) is a crucial part of the process and context is being analysed (Gestalt).

In conclusion, according to Holden and Lynch (2004), it is important for the researcher to review these four philosophical assumptions. Such a philosophical review can have a dual effect on the researcher:

'...(1) it may open their mind to other possibilities, therefore, enriching their own research abilities, and (2) it can enhance their confidence in the appropriateness of their methodology to the research problem which, in turn, enhances confidence in their research results.' (Holden and Lynch, 2004, p.406)

Having established the ontological, epistemological, human nature and methodological assumptions pertinent to this study, the research approach that emerged will be discussed in the next section.

6.2.4 Research approach

Having described the philosophical assumptions, this section outlines the research approaches applicable and explains the approach used in this study. In general there are two research approaches, quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative research can be construed as a research strategy that emphasises quantification in the collection and analysis of data. It '*...entails a deductive approach to the relationship between theory and research, in which the accent is placed on testing of results of theories; has incorporated the practices and norms of the natural scientific model and of positivism in particular; and embodies a view of the social reality as an external, objective reality*' (Bryman, 2008, p.22). Essentially, the researcher tests a theory by specifying narrow hypotheses; the

collection of data supports or refutes the hypotheses, focussing on identifying and establishing patterns and predictability (Creswell, 2003). Quantitative research involves the collection of data which is in the form of, or can be expressed as, numbers such as statistical data (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008; Creswell, 2003). It requires the use of methods such as experiments, questionnaires and surveys (Hair et al., 2007; Creswell, 2003). A quantitative approach can be adopted when research questions are quantifiable, addressing, for example, ‘how many?’ or ‘how much?’

Conversely, qualitative research aims to provide a rich understanding of processes and social realities and therefore is based on words, sentences and narratives (Moll et al., 2006b). *‘The term qualitative management research is a conceptual device that people regularly use to make sense of their worlds by signifying particular forms of management research: an abstraction that enables us to give order to our impressions by enabling the categorization of certain aspects of lived experience’* (Johnson et al., 2007, p.24). Therefore, *‘...qualitative research is a very broad church and includes a wide range of approaches and methods found within several research disciplines’* (Ormston et al., 2013, p.3). Denzin and Lincoln (2011), quoted by Ormston et al. (2013) state that qualitative research can turn the world into a series of representations including; field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to self (Ryan et al., 1992). The qualitative approach allows an investigation, in microscopic detail, of the social and cultural aspects of individuals’ lives (Agee, 2009).

Qualitative research has become more popular in the two disciplines that this research straddles; accounting and education. It aligns with the accounting research discipline due to its focus on engagement performance measurement, and with the education research discipline because of its focus on engagement of HEIs. A significant body of accounting literature has emerged that focusses on qualitative research, enough to constitute a qualitative tradition (De Loo et al., 2015). Qualitative studies in accounting are useful when researchers seek to understand how phenomena are produced, experienced and interpreted by social actors within the complex social world (Moll et al., 2006b). In comparison, quantitative studies rule out the possibility of studying in depth issues which are usually related to why and how accounting practices are implemented and used (Moll et al., 2006b). A similar resurgence of qualitative research

in education took place in the 1980s (Tight, 2010) making it a popular approach for that discipline also.

A mixed methods approach has been described as a third movement in the evolution of research methodology (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2011; Creswell and Garrett, 2008). Mixed methods research integrates quantitative and qualitative research in a single project (Bryman, 2008). Saunders et al. (2007) believe that there are two major advantages to using mixed methods in the same research project. First, different methods can be used for different purposes in a study, for example, using interviews at the exploratory stage before preparing a questionnaire. Second, use of mixed methods enables triangulation to take place. Triangulation refers to the '*...extent to which research findings can be confirmed by the simultaneous application of multiple methods, multiple investigators, multiple data sets or multiple theories*' (Brignall and Ballantine, 2004, p.228). Diccio-Bloom and Crabtree (2006) agree that mixed methods can provide potentially rigorous and methodologically sound study designs. This position is supported by Creswell and Garrett (2008) who posit that when researchers bring together both quantitative and qualitative research, the strengths of both approaches are combined, leading to a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone. If quantitative and qualitative research are considered as paradigms, bringing them together is not possible. However, Bryman (2008) contends that '*...it is by no means clear that quantitative and qualitative research are in fact paradigms.*' (Bryman, 2008, p.605) and thus quantitative and qualitative techniques can be combined in what he considers the technical version; the position in which greater prominence is given to the strengths of the data-collection and data analysis technique. In this version, quantitative and qualitative methods are capable of being fused.

Research using mixed methods is a growing trend which not only has become more accepted in the last thirty years (Creswell and Garrett, 2008) but has come of age (Creswell, 2003). However, many researchers argue against the possibility of mixed methods research, combining qualitative and quantitative research. Bryman (2008) calls the arguments against mixed methods, the epistemological version, as they are grounded in incompatible epistemological principles. He suggests that they may be classified into two categories. Firstly, the idea that research methods carry epistemological commitments with irreconcilable views about how social reality should be studied. Secondly, the idea

that quantitative and qualitative research are separate paradigms in which separate epistemological assumptions, values and methods are inextricably intertwined and incompatible (Bryman, 2008). There may be considerable barriers to combining different paradigms in actual research practice. Indeed Modell (2009) states that: '*The tensions associated with straddling between paradigms are readily observable when one considers the issue of triangulation between theories and methods rooted in different paradigms*'. (Modell, 2009, p.208). Therefore, mixed methods research should not be considered as an approach that is universally applicable. Though it has its supporters, it also has its detractors. What scholars consider important is that the quantitative and qualitative data derived from mixed methods research is mutually illuminating (Bryman, 2008).

In conclusion, quantitative and qualitative research strategies are broadly accepted in the literature, though some tension exists with regards to mixed methods research strategies. Acknowledging the benefits of gaining more in-depth and accurate results from a qualitative methodology (Agostino and Arnaboldi, 2012), this research uses qualitative data collection techniques. The aim of providing a rich understanding of processes and social realities could be fulfilled using qualitative techniques (Moll et al., 2006b) which allow the microscopic detail of the social and cultural aspects of stakeholder engagement to be ascertained (Agee, 2009). Therefore, what is important to stakeholders could be tested using qualitative techniques (Ittner and Larck, 2003). The researcher considered applying qualitative methods, to the institutional context of the case HEI, engendered insights not offered by other research approaches (Covaleski and Dirsmith, 2012). Quantitative techniques, for example, could not have engendered such social and cultural insights (Agee, 2009) and would not have been suitable as the aim was not to quantify stakeholders or engagement, nor was it to test a theory or establish patterns and predictabilities (Creswell, 2003). Quantitative techniques would not have provided the rich understanding of engagement in the case HEI, which was sought by this study. Therefore, a qualitative approach was considered most appropriate to explore the research objectives of this thesis, and assess and analyse the opinions, perceptions, attitudes and beliefs of the individuals interviewed. The next section discusses the qualitative research methods used in this study.

6.2.5 Research methods

Research methods are techniques for collecting data (Bryman, 2008; Creswell, 2003). They are the tools of the trade, the techniques and approaches researchers use when studying a particular topic (Institute of Technology Research Alliance, 2010; Saunders et al., 2007). No single set of research methods and practices will be appropriate for all purposes and situations; the judgement of research quality is driven by whether the research is appropriate to the specific situation and its aims (Facer et al., 2012). As long as a researcher recognises and evaluates flaws in the design when choosing from different research methods, many different research methods may be valid contributors to knowledge (Bryman, 2008; Saunders et al., 2007). As discussed in previous sections (Section 6.2.2 to 6.2.4), the choice of research approach adopted favours particular methods of data collection, so that experimental studies may be applied as a quantitative approach while a qualitative approach may, for example, use action research. There are various methods used to collect quantitative data including experiments and surveys. Qualitative data may be gathered using methods such as observation, focus groups and interviews (Bryman, 2008; Saunders et al., 2007).

This research adopts a case study design and uses different data collection techniques. The data collection techniques used include semi-structured interviews and documentary review. Case HEI documents, minutes of meetings and emails were reviewed. Case documents included policy and mission statements, press releases and emails to staff, as well as the case HEI's performance compact (see section 2.5.3). Minutes of meetings held to prepare the case HEI's engagement strategy were reviewed and a review of engagement stories released by the case HEI was undertaken. Combining documentary evidence with interviews is a commonly-used approach in qualitative accounting research (Barone et al., 2013) and in education research (Brown, 2012; Tight, 2011). Data was also obtained from a literature review facilitating a greater understanding of HE policy and engagement practice in Ireland and internationally. The next section describes the case study design and this is followed by a review of the types of data gathered.

6.2.5.1 Case Studies

Case study research involves the study of an issue explored through one or more cases within a bounded system (i.e. a setting, a context) (Hamilton and Corbett-Whittier, 2014;

Creswell, 2007; Eisenhardt, 1989). A case study is the preferred strategy when ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over the events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context (Yin, 2014; Tight, 2010; Adams et al., 2006). A case could be an individual, a group, an organisation, a community, an instance, an episode, an action, an event, a decision, a subgroup or a population, a social organisation, a town or a city (Brinkmann, 2018; Patton, 2015; Kumar, 2014; Adams et al., 2006).

Yin (2014) has identified some specific types of case studies: exploratory, explanatory, and descriptive. Exploratory cases are sometimes considered as a prelude to social science research. They are an appropriate design for identifying and specifying a theoretical set of research questions, constructs, propositions or hypotheses. Explanatory case studies may be used for doing causal investigations. Descriptive cases require a detailed theory to be developed before starting the project (Yin, 2014) and aim to ‘...develop a complete detailed portrayal of some phenomenon...’ (Brinkmann, 2018, p.346)

Though the distinctions between the different types of case studies are not necessarily clear-cut (Scapens, 2004), the scope of this research is best described as an exploratory case study, a preliminary investigation. The value in detailed exploratory case studies arises from the generation of ideas and hypotheses (Scapens, 2004; Ryan et al., 1992). This research will focus on the academic departments within an Irish HEI. By observing the same phenomenon across academic departments and the management team within the case HEI the researcher seeks to obtain varying perspectives. In case-study design the case selected becomes the basis of a thorough, holistic and in-depth exploration of the aspects that the researcher wants to find out about (Patton, 2015; Kumar, 2014).

Yin (2014) and Creswell (2007) report that case study is a common research method in many disciplines. Others state that case study is one of the more widely referred to research designs for undertaking educational research (Hamilton and Corbett-Whittier, 2014; Tight, 2010) and accounting research (Adams et al., 2006; Berry and Otley, 2004; Scapens, 2004; Ryan et al., 1992). As researchers in accounting disciplines became more conscious of the importance of introducing variables such as environment, human resources, power, politics, culture, social ideology, history and ethics into the design of accounting models, they undertook case study research (Barrachina et al., 2004). This allowed researchers to keep their research applicable for real issues and problems facing

managers and to understand the processes of accounting (Scapens, 2004). Case studies offer the possibility of understanding the nature of accounting and education management in practice; both in terms of the techniques, procedures and systems used and the way that they are used (Brown, 2012; Berry and Otley, 2004; Ryan et al., 1992), offering the ability to explore and understand the context of the phenomenon being studied (Saunders et al., 2007).

In summary, straddling both education (because of the focus on HEIs’ missions) and accounting (because of the focus on performance measurement) disciplines, this research follows the precedent set in those disciplines in the selection of a case study as an appropriate method. The researcher also considers the case study design appropriate for this research project as it explores the day-to-day practices of real people, and attempts to study the context in which they work. The case selected is typical of HEIs of its type in Ireland and so represents better opportunities for some limited generalisability. This case also meets the criteria proposed by Yin (2014) for selection of a case, as shown in Figure 6.3.

Yin (2014) conditions for case study use	This research
‘How’ or ‘why’ research question	How questions are the main questions asked in this research, making case study appropriate
The researcher has little control over behaviour	The researcher is member of the case HEI but has no control over stakeholder engagement practices or their measurement.
The focus is on contemporary as opposed to historical events	This research focuses on current engagement and measurement activity in the case HEI

Figure 6.3: Criteria for case selection

(Source: Yin (2014))

This research is based on a case study of an Irish Institute of Technology (IoT). The case organisation is a HE institution in Ireland offering a wide range of full-time and part-time HE courses mainly at degree and masters levels. The case organisation was opened in 1974 as a Regional Technical College and became an IoT by legislation in 1998, along with fourteen other similar institutions in Ireland (Gallagher, 2014). The case HEI is now the second largest IoT in Ireland by student number. Similar to other Irish IoTs, students

enter via several routes: straight from school or mature entry, through other courses, and through the recognition of prior academic and work-based learning. The college caters for both full-time and part-time students in many disciplines. The case HEI has 888 whole time equivalent staff (both academic and administrative) who are managed through a hierarchical structure as shown in the organisational chart in Appendix A. The researcher is a member of the case HEI staff. (Section 6.5 below presents details on access to the case HEI and how bias was avoided by a researcher who is linked to the case organisation.)

The case HEI considers itself strong in external engagement and not only includes engagement in its general strategy but a specific and detailed strategy for engagement has been prepared (Case HEI, 2017). Currently engagement activities are in evidence in each faculty, school, department as well as central support units such as an industry liaison office, an arts office, an international office, a research office and an access service (Case HEI, 2017). Extended campus is the main conduit for external engagement and acts as a central connecting point between the case HEI and its external environment. It was established to support enterprise or community groups in all forms of interaction with the case HEI (Case HEI, 2017).

The strong focus on engagement activities in IoTs and the case being a typical example of an Irish IoT, makes the case HEI appropriate to study. Selecting an IoT is relevant as previous theory from other jurisdictions is available (e.g. polytechnic research in the UK and international engagement literature). Data collection for this study involved multiple HEI departments and a variety of information from both primary and secondary sources. These data sources are outlined in the next sections.

6.2.6 Primary data and secondary data

There are two main sources of data, primary and secondary. Most research studies involve the collection of both types of data. The research question and corresponding research design adopted dictate the type of data that is required and the most suitable methods for data collection. Primary data is collected first hand by the researcher (Mc Neill and Chapman, 2005) and meets the specific purposes of the research project making the

required investment in time and money worthwhile (Cameron and Price, 2009). *'Data used for research that was not gathered directly and purposefully for the project under consideration are termed secondary data'* (Hair et al., 2007, p.118). For some research projects secondary sources may provide the main source of answers (Saunders et al., 2007). The use of secondary data presents advantages in cost and time savings (Cameron and Price, 2009; Butterfoss and Kegler, 2002) and may be of superior quality because of for example, the capacity to gather a large amount of data (Bryman, 2008). Business research uses various forms of secondary data for both descriptive, exploratory and explanatory purposes (Hair et al., 2007; Domegan and Fleming, 1999). Examples of secondary data include statistics produced by central statistics offices or marketing data from commercial data services (Bryman, 2008). The primary and secondary data collected for this research are summarised below.

Source	Type of data	Details
Case HEI	Primary	Interviews with 18 participants.
Case HEI	Secondary	Document review and thematic analysis of strategic plan, external engagement strategy, annual report, performance compact, and engagement in practice stories, Extended Campus newsletters, and minutes of consultation on external engagement strategy.
Higher Education Authority	Secondary	Documentary analysis of government reports on education.
OECD, EU, World Bank, UNESCO etc	Secondary	Documentary analysis of international reports on education.
Academic journals	Secondary	Literature review of academic journals and books.

Figure 6.4: Sources of data

(Source: Researcher)

Case studies typically combine data collection methods such as achieves, interviews, questionnaires, and observations (Eisenhardt, 1989). The methods used in this case are discussed in more detail in the following sections, using the primary and secondary data distinction shown in Figure 6.4.

6.2.6.1 Primary data

This research explores engagement practices in an Irish HEIs, focusing on the perspectives of the HoDs and members of the top management team. The method used to obtain the primary data in this research was semi-structured interviews, which are described in more detail in the sections that follow.

Interviews

The interview is probably the mostly widely employed method to source information for qualitative researchers (Brinkmann, 2018; Kumar, 2014; Cameron and Price, 2009; Bryman, 2008; Diccico-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006), helping to gather valid and reliable data relevant to the research questions and objectives (Saunders et al., 2007). Interviews involve verbal communication between the researcher and the subject (Brinkmann, 2018; Mathers et al., 2002). *'An interview has been defined as a conversation directed to a definitive purpose other than satisfaction in the conversation itself'* (Bingham et al 1941, quoted in Chisnall (2005, p.189)). The purpose of the qualitative research interview is to contribute to a body of knowledge that is conceptual and theoretical and is based on the meanings that life experiences hold for the interviewees (Brinkmann, 2018; Patton, 2015; Diccico-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006). Interviews are particularly helpful when dealing with complex/sensitive issues (Hair et al., 2007) and can allow *'...interpersonal contact, contextual sensitivity and conversational flexibility...'* (Brinkmann, 2018, p.578). It is the flexibility and familiarity of the interview that makes it so attractive (Cameron and Price, 2009; Bryman, 2008).

There are three types of interview used in social science research; unstructured, structured and semi-structured. Unstructured or informal interviews involve a list of topic areas that need to be addressed by the researcher, but there are no predetermined questions (Patton, 2015). This type of interview is more like an informal conversation where respondents are encouraged to speak and express a point of view (Bryman, 2008). The researcher allows the interviewee freedom to go in any direction with the conversation on the basis that interesting data may be generated (Patton, 2015). Qualitative data results from these informal conversations (Mc Neill and Chapman, 2005). In contrast, structured or formal interviews involve a set of standardised questions put to the interviewee that are usually closed-ended with fixed choice responses, such as a pre-selected range of answers or yes/no answers (Bryman, 2008). These type of interviews produce quantitative data

(Bryman, 2008; Mc Neill and Chapman, 2005) and are favoured by researchers who attach great importance to the objective scientific status of the research method and process (Mc Neill and Chapman, 2005). Structured interviews do not take advantage of the dialogue potential for knowledge production that are inherent in human conversations (Brinkmann, 2018).

Semi-structured interviews lie between structured and unstructured interviews (Dicicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006) and make better use of the knowledge production potential of dialogues (Brinkmann, 2018). Here, the interviewer has a pre-determined list of themes to address in the interview but there is some flexibility in terms of question order and follow up from interviewee responses (Institute of Technology Research Alliance, 2010; Saunders et al., 2007). Semi-structured interviews allow questions to change during the process of research to reflect changing perceptions of individuals brought about by increased understanding of the problem (Agee, 2009; Cameron and Price, 2009). Such interviews comprise a combination of closed ended and open ended questions aimed at collecting both factual and attitudinal data (Mc Neill and Chapman, 2005). The open-ended questions define the topic under investigation but provide opportunities for both interviewer and interviewee to discuss some topics in more detail (Mathers et al., 2002). This allows some level of freedom in the discussion that closed questions do not as, '*With the use of closed questions, the researcher has in some way limited the possible responses*' (Mc Neill and Chapman, 2005, p.36). The four reasons for using semi-structured (or standardized open-ended as termed by Patton (2015)) are: 1. The exact instrument used in the study is available for inspection by those who will use the findings, 2. Variation among interviewers can be minimised where a number of different interviewers are used, 3. The interview is highly focused insuring that interviewee time is used efficiently, 4. Analysis is facilitated by making responses easy to find and compare.

In this study, based on the research approach adopted, semi-structured interviews were used to gather data of a qualitative nature. The use of semi-structured interviews was considered appropriate for this study for three reasons. Firstly, some structure to interviews was deemed important in order to ensure cross-department comparability, so an interview guide was prepared in advance with reference to the literature reviewed (see Appendix G). Secondly, semi-structured interviews afford an opportunity to gain in-depth

information on the interviewees' interpretations and perspectives. The aim of the semi-structured interviews for this research was to assess and analyse the opinions, perspectives, attitudes and beliefs of participants, regarding HEIs' engagement with stakeholders, engagement performance reporting and measurement. Thirdly, semi-structured interviews allow participants to elaborate on their responses, whilst affording the researcher an opportunity to ask additional questions leading on from respondents' answers to questions. Hence, in this study, participants had the freedom to expand on their responses during the interview process. This process is discussed briefly in the next section.

The interview process

An interview guide (see Appendix G) was prepared for this study based on the major themes emanating from the literature review and documentary analysis. According to Bryman (2008) an interview guide is a '*...rather vague term that is used to refer to ... a structured list of issues to be addressed or questions to be asked in semi-structured interviews*' (Bryman, 2008, p.695). The aim of the interview guide was to ensure that the objectives of the study were addressed and that sufficient data was amassed on each theme to allow conclusions to be drawn (Patton, 2015). The major themes emanating from the literature review and documentary analysis that were used for this study were outlined in chapters 2, 3 and 4 of this thesis. For example, the literature reviewed conducted for chapter 2 (HE) and chapter 4 (ST and NIS) suggested questions concerning the role of networks and homogeneity. The literature reviewed for chapter 3 (engagement) led to the inclusion of questions regarding definitions of engagement, drivers of engagement, types of engagement and its measurement. The literature review conducted for chapter 4 (ST and NIS) also prompted questions relating to the identification of HEI stakeholders, their importance, and their geographical dispersion.

During the interviews, the guide acted as a memory prompt for the researcher to ensure that all pertinent areas were covered (Cameron and Price, 2009). Flexibility was maintained during questioning to allow for probing of points of interest in participants' responses. Patton (2015) asserts that the interview guide could also provide a framework for analysing and reviewing data. The researcher in this study found the interview guide very useful at the analysis stage (see Appendix E for sample of analysis).

At the start of the interview, the researcher established herself as an individual who was curious, and prepared to listen (Cameron and Price, 2009; Saunders et al., 2007; Chisnall, 2005). This was particularly important in faculties outside the researcher's own faculty in order to establish trust. Assurance regarding confidentiality and anonymity was provided at the start of the interview, as recommended by Mathers et al. (2002). The participants of the study were informed of its purpose and given the option of withdrawal. Each participant signed a consent form before interviewing began (See Appendix G). The possibility that the responses provided by interviewees may be an inaccurate reflection of interviewees' experiences have been limited by the researcher by both preparing for, and managing the interview process effectively, and ensuring to probe responses throughout the process in order to enhance accuracy of response.

During the semi-structured interviews, the dialogue was recorded using a digital dictaphone for transcription post-interview. This procedure is important for the detailed analysis required in qualitative research and to ensure that interviewee responses were captured in their own words (Bryman, 2008). At the end of the interview, participants were invited to make corrections to their statements and offer additional comments, as proposed by Mathers et al. (2002). Furthermore, participants were thanked for their time and again reassured of the confidentiality of their responses. Post interview notes were made to supplement those made during the interview and the comments recorded. Copies of interview transcripts were provided to the participants for verification. In addition, to ensure transparency in this thesis, copies of transcripts, documentation, and notes have been retained and are available for examination.

Sample selection

There are two methods of selecting a sample, probability and non-probability sampling. Probability sampling is based on the premise that each element of the target population has a known, but not necessarily equal chance of being selected (Institute of Technology Research Alliance, 2010). In non-probability sampling, the inclusion or exclusion of elements in a sample is left to the discretion of the researcher (Hair et al., 2007) and is often driven by pragmatism (Hackley, 2003).

There are many methods of probability and non-probability sampling as shown in Figure 6.5 below:

Probability Sampling		Non-probability Sampling	
Simple Random Sampling	Every element of target population has equal chance of being selected – e.g. drawing names from a hat	Quota Sampling	A type of stratified sampling in which selection of cases within the strata is entirely non-random
Systematic Sampling	After a random starting point very nth element is then selected	Purposive/ Judgemental Sampling	Use of judgement to select cases that will best answer the research questions
Stratified Sampling	After dividing the population into relevant strata, random selections are made within that stratum.	Snowball Sampling	Used when it is difficult to identify members of the desired population. One case points the way to another.
Cluster Sampling	After dividing the population into naturally occurring clusters (e.g. geography), random/systematic selections are made within that cluster.	Self-selection Sampling	Each case identifies their desire to take part in the research
Multi-stage sampling	A series of cluster samples each involving some form of random sampling	Convenience/ Haphazard Sampling	Cases are selected haphazardly based on those that are easiest to obtain

Figure 6.5: Types of probability and non-probability sampling

(Source: Researcher adapted from (Bryman, 2008; Hair et al., 2007; Saunders et al., 2007))

Non-probability sampling was considered most appropriate for this research project as sampling the entire population of the case HEI was impractical, and many members of the population would not have the information required by the researcher to answer her research questions. Random selection (probability sampling) is not considered necessary or preferable in previous studies (Eisenhardt, 1989) or by the researcher. As a result a combination of two non-probability sampling methods, judgemental sampling and convenience sampling, were used in this research. To ensure sufficient depth of relevant information, Diccico-Bloom and Crabtree (2006) propose that, it is important to ascertain, prior to data collection, whether the individuals selected for interview have knowledge and experience in the specific area that the researcher seeks to explore. This research

focused on the academic departments that report to the Institute's Executive Board through their heads of schools. There are twenty seven academic departments within the institute, the HoDs of which gather information on engagement activity from their staff and are required to report that engagement activity both for internal departmental review and for external stakeholder analysis in the creation and review of programmes. Hence, they were considered the most suitable participants for the study. In addition, prior to any formal interviews taking place, the researcher had an informal chat with four HoDs (who were later interviewed) to help her prepare for data collection and to ensure that the right people were being interviewed. This led to the elimination of the nine academic departments that are involved in very specialist education such as art, music and marine activities and have second level as well as third level students. As a result of their different education provision, their definition of external stakeholders (second level students are internal stakeholders for these departments), as well as their engagement with them, is not the same as the relationships other departments have with these stakeholders. Because of this, the transferability of data found in these departments was considered low. They are also located at satellite campuses making access more difficult. Therefore these departments were not invited to interview. As a result eighteen departments, based on the main campus, with more traditional forms, subject areas and stakeholder engagements were selected. HoDs in these eighteen academic departments were invited to interview and these are highlighted in the light blue boxes in Appendix A.

The researcher's judgement was also used in the selection of the top management team responsible for the engagement strategy and engagement measurement at the case HEI. This group of top managers was considered suitable as they collate all data collected by the HoDs of the case HEI in relation to engagement and prepare submissions on that activity to the relevant authorities. Four of this group accepted invitations and were interviewed as highlighted in yellow in Appendix A. Backgrounds of interviewees selected are shown below in Figure 6.6.

Interviewee	Years in case HEI	Role in other HEI previously	Years in current position	Other role in case HEI
HoD1	17	Lecturer	5	Lecturer
HoD2	18	Lecturer	17	Lecturer
HoD3	10	Lecturer	5	Snr Lecturer
HoD4	8	n/a	1	Lecturer
HoD5	20	Lecturer	8	Lecturer
HoD6	15	Lecturer	2.5	Lecturer
HoD7	19	n/a	0.5	Lecturer
HoD8	17	Researcher	4	Lecturer
HoD9	11	Lecturer	3	Snr Lecturer
HoD10	30+	Lecturer	12	Lecturer
HoD11	2.5	Lecturer	2.5	n/a
HoD12	16	Lecturer	10	Lecturer
HoD13	10+	n/a	3	Lecturer
HoD14	16	n/a	12	Lecturer
TM1	17	n/a	3.5	Lecturer
TM2	20+	n/a	<5	Lecturer
TM3	29	n/a	2	HoD
TM4	20	Lecturer	>3	Lecturer

Figure 6.6: Interviewee details
(Source: Researcher)

In summary, the sample was selected for two reasons. First, in order to maximise the depth and richness of the data, HoDs and members of the top management team were considered to be the most appropriate participants due to their position and experience in the case HEI (judgemental sampling). Second, as the researcher was based on the main campus, interviewees at that campus were selected for ease of access during term time

(convenience sampling). The researcher was of the opinion that these interviewees would provide the best possible holistic representation of the case HEI.

6.2.6.2 Secondary data

Secondary data used for this study consists of a review of previous literature and documents. This data was gathered as it was necessary to establish the context of the study, to develop an understanding of the environment in which the case HEI operates, and the measurement systems used.

Secondary research, in the form of a literature review, helped the researcher to generate and refine the research idea and highlight any gaps that may exist (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). It also allowed her to demonstrate awareness of the current literature in this area, its limitations, and how the current research fits in the wider context (Hart, 1998). Mc Neill and Chapman (2005) state that every researcher should spend time reading what others have written concerning the area of interest, as the literature review can provide support in forming ideas concerning the key issues and assist researchers in not making the same mistakes made by earlier researchers. The literature review identifies what is already known about the topic and whether work has been undertaken that is related to the present study (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). Additionally, the researcher considered where the current study fits in with existing research (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008; Hart, 1998). Hence, the literature reviewed was used to build and support arguments, to justify the methodology used and to make an effective critical analysis of other research (Institute of Technology Research Alliance, 2010). When compiling secondary data for the literature review, peer reviewed academic journals, textbooks, and internet-based sources were used.

The literature review process is iterative in nature. Having defined the general area of interest the researcher undertook some initial research database searches, which were also informed by previous inquiry. This allowed the researcher to refine the topic area and identify some possibilities in terms of approach. Having completed an initial outline of the literature review, the search criteria were subsequently refined. This resulted in the completion of a more focused review of extant literature, as presented in earlier chapters.

Organisational and institutional documents which have been a staple in qualitative research for many years (Bowen, 2009), are also used in this study. In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of research reports and journal articles that mention documentary analysis as part of the methodology (Bowen, 2009). Documentary analysis involves documents that have not been produced at the request of the researcher and instead are produced for an alternative purpose such as diaries, letters and autobiographies, and official documents, state publications, company documents, media outputs and internet publications (Bryman, 2008; Saunders et al., 2007; Mc Neill and Chapman, 2005).

Documents serve a variety of purposes; they can provide background and context, they can suggest some questions that need to be asked, they provide supplementary research data, a means of tracking changes over time, and a means of verifying findings and corroborating evidence from other sources (such as interviews) (Bowen, 2009). They can tell sociologists a great deal about the way in which institutions and events are constructed and the interactions and interpretations that shape these (Mc Neill and Chapman, 2005). Furthermore, as documents are non-reactive, the possibility of a reactive effect can be largely discounted as a limitation on the validity of the data (Bryman, 2008). In other words, documents are static and the data is not influenced by the researcher. The main drawback of documentary analysis is that documents are written to convey an impression and are written with certain recipients in mind (Bjorkquist, 2010; Bryman, 2008).

Documentary analysis, in conjunction with interviews, are among the most dominant types of data collection methods used in published educational studies (Tight, 2011). To fulfil the empirical aims of this thesis, the documentary analysis is based on three types of documents. Firstly, many documents produced specifically by the case HEI have been studied, as outlined in Figure 6.4. These were acquired through the case HEI internal website, through information made available to the public, through minutes of meetings attended by the researcher, and submissions made by the case HEI to the Higher Education Authority (HEA). These documents were reviewed in order to gain an understanding of engagement in the case HEI; engagement strategies and measures, engagement policy and procedures, and the extent of engagement in the case HEI. According to Barone et al. (2013), documentary evidence is crucial to understanding the events surrounding an illustrative case and especially in illuminating what, if any [stakeholder engagement] processes were undertaken. The second type of document

reviewed was more general in nature; documents pertaining to Irish HE. These included reports produced by the HEA and the Department of Education and Skills in Ireland. Published performance compacts for all Irish HEIs were also accessed and compared with the case HEI's compact (see Appendix D). National documents were used in order to ascertain national policy with regard to engagement and to allow the researcher to compare interviewee responses against institutional and state documentary data (Dougherty and Reddy, 2011). Finally, international reports, with a particular emphasis on engagement measurement were reviewed. Publications from governments and education departments internationally were a useful resource, in particular website publications and reports from the UK, Scotland and Australia greatly helped the researcher's understanding of engagement and its measurement. In addition the study made use of international reports by the European Union; World Bank; United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO); and the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD). The next section outlines how the interview and documentary data were analysed.

6.3 Data analysis

One of the main difficulties of qualitative research is that it very rapidly generates a large, cumbersome amount of data because of its reliance on prose in the form of filed notes, interview transcripts or documents (Patton, 2015; Bryman, 2008). The objective of qualitative data analysis is to identify, examine, compare and interpret patterns and themes (Hair et al., 2007). Analysis is a loop-like process in which the data is revisited regularly as new questions and connections emerge, or as the overall understanding of the research situation emerges (Hair et al., 2007). According to Hair et al. (2007), when analysing data in qualitative research the questions noted in Figure 6.7 should be considered.

What themes and common patterns are emerging that relate to the research objectives?
How are these themes and patterns related to the focus of this research?
Are there examples of responses that are inconsistent with the typical patterns and themes?
Can these inconsistencies be explained or perhaps be used to expand or redirect the research?
Do the patterns and themes indicate that additional data, perhaps in a new area, need to be collected?
Are the patterns and themes consistent with other research?

Figure 6.7: Questions to ask when analysing qualitative data

(Source: Researcher based on text by Hair et al. (2007))

Analysing documents involves ‘...*skimming (superficial examination), reading (thorough examination), and interpretation. This iterative process combines elements of content analysis and thematic analysis.*’ (Bowen, 2009, p.32). Content analysis is considered an objective method which describes the prevalence of key themes, allowing researchers to draw well-reasoned conclusions from the frequency and the nature of themes identified, and is therefore largely considered a quantitative methodology (Cameron and Price, 2009). Thematic analysis involves giving codes (labels) to sentences, phrases, paragraphs or lines before comparing them to identify variations, similarities, patterns and relationships in order to create a thematic map (Petty et al., 2012). Alternatively combining content and thematic analysis is known as ethnographic or qualitative content analysis. In this approach the researcher constantly revises the themes or categories that are distilled from the examination of the documents (Bryman, 2008).

Analysing interview data from qualitative open questions is more problematic than when closed questions are used as work must be done before often diverse responses from subjects can be compared (Mathers et al., 2002). To facilitate analysis of qualitative data,

content is analysed in a first step to identify themes inductively (Kumar, 2014; Saunders et al., 2007), and then categorising or coding is used to enable the researcher to simplify and focus on the meaningful characteristics of the data (Hair et al., 2007; Mathers et al., 2002). Many categories tend to be determined by the research objectives, and thus, may be known prior to data analysis (Saunders et al., 2007). Others are developed through an iterative reducing pattern. This approach has been described as a template approach as it involves applying a template of categories, based on prior research and theoretical perspectives (Dicicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006).

In this study the various documents obtained were reviewed using what Bryman (2008) described as qualitative content analysis. These documents were skimmed initially and then read more carefully in order to ascertain recurring themes. These themes were then revised and grouped in an iterative process of reading and rereading the documents. Once the key themes had been developed an interview guide was prepared, as discussed in section 6.2.6.1. As noted previously, interviews were recorded on a dictaphone and transcribed shortly afterwards. Interview transcripts were examined, reflected upon, and re-examined. The researcher listened to the audiotape while reading the transcriptions to ensure accuracy. During the process of transcribing and adding interview notes, categories or themes were further identified and coded into NVivo. Initial coding began with the key themes arising from the research questions, the documentary analysis, and the interview guide: stakeholders, engagement, measurement and strategic compact. From these initial codes a more detailed analysis was conducted based on the interview questions. Responses to interview questions were then coded by major themes into related sub-themes. Subsequently, Lee's (2011) adapted model (see Figure 5.3) was applied to the research evidence. Each document and interview transcript was re analysed and coded based on the key themes framing the model. As write up began, the researcher studied each theme and sub-theme more carefully. As a result, consolidation of some themes occurred, while other themes were further divided into sub-themes, which were used to structure, analyse and discuss the research findings (An example of some themes and sub-themes used is shown in Appendix E). The next section outlines the methods used to produce valid, reliable and objective findings.

6.4 Research validity and reliability

When conducting research it is important that the methods used produce valid, reliable and objective findings. Validity is the extent to which research findings are really about what they profess to be about. It refers to the ways in which the credibility of a piece of research is developed (Lukka and Modell, 2010). Reliability is fundamentally concerned with the extent to which data collection techniques yield consistent findings. Objectivity is described as the avoidance of bias and subjective selection during the conduct and reporting of research (Saunders et al., 2007). However, there has been a reluctance to apply validity, reliability and objectivity to anti-positivist research because this may imply acceptance of one absolute (positivist) reality (Easterby-Smith et al., 2002) (See section 6.2.2). Instead of using quantitative terms such as validity, reliability and objectivity, many researchers applying a case study approach employ terms such as dependability, confirmability, credibility, objectivity, trustworthiness, and transferability to mean the same thing as validity and reliability (Kumar, 2014; Lukka and Modell, 2010; Creswell, 2007). These terms will be applied to this research in the following paragraphs.

Assessing the dependability or consistency of findings, according to Easterby-Smith et al. (2002, p.135), is '*...primarily a matter of stability: if an instrument is administered to the same individual on two different occasions...will it yield the same result*'. Dependability is concerned with whether the same results would be obtained if the same interview was conducted twice but can be affected by the physical setting, the participant's mood and the nature of the interaction between the interviewee and interviewer (Kumar, 2014). The researcher had to bear in mind that this study is located in the field where both she and the participants (in the study) work. This had the advantage of helping to understand the context in relation to what the participants were saying and it minimised the distance, or objective separateness, between the researcher and the people being interviewed. During this research all interviewees were interviewed in their own offices in order to put them more at ease in familiar surroundings and each interview was started and conducted the same way as detailed in Section 6.2.6.1 above. Also, data collected from interviews were continuously cross-referenced with data from other sources, and cross-checked against insights from other interviews conducted and documents analysed.

Confirmability is the degree to which the results could be confirmed or corroborated by others (Hair et al., 2007; Mc Neill and Chapman, 2005). Assessment confirmability is only possible if subsequent researchers follow the process in an identical manner (Kumar, 2014). Confirmability parallels objectivity and questions whether the researcher has allowed her values to intrude (Bryman, 2008). By being cognisant of these weaknesses in qualitative interviewing and interpretation, the researcher endeavoured to remain objective throughout by allowing the interviewees to express their perspectives and experiences without judgement or comment. By using interviews and documentary analysis, objectivity was also ensured because documents do not respond to researchers, so any researcher effects that may have unconsciously crept into interviews can be discounted (Bryman, 2008). Using multiple sources for objectivity aligns with Bowen (2009) who states that *'By examining information collected through different methods, the researcher can corroborate findings across data sets and thus reduce the impact of potential biases that can exist in a single study'* (Bowen, 2009, p.28).

When assessing credibility, it is important to set out how specific interpretations have been distilled as researchers went through their process of discovery, so that other researchers (as well as others who are interested in the research) can judge whether they think these interpretations are persuasive (De Loo et al., 2015). Results of research should be believable and reached through methods that are transparent and transferable. When there is convergence of information from different sources, readers of the research report usually have greater confidence in the credibility of the findings (Bowen, 2009). Credibility and the resulting transferability is made possible by rich, thick description. With detailed description, the researcher enables readers to transfer information to other settings and to determine whether the findings can be transferred because of shared characteristics (Lincoln & Guba (1985) quoted in Creswell (2007)). To improve credibility, it is important for the researcher to describe how access to the particular organisation was gained and what processes led to the selection of participants. It is also important to explain how data was created and recorded, what processes were used to summarise or collate it, how the data became transformed into tentative ideas and explanations (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). In this thesis, these explanations are summarised as follows:

Transparency aspects of Thesis	Summary answer	See Section
How access to the case HEI was gained:	The researcher has links to the case HEI and via the Head of Faculty and the Vice President of Finance secured access.	6.5 Ethical considerations
Selection of informants:	Non-probability and convenience sampling was used	6.2.6.1 Sampling
Data creation and recording:	Semi-structured interviews were recorded by Dictaphone. Documents are non-reactive and therefore absent of bias.	6.2.6.1 Interviews and documentary analysis
Summarising or collating the data:	Interviews were transcribed and NVivo, a data analysis software package, was used.	6.3 Data Analysis
Transforming the data into tentative ideas and explanations:	Initially, simple identification of themes from transcripts using paper and coloured highlighters. Later, other themes were identified and coded using NVivo in an iterative process.	6.3 Data Analysis

Figure 6.8: Transparency of Thesis

(Source: Adapted from Easterby-Smith et al. (2008))

6.5 Ethical considerations

According to Cameron and Price (2009) ‘*Ethics is that branch of philosophy which is concerned with human character and conduct; a system of morals or rules of behaviour*’ (Cameron and Price, 2009, p.117). In order to ensure that ethical standards were met the proposal for this study was presented to, and approved by, the appropriate research ethics committees in Waterford Institute of Technology. Ethical standards can be met by consideration of four key areas: the potential for harm to the participants; informed consent; invasion of privacy; and deception (Bryman, 2008).

In this study, the researcher has addressed ethical standards by consideration of each of these four key areas. First, in order to provide protection to all participants a high level of confidentiality and anonymity was agreed in advance and was maintained throughout data collection, analysis and reporting. This also applied to publications from this research (see Appendix H) and will be continued in any subsequent post publication dissemination.

Access to potential interviewees was ensured through a link that the researcher has with the case HEI. Two senior members of the case HEI (not members of the interview pool) invited all HoDs and members of the top management team to participate at a monthly management meeting. Following this, the researcher emailed each potential interviewee separately and invited them to participate in the study. Second, in terms of interviewee consent, during the data collection phase, the participants of the study were informed of its purpose, assured of confidentiality, and given the option of withdrawal. Each participant signed a consent form before interviewing began (see Appendix G). In analysing the data, interview transcripts were provided to the participants for their approval and comment, and also the opportunity for correction and amendment was provided. Third, linked to the notion of informed consent is the principle of respecting an individual's right to privacy. An assurance was given that any information provided by participants would only be used for the purposes of this research. While this study was conducted to achieve a doctoral degree and the resulting thesis will be available for public view, the anonymity of the participants and confidentiality of information supplied will be maintained. Finally, the researcher had no reason to engage in any deception. The researcher presented the results of the study so as to honestly record the underlying data and faithfully represent accurate, unbiased findings. To ensure transparency in this thesis, copies of transcripts, documentation, and notes have been retained and are available for examination.

6.6 Conclusion

This chapter outlined the methodological approach adopted in this study. First, research design, a road map that the researcher decides to follow during their research journey was presented. The importance of research questions and objectives was outlined. An overview of the research paradigms and possible research approaches was subsequently presented. The philosophical assumptions regarding the nature of social science; ontology, epistemology, human nature and methodology were then described. The choice of research methods, as techniques for collecting data, was then explained. In essence, this exploratory research study is a pragmatist study and adopts a qualitative research approach. A pragmatic study straddles both anti-positivist and positivist elements. In this research these include the study of participants' perceptions through interviews (anti-

positivism), and ascertaining what engagement activity is measured from documentary analysis (positivist). The next section identified the case organisation selected for study and justified and data collection methods used. Finally, research validity and reliability, as well as ethical standards relating to this study, were addressed.

CHAPTER 7: FINDINGS

7.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from primary data collection. Data was collected using in-depth interviews and documentary analysis. As outlined in the previous chapter, eighteen managers from the case HEI were interviewed, fourteen of whom were heads of department (HoD1-14) and four senior managers (TM1-4). Documentary analysis included internal HEI documents as well as Irish and International HE publications. The aim of the chapter is to begin to address the research question: *How do Irish HEIs engage with their external stakeholders and how is the engagement measured?* To address this question research objectives were developed: *1: To determine how Irish HEIs engage with external stakeholders. 2: To identify techniques currently in use to report on engagement practices in a HEI setting. 3: To explore the key influences on engagement practices and on measures selected to report engagement performance.*

The chapter begins with an overview of the external stakeholders as proposed by the interviewees of the case HEI and supported by documentary analysis. The findings relating to the salience of these stakeholders are then outlined. Based on this reported salience, a stakeholder typology comprising latent, expectant and definitive stakeholders is presented. Findings relating to the proximity of stakeholders are then detailed. The next section addresses perspectives on engagement. The findings are presented based on five broad themes arising from the literature review and supported by the findings of this study (see section 3.4): graduate formation; workforce development; research and innovation, social enhancement, and market advancement. Findings regarding the influences on HEIs' engagement with external stakeholders are then noted and the measurement of engagement practices in the case HEI are discussed. Finally, findings relating to the strategic performance compact, awareness of it and influences on the selection of engagement measures therein are considered.

7.2 Stakeholders

This section presents findings in relation to external stakeholders, their identification, their salience and the influence of their proximity. The first part of the research was to

ascertain who the case HEI's interviewees considered as external stakeholders. Interviewees identified business and industry, prospective students, government and their agencies, other HEIs, professional bodies, communities and alumni as their external stakeholders. Detailed findings relating to these stakeholders are presented in the following sections.

7.2.1 Legitimate external stakeholders

The findings in this study show a legitimisation of external stakeholders by the case HEI as well as a legitimisation of the case HEI's activities by external stakeholders. This section discusses the legitimisation of stakeholders by the case HEI. (Legitimisation of case HEI activities is considered in section 7.3.3). One of the interviewees describe legitimate stakeholders as “...*people who have a valued interest in whether or not my department actually exists*” (HoD12). This interviewee continues to state that their legitimacy arises because external stakeholders “... *are very necessary. The nature of education and the nature of the world we live in and the nature of technology is that you've got to keep moving, and we need influences, we need information, and then we can establish our position within all of that*” (HoD12). Another interviewee concurs with this legitimisation of external stakeholders, and their value to the case HEI, and contends the case HEI doesn't “... *see ourselves as the repository of all knowledge. We think that some companies have excellent practices and techniques that we can learn from them ...*” (HoD13). The case HEI's strategy documents also legitimise external stakeholders by prioritising, as one of its visions, a desire to be ‘...*a national and international leader in enterprise engagement and the practice of extending the education campus into the workplace and the wider community.*’ (Case HEI, 2012-2017, p.7).

The findings confirm the existence of multiple legitimate stakeholders with interviewees contending: “*Our external stakeholders are multiple*” (TM3) and “...*there's a whole range of stakeholders*” (HoD5). The documents reviewed also confirm the existence of multiple external stakeholders. An analysis of the case HEI's *External Engagement Strategy* (Case HEI, 2017) identified employers, community, education partners, clients and supporters, as their external legitimate stakeholders. Findings from interviewees added further external stakeholders to those identified in the case HEI's engagement strategy. The extract below from NVivo (see Figure 7.1) shows the stakeholders that were identified by the interviewees, as well as the number of interviewees that identified these

stakeholders, and the number of references made by the interviewees to the stakeholders. NVivo identified the number of references from analysing the sections of interview transcripts relating to questions about who interviewees thought their stakeholders are. The findings indicate that more references to a stakeholder group the more highly regarded and significant that group is to interviewees. Therefore, stakeholders are presented in descending order in the figure below, showing those with the highest number of references at the top of Figure 7.1. More detailed findings relating to each of these stakeholder groups are presented in subsequent sections.

Section	Stakeholder	No. of interviewees	References
7.2.1.1	Business and industry	18	49
7.2.1.2	Prospective students	11	30
7.2.1.3	Government and their agencies	14	25
7.2.1.4	Other HEIs	11	25
7.2.1.5	Professional bodies	10	13
7.2.1.6	Communities	6	6
7.2.1.7	Alumni	3	3

Figure 7.1: External stakeholders identified by interviewees

7.2.1.1 Business and industry

As Figure 7.1 shows, all eighteen interviewees, in forty nine references, cited business and industry (including industry associations) as external stakeholders. This is the only stakeholder group identified by all of the interviewees and it shows the highest number of references. Interviewees identified different stakeholder strands within the business and industry category, including types of organisation, employers, and industry associations. In relation to types of organisation, interviewees noted small to medium sized enterprises, large multinational companies (MNC) and indigenous companies as strands of the business and industry stakeholder grouping:

“Enterprise - SMEs [small to medium sized enterprises] would be very important to us and so would the small firms associations, so the less than ten [employees] and between ten and fifty [employees] would be very important to us. You have to deal with them

slightly differently because of scale. The multinationals, particularly the bio-pharma and the ICT [information, communication and technology] companies ... So within enterprise broadly there is three strands” (TM2).

“And then you have your types of enterprise, you’ve got your MNC [multinational companies] and indigenous ...” (TM4).

Employers were suggested as a strand of business and industry stakeholders by many of the interviewees, for example:

Interviewee	Comment
HoD8	<i>“Employers are obviously very important.”</i>
HoD9	<i>“...the main stakeholders are obviously the employers and the potential employers.”</i>
TM3	<i>“...one of the other factors in ensuring that we have good students coming in is ... engagement with the world of work let’s say...Our employers in general, employers in the regions, are a major stakeholder ...”</i>

Figure 7.2: Business and industry as employers

Industry associations were another prominent strand of the business and industry stakeholder group identified in interviews. Industry associations, identified as stakeholders, included the Irish Business and Employers' Confederation (IBEC), the Irish Marketing Institute (IMI), the Sales Institute, [HEI city] Electronics Industry Association (CEIA), it@[HEI city], the Chamber of Commerce, and [HEI city] Business Alliance.

When asked to rate their most important stakeholder group, sixteen interviewees selected business and industry as their most important stakeholder group:

“I would say enterprise because we are a career focused institution, so from our internal stakeholders point of view we need good connectivity to the external – they influence the development of our courses, but also they employ hundreds of thousands of people so what we do with them feeds back into families and all the rest. So by addressing them you address all the other stakeholders to various degrees. So that is why I put them first.” (TM2).

“I’d be more inclined to say generally industry. We need to place our students, we need to get companies to engage with us on guest talks and so on, and that to me is the key thing”. (HoD11).

One interviewee summarised the importance of employers stating; *“...if you have local industry keyed into you're thinking and your philosophy, I think that is more powerful.”* (HoD14).

In conclusion, the findings show that business and industry is considered to be the most important stakeholder group based both on the number of references made to them during interviews, and from interviewee opinions about their importance. Different strands were identified within the business and industry stakeholder grouping comprising different types of organisation, employers, and industry associations.

7.2.1.2 Prospective students

The findings show that the second most highly ranked stakeholder group identified in this study were prospective students. As shown in Figure 7.1 these stakeholders were referred to on thirty occasions by eleven of the interviewees. Prospective students are not a generic group, rather, prospective students can be subdivided into standard and non-standard entrants (see section 4.2.1.2). Standard entrants are students who enter the HEI having completed the terminal state exams at second level. Non-standard entrants enter HE later in life or having completed an educational programme to meet the necessary entry requirements.

Interviewees identified prospective students as stakeholders, irrespective of being standard or non-standard entrants. When asked who the most important stakeholder group was, some interviewees selected prospective students as their most important and provided answers such as those shown in Figure 7.3 below:

Interviewee	Comment
HoD13	<i>“...the stakeholders in relation to second level students are of key importance...”</i>
HoD9	<i>“If you look at the short hand scale, the students are the most important, because if you don’t get the student, you are going nowhere”</i>
TM3	<i>“There is our perspective students and the influencers of our perspective students because our funding model still is predicated around the funding follows the student... ”</i> <i>“...I mean I think our perspective students are a core stakeholder, given where our funding lies.”</i>
TM4	<i>“...in order of importance I would say the prospective students”</i>

Figure 7.3: The most important stakeholders: Prospective students

In conclusion, both the literature and the interviewees divide prospective students into two groups; standard and non-standard entrants. Regardless of how the student came to the HEI, prospective students were recognised as the second most important stakeholder group by the interviewees, both for the future of the HEI and from a funding point of view.

7.2.1.3 Government and their agencies

Government and their agencies were identified as the third stakeholder group. As shown in Figure 7.1, twenty five unique references were made by fourteen of the interviewees. *“...government agencies would be more national”* (HoD4) than most of the other stakeholder groups. The interviewees identified the constituents of this stakeholder grouping as including research partners and government agencies that fund research, as well as government agencies as employers, as policy makers, and as regulators. For example, one interviewee considered government agencies and departments important from both a research funding point of view and from a policy steering point of view:

“They [government agencies] are [important] from a funding point of view but in particular ... the Department [of Education and Skills] and the HEA [Higher Education Authority] who are the two bodies I suppose that would be looking over our shoulders in

terms of steerage... a lot of our engagement with the HEA and the government is demonstrating to them that we are meeting the needs of enterprise and perspective students.” (TM4).

Other interviewees discussed membership of government committees that are responsible for policy initiatives and standard settings. For example:

“I would work with them on HEA committees, in relation to skills initiatives and so on” (HoD14).

“We would have four staff on NSAI, National Standards Authority of Ireland. They would have a number of committees responsible for different design codes and standards. We would have a number of staff on that. I think one of our staff is a chair of a committee” (HoD5).

While fourteen interviewees identified government and their agencies as their stakeholders, few of them included this stakeholder group as their most important stakeholders. Those who considered government agencies as their most important stakeholders did so because of the requirement for their courses and graduates to be registered and regulated by that agency or based on receiving direct funding allocation, for example:

“In terms of social care, the most important external stakeholder would be Coru [Ireland’s multi-profession health regulator (from the Irish word 'cóir' meaning fair)] ... for registration of social care workers. [They] will register our students in future.” (HoD10).

“...the funding agencies are very important because they give us money ...” (HoD9).

To summarise, the interviewees identified the constituents of this stakeholder group as research partners and government bodies that fund research, government agencies as employers and as policy makers and regulators. A few of the interviewees considered government and its agencies as their most important stakeholder group.

7.2.1.4 Other HEIs

As shown in Figure 7.1, other HEIs were referenced twenty five times by eleven of the interviewees, ranking them fourth in the listing of stakeholders. Other HEIs noted as being stakeholders are diverse and geographically dispersed, ranging from the case HEI's nearest neighbour, to partners in Europe and internationally.

Some of the interviewees identified proximate HEIs located within the same county as external stakeholders. For example:

“Then there are other partner HEIs. People that we work with. People like [the neighbouring HEI] are a big stakeholder here” (TM3).

Interviewees also referenced benchmarking themselves against other HEIs (TM1, TM2, TM3 and TM4). One interviewee said performance measures were chosen based on a European group that the case HEI is involved with:

“Then there is a group called the European Consortium of Innovative Universities (ECIU) and again they would have a lot of the features that we would aspire to so we picked a number of members of that [institution] as well to compare to. So we benchmarked ourselves against 5 other institutions.” (TM4).

Interviewees noted learning from other HEIs: *“...that's how you learn ... [from] how the rest of the world does thing...”* (HoD1)

Only one interviewee rated other HEIs as an important stakeholder group stating that: *“...in the long term you need to have a good collaborator internationally because all of these things are peer review. So, you need to increase your profile.”* (HoD9).

In summary, although eleven interviewees identified other HEIs as stakeholders, they were not considered to be very important by the majority of interviewees.

7.2.1.5 Professional Bodies

Figure 7.1 shows that when asked to identify their stakeholders, ten of the interviewees cited professional bodies in thirteen references. Heads of department who were

interviewed, identified a diverse range of professional bodies as their stakeholders, for example:

“Professional bodies are a massively important one. So, you have the professional accountancy bodies, because we deliver their programmes, even though they give exemptions for programmes in another department...And then on one of our degrees and masters programmes, they are professionally accredited by CIPD [Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development], the professional body for HR professionals worldwide” (HoD6).

“We would have members on ICHEME [Institution of Chemical Engineers] accreditation panels. We have at least 2 members of staff this year on Engineers Ireland panels” (HoD13).

Engaging with the professional bodies is undertaken predominantly for validation, accreditation and exemptions purposes. For example, one interviewee stated:

“I want to add external validation and professional accreditation bodies such as Engineers Ireland, ICHEME and the Energy Institute. They accredit courses...” (HoD13).

While a diverse range of professional bodies were identified, recognition of the importance of these stakeholders by interviewees was varied. One interviewee identified Engineers Ireland as the most important external stakeholder for that department:

“They are important, I wouldn’t say they are the most important but of the external stakeholders probably yes...because the programmes are accredited by Engineers Ireland which means the companies are happy then to hire ” (HoD8).

Another respondent did not identify professional bodies as the primary stakeholder grouping but rather as second in terms of importance by stating that:

“...the professional bodies are very important but in a way maybe the employers [are most important], because they validate our programmes by taking our graduates” (HoD6).

In summary, ten interviewees cited a wide variety of professional bodies as their stakeholders, however, just one interviewee considered this group as an important stakeholder.

7.2.1.6 Communities

Figure 7.1 above shows that six interviewees identified their local communities as stakeholders and made six references to communities during the interviews. For example, one interviewee stated:

“I suppose on a daily basis our main external stakeholders would be our enterprise and community partners locally, regionally and nationally” (TM1).

Communities were recognised as an important part of the case HEIs environment or ecosystem. One interviewee stated:

“... it is an ecosystem; everybody has a role, everybody feeds off of everyone else, in a positive way, and puts something back in again. You know, if you took one element out of the picture we're the less for it...we are part of that community based contract with the outside world...” (HoD12).

Other interviewees indicated the importance of servicing communities as a stakeholder group, even when they are not financially lucrative, stating that:

“The next big group [after potential learners and enterprises] are community, sporting and cultural groups and that is a list as long as my arm, but they are significant in that they would be part of the broader mission...” (TM4).

“So those stakeholders in the community may not be a very financially lucrative stakeholder but we have an obligation to service them” (HoD8).

Much of that ‘...service...’ (HoD8) is undertaken by the case HEI’s staff on a voluntary basis as confirmed by one interviewees who stated:

“...Also lots of our staff give talks at various fora ... we are connecting with the community so in that sense I would see them as stakeholders.” (TM2).

In summary, communities were identified as HEI's stakeholders by a third of the interviewees. However, while considered significant by some respondents, none of the interviewees ranked communities as their most important stakeholder group, with a low level of both financial outlay by the case HEI, and financial return from engagement with communities recognised.

7.2.1.7 Alumni

Alumni were identified as HEIs' stakeholders by three of the interviewees who made three references to them, as shown in Figure 7.1. One interviewee mentioned alumni stakeholders in the context of a continuing relationship from being a student of the HEI, to becoming a graduate (alumnus) of the HEI:

"... the students are our key stakeholder and will remain so. They can be a stakeholder while they are here being students and also as alumni... and their position within the institute varies over time so that is one obvious stakeholder" (TM2).

This relationship continuum was also highlighted by another interviewee who included:

"... all of the potential and previous learners in the institute because we would quite often see a continuum of engagement with a learner as an alumnus, as an employee, as a mentor, so there is what we consider to be a lifecycle of engagement with them. It is not that they are separate to the Institute, we see them as partners with the institution in an ongoing way." (TM1).

This interviewee recognised the importance of alumni in building external relationships with business and industry resulting in the attraction of future students to the HEI. Other interviewees discussed helping alumni to achieve this goal and alumni also helping the case HEIs current students:

"...helping graduates to position themselves for employment. So, I suppose, supporting things like graduate recruitment, so companies that have graduate training programmes - allowing them to come in, talk to student, supporting information sharing, like posters, or email the student cohort about jobs that are coming up in the graduate space...so that engagement piece would allow us to link industry with our student cohort, whether they're

recent graduates or using our contact database to maybe, forward information on jobs to past graduates” (HoD3).

“Alumni provide placements and job opportunities for our graduates, they inform changes to programmes at programmatic review and, most importantly, they act as ambassadors for the programme, the department and [the case HEI] as a whole” (HoD6).

In summary, a small number of interviewees identified Alumni as stakeholders but none of these considered alumni as their most important stakeholder group.

7.2.1.8 Summary

Overall, the findings show that interviewees identified seven stakeholder groups comprising: business and industry, prospective students, government and their agencies, other HEIs, professional bodies, communities, and alumni. Stakeholders were described based on the number of interviewees suggesting them as external stakeholders and the number of times that they were referenced while the interviewees were identifying who their stakeholders are.

During interviews, interviewees were asked to rate stakeholder groups in terms of importance. Figure 7.4 below shows the ranking of the stakeholder groups by their perceived importance to the interviewee. The ranking indicates that business and industry have been identified as the most important stakeholder group while alumni have been ranked as the least important of all stakeholder groups. Other stakeholders are shown in order of importance so business and industry as the most important is followed by prospective students, government and their agencies, communities, other HEIs, professional bodies, and the least important for interviewees, alumni. The next section presents findings providing more detail regarding the importance or salience of stakeholders.

Stakeholder	Cited as important by number of interviewees
Business and industry	16
Prospective students	7
Government and their agencies	5
Communities	3
Other HEIs	2
Professional bodies	2
Alumni	0

Figure 7.4: Interviewee ranking of stakeholder importance

7.2.2 Stakeholder salience and attributes

In terms of importance or salience, the findings indicate that it is managers' perceptions of stakeholders that determine how they are prioritised. For example, interviewees stated:

"Everyone is busy. So you know you've got to prioritise." (HoD2).

"...there are some things that you would like to do but don't do because you don't need to do them at that precise moment and time. And there are other things that I can't avoid. I have to deal with them because they are more important...So, you know, I don't treat them all the same is what I would say overall. In my head at least... there's a hierarchy of importance, and that changes from time to time." (HoD11).

In this study, to ascertain salience of particular stakeholders, the interviewees were asked to consider stakeholders and their possession of the three attributes of salience; power, legitimacy and urgency. The findings relating to these attributes, as they apply to external stakeholders, are presented in the following sections using the three classifications of the stakeholder typology identified earlier in section 4.3.2 of Chapter 4; latent, expectant and definitive, and as shown in Figure 7.5 below.

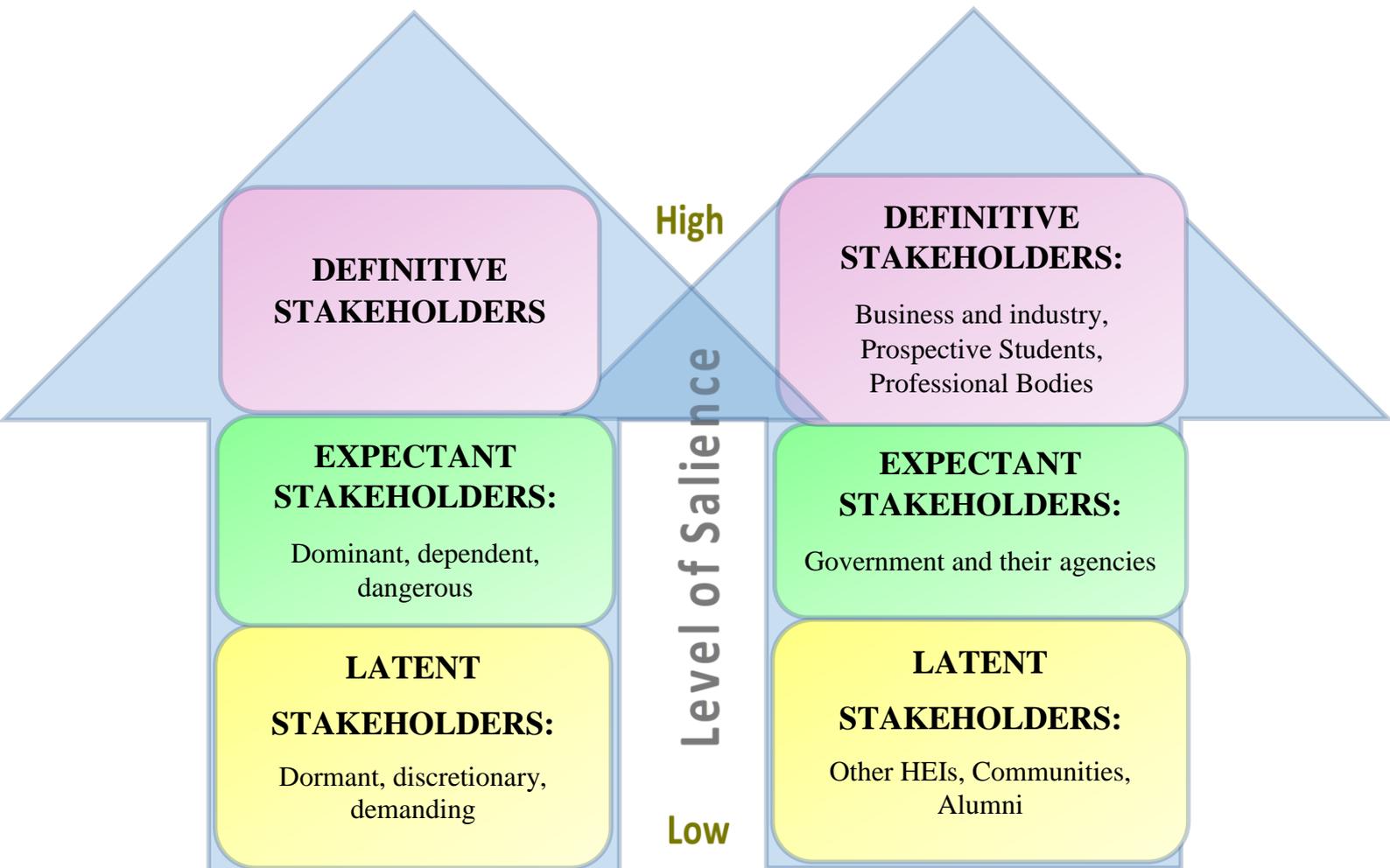


Figure 7.5: Stakeholder typology and level of salience

(Source: Researcher adapted from Mitchell et al. (1997))

7.2.2.1 Latent Stakeholders

Stakeholders to whom just one attribute are ascribed have a low level of salience, and are categorised as latent stakeholders. All stakeholder groups identified by the interviewees were recognised as having at least one of the attributes of legitimacy (stakeholder actions

are desirable within social norms), power (stakeholders ability to impose their will on a given relationship) and urgency (stakeholder claims call for immediate attention).

The interview findings suggest that legitimacy was the attribute ascribed to most of the stakeholder groups classifying them as discretionary stakeholders. For example, the legitimacy of the communities' stakeholder group was noted by one interviewee who stated: "*So those stakeholders in the community may not be a very financially lucrative stakeholder but we have an obligation to service them*" (HoD8).

One interviewee considered dealing with professional bodies to be at her discretion ascribing the stakeholder group legitimacy and recognising that the HEI is linked to the professional bodies: "*...we were linked to the professional bodies ...but it won't be driven by it*" (HoD3).

The findings indicate that the attribute of power was ascribed to some of the stakeholder groups. These include government and their agencies, business and industry and professional bodies classifying these groups as dormant stakeholders in the eyes of those interviewees. For example: "*Ultimately, the HEA have the money, so they have ultimate power.*" (HoD14).

However, the interviewees did not ascribe urgency as the sole attribute to any grouping hence no stakeholders were classified as demanding. Figure 7.6 shows the classifications ascribed to stakeholders that allowed them to be categorised as latent stakeholders.

Stakeholder	Interviewee	Classification
Alumni	HoD3	Discretionary
Alumni	HoD6	Discretionary
Business and industry	HoD2	Discretionary
Business and industry	HoD3	Discretionary
Business and industry	TM1	Discretionary
Business and industry	TM3	Discretionary
Communities	HoD3	Discretionary
Communities	HoD6	Discretionary
Communities	HoD8	Discretionary
Communities	TM1	Discretionary
Government and their agencies	HoD3	Discretionary
Government and their agencies	HoD6	Discretionary
Government and their agencies	HoD12	Discretionary
Other HEIs	HoD3	Discretionary
Other HEIs	HoD6	Discretionary
Other HEIs	TM2	Discretionary
Professional bodies	HoD2	Discretionary
Professional bodies	HoD3	Discretionary
Professional bodies	HoD12	Discretionary
Prospective students	HoD1	Discretionary
Prospective students	HoD3	Discretionary
Prospective students	HoD6	Discretionary
Prospective students	HoD8	Discretionary
Business and industry	HoD7	Dormant
Government and their agencies	HoD14	Dormant
Professional bodies	HoD8	Dormant
Business and industry	HoD5	Dormant

Figure 7.6: Categorisation of latent stakeholders

7.2.2.2 Expectant Stakeholders

Stakeholders to whom two attributes are ascribed have a medium level of salience, and are considered expectant stakeholders. The interviewees ascribed two attributes to four of the stakeholder groups which categorises them as expectant. These are prospective students, business and industry, government and their agencies, and professional bodies. The interviewees did not ascribe the pairing of power and urgency to any of the stakeholder groups, which would classify them as dangerous stakeholders. However, they did select power and legitimacy (classifying them as dominant stakeholders), and urgency and legitimacy (classifying them as dependent stakeholders), as being pairs of attributes that stakeholder groups possess.

In total, three stakeholder groups were identified by some interviewees as possessing both power and legitimacy, classifying them as dominant: business and industry, professional bodies and government and their agencies. For example:

“Well what you find is that things like the professional bodies have a big influence [legitimacy] ... where our students need to have professional qualifications, then the power does lie with those externally [power].” (TM2).

Another interviewee was of the opinion that a government agency had both power and legitimacy and stated:

“So, by taking Teagasc [the Irish government’s agriculture and food agency] as an example, ... they certainly have some power to influence, they have a legitimate claim, well they have a legitimacy around they’ve got expert knowledge.” (HoD4).

Figure 7.7 shows the classifications ascribed to stakeholders by the interviewees that categorises them as expectant stakeholders.

Stakeholder	Interviewee	Classification
Prospective students	HoD11	Dependent
Business and industry	HoD14	Dominant
Business and industry	TM4	Dominant
Government and their agencies	HoD4	Dominant
Government and their agencies	HoD8	Dominant
Government and their agencies	TM4	Dominant
Professional bodies	TM2	Dominant

Figure 7.7: Classification of expectant stakeholders

7.2.2.3 Definitive Stakeholders

Stakeholders to whom interviewees ascribed three attributes have a high level of salience, and are considered definitive stakeholders. The findings indicate that three of the stakeholder groups were considered by interviewees to possess all three attributes (legitimacy, power, and urgency): business and industry, professional bodies, and prospective students. For example:

“...if you look at industry, we have to make the programme attractive to industry [legitimacy]...that company had power because there could be a significant long-term relationship with significant numbers of students in the long-term...and that allowed something to be done very quickly [urgency]” (HoD13).

“...if you take the Engineers Ireland ... as an example... the accreditation of programmes by the Engineers Ireland means an awful lot to our engineers [legitimacy]. So, they’re a stakeholder with a lot of clout [power]. So we will jump when they come calling [urgency].” (HoD1).

“... at the end of the day our most important stakeholder in terms of bums on seats is the second level students [legitimacy]... So they have power ... if they could send us a signal that they could provide a 100 students if you did this, boy would we jump at that [urgency]” (HoD13).

Definitive stakeholders identified by the interviewees are shown in Figure 7.8 below:

Stakeholder	Interviewee	Classification
Business and industry	HoD6	Definitive
Business and industry	HoD8	Definitive
Business and industry	HoD11	Definitive
Business and industry	HoD13	Definitive
Business and industry	TM2	Definitive
Professional bodies	HoD1	Definitive
Professional bodies	HoD5	Definitive
Professional bodies	HoD6	Definitive
Prospective students	HoD9	Definitive
Prospective students	HoD10	Definitive
Prospective students	Hod13	Definitive

Figure 7.8: Classification of definitive stakeholders

7.2.2.4 Proximate or Distal influences

Proximity is another factor which influences the salience of stakeholders, with some researchers concluding that proximity confers power and/or urgency on stakeholders. Proximity was defined earlier (section 4.3.1) as spatial nearness, while conversely distal is defined as spatial farness. When asked about their location, interviewees spatially positioned most of their stakeholders in the same city as the case HEI. These proximate stakeholders included employers (business & industry stakeholders), local branches of professional bodies, and prospective students. Stakeholders not included by interviewees as spatially near the case HEI include government and their agencies, other HEIs, communities, and alumni.

Most interviewees agreed that the definitive stakeholders, employers (business and industry) and prospective students are predominantly drawn from the case HEI's city, with diminishing numbers from more distal regions:

“75% of our intake is from [the case HEI's county] ... We have a lot of employers on our doorstep in terms of that [case HEIs region]” (TM3).

“Employers are [the case HEI’s region] mainly I would say. It’s kind of like one of these pyramid things. Majority [the case HEI’s region] and then less further afield” (HoD8).

The proximity of employers was highlighted by interviewees who noted the significance of *“...core employers in the region...”* (TM3). Most employers of students from the case HEI are located spatially near the case HEI, in its local region. This is confirmed by one interviewee who stated that employers are mainly in the case HEI’s city: *“Employers wise, again would be majority [in the case HEI’s city].”* (HoD6).

Interviewees acknowledged that local employers, as a proximate stakeholder grouping (business & industry), would influence the case HEI’s students and thus its agenda. One interviewee stated that local employers: *“...influence the students that are coming in, they influence the students that are here, they influence the alumni that come out, they influence our research agenda.”* (TM3).

Interviewees also engage with spatially near industry associations [business and industry stakeholders] and stated that they attempted to influence local and national policy by working with business and industry stakeholder groups on initiatives that might benefit local stakeholders as well as the case HEI: *“...we might do things like support [case HEI’s county] Chamber, the Small Firms Association, IBEC (Irish Business and Employers Confederation) etc. with initiatives that they are involved in that may be ultimately advantageous to the institute”* (TM2).

Local branches of the definitive stakeholder group, professional bodies, are also identified as important by interviewees: *“...the local CIPD [Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development] and the local accountancy body groups are important...”* (HoD6). These are located spatially near the case HEI.

With regard to the definitive stakeholder prospective students, one of the interviewees noted that the majority of students of the case HEI come from the local area and it was: *“...a very interesting demographic, showing dots on a picture of [the region], showing where the bulk of our students were coming from, and we were strong [HEI’s city]...”* (HoD12).

Conversely, interviewees stated that the expectant stakeholder group, government and their agencies, is on their periphery and distal from them and *“...more national”* (HoD4)

with one interviewee stating: “*I don’t think this is the kind of thing [influence of government policy] that would be on their radar at this level*” (HoD11).

In summary, the interviewees located the three definitive stakeholder groups; business and industry, prospective students, and professional bodies, in proximity to the case HEI. They located engagement on government policy, with the expectant stakeholder group government and their agencies outside their radar and distal from them.

7.2.2.5 Summary

To summarise, interviewee findings identified business and industry, prospective students, government and their agencies, other HEIs, professional bodies, communities and alumni as HEIs’ stakeholders. In terms of the importance or salience of stakeholders, the findings show differences in how interviewees ascribe attributes resulting in alternate classifications. For example, for some interviewees a stakeholder group might be latent whilst for another interviewee the same stakeholder group is definitive. The classification chosen is based on the maximum number of attributes ascribed by interviewees. Business and industry, prospective students and professional bodies are ascribed all three attributes by interviewees and are therefore definitive for this research. These definitive stakeholders are also spatially proximate to the case HEI.

7.3 Engagement

This section presents how documents reviewed as well as interviewees define engagement and the types of engagement undertaken in the case HEI.

7.3.1 Defining Engagement

Documentary analysis shows that the case HEI’s engagement strategy defines engagement as “*...collaborating for mutual benefit...growing long-term relationships to provide better services and supports for external partners and wider society...*” (Case HEI, 2017). A wide variety of descriptions of engagement also emerged from the interviewees as is shown by the extract from NVivo, Figure 7.9 below. The figure illustrates the frequency of themes listed when interviewees were asked to define engagement.

Engagement theme	No. of interviewees
Mutual benefit	9
Partnership	8
Community/Philanthropic /Neighbours	6
Communication (including conversation and dialogue)	5
Getting the good messages about the case HEI out to the public	4
Consulting	2

Figure 7.9: Themes posited by interviewees when defining engagement

Similar in meaning, mutual benefit and partnership are the most common themes to emerge from the interviewees’ descriptions of engagement. Most interviewees concluded that it is not enough that benefit from engagement accrues to the HEI, benefits must be two way and mutual for all parties involved. For example one interviewee defined engagement as:

“...any department link with an agency, inside or outside the college, which is two way and mutually fruitful, I would regard as an engagement.” (HoD12).

He clarified his thoughts with an example:

“Having students in there [industry] for a decent amount of time doing research projects or industrial based projects will allow them to get the expertise out of us, but also our people, our lecturers, to learn from best practice in there. That to us is really important.” (HoD12).

As well as engaging to help external partners, interviewees recognised that engagement can help the case HEI set aims, purposes and priorities. Interviewees discussed in particular engagement helping them develop programmes, stating; *“You’re then looking at industry to participate in stakeholder consultations around programme development”* (HoD3). Another interviewee stated that engagement: *“... enables the outputs of the other two [teaching and learning and research] to be appropriate and meet the needs of the external stakeholders”* (TM4).

Other interviewees also highlighted mutual benefit and partnership in describing engagement, as shown in Figure 7.10 below:

Interviewee	Comment
HoD7	<i>“I suppose we see it as links really, linking and connecting with people for mutual benefit...So that we’d have something for them and they’d offer students opportunity, and we’d offer them people who know how to do jobs and who are trained, who are expert in a specific area.”</i>
TM3	<i>“...building two way reciprocal relationships with external organisations... It is really the development of that reciprocal relationship for the benefit of both sides.”</i>

Figure 7.10: Mutual benefit and partnership themes

(Source: Used by interviewees in describing engagement)

One interviewee prefers to use partnership instead of the term engagement:

“... I don’t like using the term engagement, I like to call it partnership.... I think it’s a better word. Partnership means there’s a two way interaction. It also means that the loop is closed. Engagements have a habit of not going to marriage. So, the full marriage is who we are.” (HoD14).

Other terms used by interviewees when defining engagement include communication, a conversation, dialogue, and ‘getting the word out’. For example, interviewees stated that engagement:

“... is a two way conversation between you and the stakeholder... Engagement is a conversation. It doesn’t necessarily have to have an objective and doesn’t necessarily have to have an immediate positive outcome.” (TM2).

“I suppose dialogue, positive dialogue, dialogue which supports and facilitates the needs for both parties.” (HoD5).

“... [the] coffee morning for Christmas, or the Christmas party for the neighbours... sending a staff choir up to [the local hospice] or that sort of thing... I think that’s important too because ...it’s always about getting the word out ...” (HoD1).

When defining engagement some interviewees considered the role of the case HEI in their community and their obligation to that community. For example, one interviewee separated engagement into two types:

“So basically I break it down into two: external engagement with a view to enterprise and then external engagement with a view to community, cultural, society etc.” (TM4).

Interviewees also defined engagement by including its broader community goals, taking on the wider responsibilities as good neighbours and citizens, as well as social and economic development functions:

“Engagement can also [be] broadened to say you know, how you would deal with... the neighbours...” (HoD1).

“You could look at some of the universities and see that well really it is research that drives them, where as in [this HEI] the notion of supporting our graduates to come out and be able to be good citizens in society, good employees and lifelong learners is what drives us. And I think that the relationship with the outside world is what allows us to express that, to and through our students.”(TM3).

Additionally, interviewees recognised the importance of personal relationships in facilitating communication and partnership. This was evident from one interviewee who commented that:

“Engagement is creating linkages and collaboration and to do that you need to have personal relationships with people, and an understanding of their needs, and try to give them an understanding of what you can do for them” (HoD13).

In summary, interviewees described engagement using six main themes; mutual benefit, partnership, communication including dialogue, ‘getting the good word out’, an obligation to their broader community, and consulting. Interviewees also stressed the importance of personal relationships in facilitating engagement. They also stated that engagement included taking on responsibilities as neighbours and citizens, interaction in setting HEIs’ goals, and relating teaching and learning to the needs of external stakeholders.

7.3.2 Types of Engagement

The types of engagement with the seven categories of HEIs’ stakeholders as gleaned from the literature (see section 4.2.1) and identified by interviewees (see section 7.2.1) are presented under five broad headings: graduate formation, workforce development,

research and innovation, social enhancement, and market advancement (see section 3.4). As outlined in section 3.4, the first three types of engagement are extracted from the Sheridan and Fallon (2015) framework. The researcher has added two additional categories, social enhancement and market advancement, from other literature (see Figure 7.11).

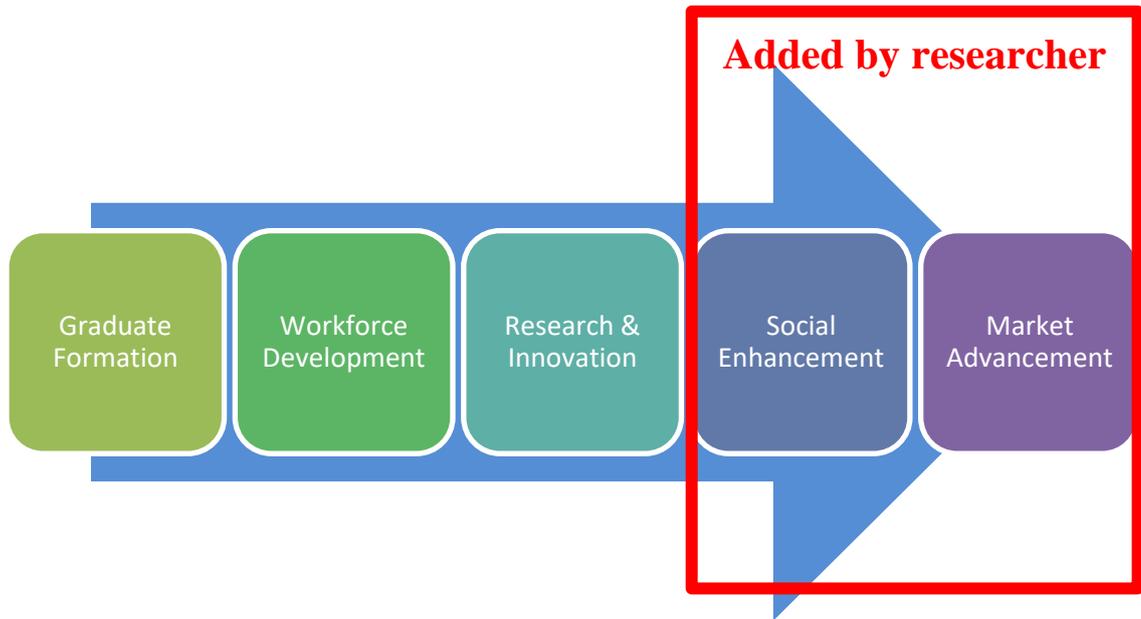


Figure 7.11: Types of interaction - extended framework

(Source: Adapted by Researcher from Sheridan and Fallon (2015))

The following sections present the findings relating to the types of HEI engagement with external stakeholders under each of the categories shown in Figure 7.11.

7.3.2.1 Graduate formation

During the interviews, participants outlined engagement interactions with stakeholder groupings relating to: curriculum design; panels and advisory boards; guest lectures; site visits; work-based projects; work placement; external examiners; mentors and sponsors; and course delivery. One interviewee defined graduate formation as being: “...where the outside world, not just industry, helps shape what types of graduates we are producing and they do that in lots of ways. They help with course design. They help with course review. They help with live cases, projects, work placement. They come in and do Gradfest. They help prepare our graduates before they come out.”(TM3).

Interviewees did not suggest that all stakeholders are engaged in all types of interactions as is considered below.

Curriculum Design, panels and advisory boards

Interviewees stated that the case HEI engaged with business and industry and other HEIs in relation to curriculum design through advisory panels, and advisory boards. For example, one interviewee stated that new programmes were developed by engaging with industry partners:

“...what we’ve done over the past two years, we’ve worked with them [industry partners] to develop programmes which will offer continual professional development for their staff and for potential students.” (HoD14).

The interviewees highlighted how the use of business and industry stakeholders on panels provides guidance in the design and development of courses and course review. Some of the interviewee comments in relation to programmes and curriculum design are shown in Figure 7.12 below.

Interviewee	Comment
HoD2	<i>“I suppose we also engage with the companies in the context of advisory bodies ... Whereby we sit around the table and discuss the needs of industry. And I’m always very conscious that we tailor the programmes when it comes to programmatic review. Also when it comes to major or minor programme time changes, and they can be made in the context of those industry advisory meetings.”</i>
HoD3	<i>“...so how do you identify what skills or what content should be covered in programmes... You’re then looking at industry to participate in stakeholder consultations around programme development...”</i>
TM3	<i>“They [industry] help with course design, they help with course review”</i>

Figure 7.12: Engaging with industry experts for panels and advisory boards

The interview findings also suggest engagement with other HEIs on validation panels, programme review panels and interview panels. Interviewees stated:

“It would also include interviewing. Some of us would sit on interview boards in other HEIs” (HoD10).

“The other thing is, I would work with them in interview panels, programmatic reviews...” (HoD14).

In summary, interviewees highlighted agreement with stakeholder groups, business and industry and other HEIs for curriculum development, panels and advisory boards. No other external stakeholders were noted by the interviewees when considering curriculum design, panels and advisory boards.

Guest lectures

Guest lecturing involves inviting adjunct and guest lecturers to speak to students, either for complete courses or to talk about a specific topic on a once off basis. Adjunct lecturers were described by one interviewee as: *“... the use of casual part-timers who happen to be in business three days a week and coming in here two days a week.” (HoD4).*

Half of the interviewees suggested guest lectures as a method of engaging with external stakeholders, alumni and business and industry, as noted below:

“We also have a number of the visiting lecturers coming from, I suppose the food, pharmaceutical, medical devices, biomedical science, [and] herbal science industries that give guest lectures here in the department...I would like to see more involvement from external and the industry based people coming into deliver on programmes...that would be good for the programmes ...” (HoD2).

“We use alumni as guest lecturers, to address new first year cohorts and be used as examples in lectures for motivation purposes.” (HoD6).

In summary, interviewees identified engagement with business and industry and alumni for guest lecturing. No other external stakeholders were noted by the interviewees when considering guest lecturing.

Site visits

Site visits were also suggested by interviewees as a type of engagement interaction with external stakeholders. One interviewee gave an example of a site visit with a business and industry stakeholder:

“Last year we had a site tour with first years up to a wind farm that is being built up in [a local town], and they got very good access through a contact in the ESB [Electricity Supply Board]. So they got to control them, and see the gear boxes on the ground, and see the construction on the ground. Really fabulous access. There is a very good link established with that company now as well.” (HoD13)

Only business and industry stakeholders were noted by interviewees when considering site visits.

Work-based projects and live cases

The interviewees also highlighted engaging with external stakeholders on work-based projects, including live cases. Live cases involve realistic, complex, and contextually rich situations and often involve a dilemma, conflict, or problem that must be solved for the real-life organisation, which is partnering with the HEI, so that solutions can be developed. Business and industry and communities were the only stakeholder groups noted by interviewees for project and live cases engagement. Examples of interviewee comments relating to project work and live cases are shown below:

Interviewee	Comment
HoD1	<i>“...our types of engagement are in relation to project opportunities for our students”</i>
HoD13	<i>“...industrial based projects will allow them to get the expertise out of us but also our people, our lecturers, to learn from best practice in there.”</i>
HoD6	<i>“Engaging in live case studies is engagement, like we had for example our Masters ... class now last year with... their lecturer, did a live case for the [the] Street traders. The result was used as part of a grant application by [the] Street. And they got money...”</i>

Figure 7.13: Engagement for project work and live cases

Business and industry were the only stakeholders noted by interviewees when considering work based projects and live cases.

Work placements and graduate recruitment

Most of the interviewees considered that establishing work placements for students, while studying and after graduation, was an important engagement interaction. One interviewee

described what work placement involves: “... *employers would come in and talk about the role, and that’s really useful for us, when they’re talking about what sort of role they are looking for the students for...And they give us feedback on how the student is getting on, and that’s a valuable piece of relationship building.*” (HoD4).

Four stakeholder groups were noted by interviewees as interacting on work placement: communities, business and industry, government and their agencies, and alumni. Interacting with community groups on work placement was considered by one interviewee whose department runs community and social development courses. This interviewee stated: “*We have a community development programme so the department places students ...in all sorts of community settings, including family resource centres*” (HoD10).

More than half of the interviewees noted engaging with employers [business and industry stakeholders] for work placement and graduate recruitment. The types of interactions included as engagement with employers are two-fold. Firstly, engaging with employers helps the case HEI determine what employability skills are required by students as discussed under curriculum design above. The second type of engagement interaction with employers is graduate recruitment. This also benefits students as they gain employment from the interaction. This is demonstrated by one interviewee who stated: “*...supporting things like graduate recruitment, so companies that have graduate training programmes, allowing them to come in, talk to students, supporting information sharing, like posters, or emailing the student cohort about jobs that are coming up in the graduate space, ... so that engagement piece would allow us to link industry with our student cohort ...*” (HoD3).

For two interviewees engaging with government agencies on work placement is important. Three government agencies were identified as employers: “*...the HSE [Health Service Executive] & Túsla [the Child and Family Agency]*” (HoD10) and “*...the National Cancer Registry.*” (HoD1). While important for these two departments, engagement with government as employers is not a significant activity for most of the interviewees in this HEI.

In summary, interviewees identified engagement with four stakeholder groups on work placement: communities, business and industry, government agencies, and alumni. No

other stakeholders were noted by interviewees when discussing engagements relating to work placement and graduate recruitment.

External examiners

The interviewees suggested that sourcing and providing external examiners as another type of engagement interaction with external stakeholders. The role of the external examiner is to ensure fairness and objectivity of exam papers and correcting. The interviewees included business and industry and other HEI stakeholder groups when considering external examiners as an engagement interaction. One interviewee stated that they have external examiners from both stakeholder groupings:

“So, you’d have academic [from other HEIs] and professional [business based external examiners], but we aim for, well particularly for the masters programmes, we’d aim for practical and industry people.” (HoD7).

In terms of engaging with other HEIs, sourcing external examiners was the most popular suggestion by interviewees. Almost two thirds of the interviewees suggested external examiners as a form of engagement with other HEIs, indicating the perceived significance of the interaction. This was confirmed by one interviewee who stated: *“Our external examiners are very important to us.” (HoD13).*

The movement of staff as part of the external examiner process is two way. The case HEI is both the provider and host of external examiners. Several interviewees mentioned this two way interaction with other HEIs as shown by one interviewee who stated: *“And also you know we have external examiners, we host and also we visit other colleges and act as assessors in exam rooms there.” (HoD2).*

The interview findings suggest that many of the case HEI staff are involved in the external examiner process, with other HEIs indicated as partners, as shown in Figure 7.14 below:

Interviewee	Comment
HoD5	<i>“I’m an extern for GMIT and a number of the other staff are externs here and there”</i>
HoD13	<i>“Members of staff would be involved as external examiners – I know we have people in DIT [Dublin Institute of Technology], ITB [Institute of Technology Blanchardstown], Limerick, UL [University of Limerick].”</i>

Figure 7.14: Engaging with other HEIs for external examiner engagement

In summary, the interviewees noted engaging with business and industry and other HEIs in the external examiner process. No other stakeholders were noted when interviewees considered this type of interaction.

Mentoring and sponsorship

Another type of engagement with stakeholders that was suggested by interviewees, related to mentoring and sponsorship. Interviewees proposed two stakeholder groups when considering mentoring and sponsorship: business and industry and alumni. Mentorship is a relationship in which a more experienced or more knowledgeable person helps to guide a less experienced or less knowledgeable person. In relation to helping prepare or mentoring graduates, one interviewee commented:

“...industry helps shape what types of graduates we are producing and they do that in lots of ways. ...they help prepare our graduates before they come out ...” (TM3).

Interviewees described sponsorship using two broad themes: sponsoring a student’s college expenses and sponsoring prizes for achievements. Some interviewees described industry funded students, where industry supports full-time students (who are not their employees) by providing bursaries for them to study in a particular field:

“...we have bursaries, one of the companies has given us an annual bursary of €15,000 for one of our students.” (HoD14).

“We have that level of engagement as well in that ... the small to medium type business in Limerick that are sponsoring the supervision of a PhD student...” (HoD2).

In terms of sponsoring prizes for achievements, some interviewees commented on business and industry sponsoring those prizes:

Interviewee	Comment
HoD2	<i>“We have our faculty awards night tonight and departmental within the faculty awards. We have five awards tonight being sponsored by industries that are allied to the department.”</i>
HoD4	<i>“Yeah, the other thing I wanted to say was that we also get some sponsorship. ... Last week I rang a garden centre to sponsor a prize for horticulture and there was no problem. They were delighted to come on board.”</i>

Figure 7.15: Engaging with business and industry on sponsorship

Engaging with alumni as mentors and sponsors was also proposed by interviewees:

Interviewee	Comment
HoD13	<i>“That is where we got in recent graduates who are working for companies, three of them, and they spoke about their experiences to the existing students.”</i>
HoD1	<i>“Graduates have also assisted us with the sourcing of sponsorship for the Faculty awards.”</i>

Figure 7.16: Engaging with alumni for sponsorship and mentoring

In summary, interviewees noted engaging with business and industry and alumni stakeholder groups when considering mentoring and sponsorship. No other stakeholder groups were detailed when considering this type of interaction.

Course delivery

Some interviewees suggested course delivery as another engagement interaction, highlighting work with professional bodies. One interviewee described organising guests from professional bodies to deliver parts of courses, by providing technical talks: *“...we would have arranged, under the opuses of Engineers Ireland, technical talks. So each year there would be three to four technical talks hosted here in the Chem Eng [Chemical Engineering] space.”* (HoD13).

Another interviewee noted engagement of case HEI’s staff in delivering courses on behalf of the professional bodies: *“...you have the professional accountancy bodies, because we deliver their programmes”* (HoD6). The stakeholder grouping professional bodies was

the only stakeholder mentioned by the interviewees when considering course delivery engagement interactions.

As described above, the interview findings indicate a wide range of engagement interactions with many of the identified stakeholder groups for the purpose of graduate formation. When combining these types of interaction, six of the seven stakeholder groups were considered to be part of the graduate formation process, the exception being prospective students. According to the interviewees this type of engagement comprises curriculum design; panels and advisory boards; guest lectures; site visits; work-based projects; work placement and graduate recruitment; external examiners; mentoring and sponsorship; and course delivery.

7.3.2.2 Workforce development

This section presents the types of engagement interactions suggested by the interviewees that have been categorised as workforce development, in line with the Sheridan and Fallon (2015) framework. One interview described workforce development as:

“...where we help them [business] develop their own workforce, so whether they are looking for people that are suitable, whether they have skill shortages that we can contribute to filling via bespoke course, or specialised modules. Whether we can put on special purpose awards just for them, or to provide them with any training ... so we can contribute to the growth of the workforce of the outside world” (TM3).

These types of engagement comprise recruitment, customised courses and continuing professional development (CPD), accreditation, and exemptions.

Recruitment

The interviewees suggested recruitment services as a type of engagement interaction with stakeholders. Such services involve the case HEI informing its alumni when job opportunities in partner businesses arise. For example:

“The department also has a well-established practice of emailing graduates [alumni] details of job opportunities which come to our attention, this is a very active provision.” (HoD5).

“...so companies [business and industry] that have graduate training programmes, allowing them to come in ...about jobs that are coming up in the graduate space...”
(HoD3)

Alumni and business and industry were the only two stakeholder groups noted by interviewees when considering recruitment types of engagement interactions.

Customised learning, CPD and practitioner skill development

Interviewees suggested customised learning, CPD and practitioner skill development engagement as engagement interactions between the case HEI and business and industry and alumni. Customised learning involves the case HEI preparing customised courses for specific employers. CPD is the continuing development of the skills of professionally qualified employees. Practitioner skill development sees practitioners in a particular field coming into the HEI to update or develop their skills. The interviewee comments in relation to these interactions are shown in Figure 7.17:

Interviewee	Comment
Customised learning	
HoD13	<i>"...we provide specific training for them [employers] for their existing employees."</i>
HoD8	<i>"CAMMS [Centre for Advanced Manufacturing and Management Systems] is training for industry in specialist areas. It runs specialist night programmes ... designed for companies ... with courses designed on request."</i>
Continuing professional development and practitioner skill development	
HoD13	<i>"We also do CPD with industry... We have a very nice course called Upstream Bioprocessing and that is taken by [alumni] graduates of Chem-Eng [Chemical Engineering], maybe for about 20 years. Where Chem-Eng were very competent people but now want to retrain in the Bio-Eng [Biomedical Engineering] area so they are coming back. It is a very successful programme and is booked out all of the time."</i>
HoD13	<i>"Gilliad are interested in taking one of [the] programmes and delivering it onsite ... people would have the advantage of getting a qualification if they stay with the company. "</i>
HoD8	<i>"A lot of the Employers would send, or encourage, staff to do these to upskill. These courses are very heavily subscribed and go from level 6 to 9."</i>

Figure 7.17: Engaging for customised learning, CPD and practitioner skill development

Business and industry and alumni were the only external stakeholder groups noted by the interviewees when considering customised learning, CPD and practitioner skill development as engagement interactions.

Accreditation

Accreditation is necessary to prove that a course and institution meet a general standard of quality. In the case HEI accreditation was considered in terms of course accreditation and accredited professionally qualified staff. In the findings half of the interviewees made reference to course accreditation as a form of engagement suggesting that it was considered an important interaction. Interviewees noted professional bodies as an important stakeholder group when considering accreditation as shown in the comments in Figure 7.18 below:

Interviewee	Comment
HoD8	<i>“The accreditation bodies are major stakeholders”</i>
HoD12	<i>“The Engineers Ireland is... they’re the people who influence what we do”</i>
HoD5	<i>“Professional body engagement would be huge.”</i>

Figure 7.18: The importance of engaging with professional bodies

In addition to course accreditation in the case HEI, the interviewees also highlighted members of staff engaging by being members of professional bodies which review and accredit courses and students from other HEIs:

“We would have members on ICHEME [Institute of Chemical Engineers] accreditation panels. We have at least two members of staff this year on EI [Engineers Ireland] panels” (HoD13).

“...the chair of the concrete society is a member of staff in the department. We’d have a heavy involvement with EI [Enterprise Ireland], with members of staff who would serve on professional review interviews” (HoD5).

One HoD also noted that professionally accredited staff engage with their own professional bodies. He highlighted staff members who are accountants, HR professionals and marketing professionals being members of relevant professional bodies or institutes:

“But they are active in their own professional bodies because we would have a share of accounting staff. We would have a share of HR [Human Resources] staff. The same I would say with marketing staff. So they are all members of a body or an institute, so they have to have their own CPD [Continual Professional Development] as well.” (HoD6).

To summarise, professional bodies were the only stakeholder group noted by interviewees when considering engagement interaction relating to accreditation.

Exemptions

Exemptions means that graduates from a HEI do not have to undertake all of the exams for a particular qualification because the professional body has deemed modules within the HEI cover the material for some of its subjects. One interviewee, for example,

highlighted that discussing exemptions “...makes me think the accounting exemptions...in terms of professional bodies” (HoD4).

Similar to accreditation, professional bodies were the only external stakeholders noted by interviewees when considering engagement interaction relating to exemptions.

Overall, the findings show that, the case HEI engages with stakeholders for workforce development in four ways: recruitment; customised course development, CPD and practitioner skill development; accreditation; and exemptions. The interviewees noted alumni, business and industry, and professional bodies as the stakeholders involved in this type of engagement. No other stakeholders were mentioned by the interviewees when considering engagement for workforce development.

7.3.2.3 Research and innovation

Interviewees contend that research and innovation is always a type of engagement, with one interviewee commenting that “...research and innovation is always an engagement anyway...[but]...if it doesn't involve the generation and dissemination of new knowledge...then you can't call it engagement...” (TM2). The types of engagement noted by interviewees, and classified as research and innovation, based on Sheridan and Fallon's (2015) framework, include; consultancy, engaging to secure funding for research, and research contracts and collaborations.

Consultancy

Interviewees suggested consulting as a type of engagement undertaken in the case HEI. Consultancy is the practice of helping organisations improve their performance through the provision of expert advice. Interviewees noted engagement with business and industry stakeholders when considering consultancy. Examples of interviewees' comments relating to consulting are shown in Figure 7.19.

Interviewee	Comment
HoD3	<i>“...giving advice on business development or it could be helping, giving an idea generation workshop...”</i>
HoD13	<i>“...we would have engagement with people who may come to us with ideas... from a research development point of view or specific problems they want solved... They are kind of 4th level research where they take Post Docs and do research at a high level”</i>

Figure 7.19: Engaging in consultancy

In summary, interviewees highlighted the business and industry stakeholder group when considering consultancy as a type of engagement. No other stakeholder group was included by the interviewees in this type of engagement.

Securing research funding

Funding research is recognised by the interviewees as becoming more difficult to obtain. Interviewees are therefore engaging with external stakeholders in an attempt to secure funding for research. Business and industry and government agencies were the stakeholders included by interviewees when considering research funding. Figure 7.20 shows some interviewee comments regarding engagement interaction to secure research funding.

Interviewee	Comment
HoD2	<i>“The funding in the life science area is becoming more and more competitive. ... So we're strategically looking at going to industry ... they provide the monies and we put manpower.”</i>
HoD9	<i>“...if you take into consideration the research, well then you have to talk about the funding agencies... The funding is going to come, mainly, 10% from industry, then the 90% will come from one third from the European commission, and two third from Enterprise Ireland.”</i>

Figure 7.20: Engaging for funding

In summary, interviewees mentioned business and industry as well as government agencies when considering securing research funding as a type of engagement. No other stakeholders were included by the interviewees in these types of engagement.

Research contracts and collaborations

Interviewees noted engaging with other HEIs and government and their agencies when considering engagement interactions for research contracts and collaborations. Government policy has the ability to influence research strategy in the case HEI as outlined by one interviewees who stated:

“So there is a bit of waiting around to see nationally what new initiatives will be opened out. We can plan and be strategic but we also have to be reactive because if someone opens up a new programme, and there is a lot of money in it, but they require you to do A, B, C, and D, then you may have to amend your things to meet A, B, C, and D” (TM2).

The interview findings show that the case HEI engages with government and its agencies alone or with other HEIs through specific research contracts commissioned by an agency. For example, HoD1’s department is working with a neighbouring HEI on a research contract commissioned by the case HEI’s County Council:

“... one of our lecturers would have done a collaboration with ... [neighbouring HEI]....Declan, would have done a nice piece of work in relation to the effects of the removal of the milk-quota. So that was for the [the case HEI’s] county council. So, the [the case HEI’s] county council was the client.” (HoD1).

Other interviewees also stated that they are undertaking research contracts with government agencies. For example, HoD7’s department is working on a research contract with the Health Service Executive *“...from a PR point of view”*.

HoD12 commented on the research staff from his department moving to a research entity which works with the government agency Enterprise Ireland. He stated:

“...the Nimbus [Research Centre in Cyber-Physical Systems and Internet of Things] people are also engaged with Enterprise Ireland...the main research people in the department moved to NIMBUS, they operate as an entity, in terms of their own accounting and recruiting and all of that” (HoD12).

Interviewees also noted staff in their departments collaborating with staff in other HEIs on research. For example:

“There would be lecturers within the department collaborating with lecturers of other HEIs, both nationally and internationally, in terms of research” (HoD1).

Most of the interviewees highlighted collaborations within Ireland, many of the interviewees referencing more than one HEI with whom they are engaged on different research projects. For example, one interviewee stated:

“We have research collaborations with places like Tyndall [Research partnership between University College Cork, Science Foundation Ireland (SFI), and the Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment.], DCU [Dublin City University], UL [University of Limerick] and NUIG [National University of Ireland, Galway], everybody in the country.” (HoD9).

One of the top managers interviewed observed that research collaborations were a tenet of contract research because collaborating “...builds your ability to attract funding by building into strong consortia” (TM2)

He stated that due to the size of the research presence in the case HEI, it is necessary to collaborate with partners in order to be involved in research contracts:

“In the case of other HEIs we often find ourselves as collaborators or partners on projects that they lead. We are smaller in terms of scale in the research space so that means we are often partners rather than leads. So that means it is to our advantage to work with others that share our vision rather than to drive their vision ... Now a HEI like Tralee is small in scale so it is easier for us in principle to influence, but most of the HEIs we deal with in research are universities, both national and international” (TM2).

In summary, interviewees noted government and their agencies as well as other HEIs as the stakeholders with whom they interact for research and collaborations.

Overall, in the case HEI, engagement interactions that may be classified as research and innovation include: consultancy; engaging to secure funding for research; and research contracts and collaborations. The stakeholders highlighted by the interviewees in this type of engagement were business and industry, government and their agencies, and other HEIs. No other stakeholders were noted by the interviewees as being involved in this type of engagement.

7.3.2.4 Social enhancement

As noted in Chapter 3, other types of engagement are found in the literature that the researcher has added to the Sheridan and Fallon (2015) framework (see Figure 7.11) and classified them as social enhancement and market advancement. The interview findings presented in this section, classified as social enhancement, include engaging for social cohesion and engaging to improve the economic health of the region.

7.3.2.4.1 Engaging for social cohesion

Within this classification the interviewees suggested engagement interactions involving sharing of resources with communities, staff volunteering activities and community education. Findings relating to these interactions are detailed below.

Sharing of resources

Sharing of resources includes sharing sports grounds, working spaces, laboratories and theatre facilities. For example, one interviewee highlighted sharing of resources with communities stating “...we have facilitated Coder Dojo [a voluntary group which shows children computer programming]” (HoD14). Other interviewees also noted sharing facilities with community groups:

“...sharing space, giving them our space, using their space perhaps, all of these kinds of two way exchanges.” (TM3).

In summary, sharing resources with community stakeholders was highlighted as a type of engagement promoting social cohesion. Only the community stakeholder group was noted by the interviewees when considering this type of engagement.

Staff volunteering activities

The interviewees suggested staff volunteering with community groups as an engagement interaction that facilitates social cohesion. The case HEI’s staff are involved with a number of local community groups on a voluntary basis. Such groups include sports organisations, charities, arts groups and schools as shown in the examples of interviewee comments in Figure 7.21 below:

Interviewee	Comment
HoD4	<i>“...we have a whole host of staff, who engage in community activity, between the GAA [Gaelic Athletic Association], between charity bodies, local enterprise initiatives...”</i>
HoD1	<i>“... I’m on the board of the Opera house. I’ve served on a few school managements. [We have] a lecturer who is very involved in the highest level in sport, we’ve a lecturer who would be involved in the choirs, the arts.”</i>
HoD5	<i>“There’s staff members on schools boards of management, on strategic development groups...”</i>

Figure 7.21: Engaging through staff volunteering activities

In summary, the interviewees considered staff volunteering with different community groups as a method of engaging with stakeholders for social enhancement. Only the community stakeholder group was noted by interviewees when considering this type of engagement.

Community education

In terms of HEI engagement interaction, a few of the interviewees suggested education for the community. For example, one interviewee highlighted engaging on programmes that benefit the community as being part of the case HEI’s core mission:

“...they [community] are also part of the specific mission so we for example, we have delivery provision in the area of sport, culture... So it is not just ... helping these groups but we would have part of the core mission of delivering education relating to them as well...” (TM4).

Another interviewee discussed a community development programme whereby students are assigned to community based work-placements:

“We have a community development programme so the department places students ...in all sorts of community settings including family resource centres” (HoD10).

As is the case for sharing resources and staff volunteering activities, the interviewees noted that community stakeholders were the only stakeholder group involved in these types of engagement interactions.

Overall, the findings show that sharing resources, staff volunteering activities and community education are the types of engagement suggested by interviewees as engaging for social cohesion. Communities are the only stakeholder group involved in such engagement. The next section presents the findings relating to the second tenet of social enhancement, engaging to improve the economic health of the community.

7.3.2.4.2 Engaging to improve the economic health of the community

In the interview findings, the types of engagements that were proposed to improve the economic health of the community include: engagement to meet regional skills needs, public access to knowledge, and international promotion of the region and the HEI. Findings relating to these types of engagement are presented in the following paragraphs.

Meeting regional skills needs

One way that the case HEI engages to help improve the economic health of the community is by providing graduates that meet the regional skills required for economic prosperity. In relation to engagement interactions, many interviewees suggested increasing the regional skills base in areas where there are shortages by engaging with business and industry, government agencies such as the Higher Education Authority (HEA), communities and prospective students.

One interviewee developed a programme as a result of a demand from industry for graduates with writing skills. He stated that the programme was: “... *driven by a request from an industry partner for graduates who could actually write*” (HoD14).

In general, courses in the HEI operate based on approval from government agencies including Quality and Qualifications Ireland (State agency responsible for promoting quality and accountability in education and training services in Ireland) and the HEA. Aside from these agencies other special arrangements exist. These include short courses under the Springboard scheme, for example, (courses for unemployed people in the community and designed to fill skills gaps in the economy). In terms of improving regional skills needs, one interviewee stated that courses are offered: “...*under*

Springboard, through various initiatives around increasing the output of computing graduates” (HoD14).

This interviewee also suggested that courses were operated to both upskill people in the region and to reach out to communities:

“We run a degree by night the BSc [Bachelor in Science] in computing. I think that's a community based one, the fees are low, it attracts in students who are working and that may not have been given the opportunity or circumstances might have prevented them from going to college. ...We took in one hundred students this year by night in that programme which is a broad cross section of society. I think it's reaching out to the community at large. It's an accessible affordable course. It gives them opportunities to upskill and to get a professional qualification, an academic qualification in computing.” (HoD14).

Therefore, Springboard courses involve engaging with government agencies and community stakeholders. The case HEI also has a role in exposing prospective students to science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) as these are in demand skills in the region. Interviewees noted that engagement with prospective students, from transition year in second level schools, is undertaken in order to expose them to STEM programmes:

“We would also run and organise the exploring technology programme which is run for transition year students. They would get talks from all the different branches of engineering while they are in here.” (HoD13).

“There's a transition week that is organised with Engineers Ireland. We'd be involved in that. There's a new one for female students, I-WISH, we've two members of staff involved in that.” (HoD5).

In summary, the interview findings show that engaging to meet regional skills needs requires the case HEI to engage with business and industry, government agencies, communities and prospective student stakeholder groups.

Public access to knowledge

Another way that the case HEI engages to help improve the economic health of the community is by allowing business and industry and community stakeholder groups access to its knowledge. Half of the interviewees highlighted networking with industry associations as a type of engagement. Networking with others through these associations was seen as useful to the personnel involved, but also useful in offering an opportunity to share knowledge. For example, one interviewee described sharing knowledge with business and industry stakeholders:

“I suppose the research arm of the department has the ability to support the issues or problems that arose in the region. Recently the paint company came to us with regard to contamination and paint and we were able to help with that...” (HoD2).

Knowledge resources are not only shared through networking with business and industry, but are also made available to help the community with specific projects. A few interviewees noted this type of engagement, for example:

“...you know like we tend to do projects that are practical and that involve people in the community and region. And the example of that would be the MA in Public Relations, where we did a project with the ...Arts centre last year, and with [the case HEI city] Innovates the year before, which is a local group.” (HoD7).

In summary, interviewees suggested that engaging for public access to knowledge involves business and industry as well as community stakeholder groups. No other stakeholder groups were noted by the interviewees when considering engaging for public access to knowledge.

Promotion of region and HEI internationally

Engaging with government agency stakeholders to promote Ireland as a location for business, and to promote the case HEI to non-EU students, was noted by a few interviewees. One interviewee highlighted events both in the region and abroad:

“In terms of our general internationalisation, there’d be interaction with City Hall on joint events. We had the Asian business week here last July, and equally [Head of Faculty]

went to Shanghai recently....as part of that ecosystem, maybe led by city council [government agency]....” (HoD11).

While another respondent, noted having travelled abroad to promote the region for an event organised by two government agencies:

“I have done these international delegations to Brazil organised by Educate Ireland and Enterprise Ireland ... for recruitment abroad...” (HoD8).

In summary, the findings suggest that promotion of the region and the HEI entailed engaging with government and their agencies. No other stakeholders were noted by the interviewees when considering engaging for the promotion of the region and the case HEI.

Overall, the interview findings propose that engaging to improve the economic health of the region relates to meeting regional skills needs, public access to knowledge and promotion of the region and the HEI internationally. These types of engagement involve business and industry, communities, government and their agencies, and prospective students.

7.3.2.5 Market advancement

The final type of engagement interaction noted in the literature and added to the Sheridan and Fallon (2015) framework by the researcher is engaging for market advancement. The interview findings presented below comprise engaging to justify funding, and engaging to broaden access and compete for students.

7.3.2.5.1 Engaging to justify funding

The types of engagement HEIs undertake to justify and guarantee future funding include: involvement by case HEI staff in government regulation and policy committees and involvement with other networks, such as discipline specific/area of interest networks and networks of HoDs.

Involvement by HEI staff in committees

Most of the interviewees described their relationship with the government and its agencies in terms of funding. Government departments and agencies that were noted are research funding bodies as shown in Figure 7.22. All of those noted provide direct funding to the case HEI for research conducted in areas of general interest to the government department or agency.

Government department/agency funding research	Interviewee
Enterprise Ireland	HoD12, HoD8, TM3
Science Foundation Ireland	HoD12, HoD2, HoD13, TM3
Teagasc (The state agency providing research, advisory and education in agriculture, horticulture, food and rural development in Ireland)	HoD13, HoD8
Forfas (Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation)	HoD12
European Commission	HoD12, HoD9, HoD4, HoD14
Food Institution Research Measure	HoD2
Irish Research Council for Science Engineering and Technology	HoD2, HoD13
Department of Agriculture	HoD2
EU Horizon 2020	HoD14

Figure 7.22: Government departments/agencies funding research

Some interviewees noted another type of engagement interaction with government in relation to regulation and policy issues. These interviewees are members of committees and panels that are involved with policy generation and implementation. For example, one interviewee stated:

“...the Department of Agriculture would be an important stakeholder, in terms of regulations and policy making around agriculture ...they influence what we are doing...”
(HoD4)

Other interviewees also noted that they were members of boards and engage with government and its agencies in this capacity. The interviewees and the staff of the case

HEI are involved in a wide range of committees and specialist panels whose work runs parallel to the work of their own department. For example, interviewees highlighted committees such as the national steering committee of the Higher Education Authority (HEA) tasked with introducing the Athena Swan Charter for gender equality in STEM (HoD1), the HEA sub-group on skills initiatives (HoD14), “...*the Academy of Medical and Laboratory Science (MSL), the designated authority for medical sciences approved by the Minister for Health and Gender*” (HoD2), the National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI) (HoD5), Children First, and Túsla (The Child and Family Agency) (HoD10).

In summary, the findings indicate that interviewees only engage with the stakeholder group, government and their agencies, on issues relating to funding, regulation, policy and steering committees

Involvement with other networks

Interviewees also outlined involvement by the case HEI’s staff with other networks, such as discipline specific/area of interest networks and networks of HoDs. They noted other HEIs and business and industry stakeholders when considering this type of engagement interaction.

In terms of engagement with other HEIs, five interviewees commented on personal networks that they, or their staff, had drawn upon. Some networks were formed around an interest in a specific teaching or research discipline, whereby the case HEI and other HEI staff meet at discipline specific forums and panels. Examples of interviewee comments are shown in Figure 7.23 below:

Interviewee	Comment
HoD1	<i>“I suppose, I would have contacts in the maths departments, across Ireland really ... I kind of would have known somebody in most of the departments, through externs, or like friends I’ve been with.”</i>
HoD14	<i>“Most of the other ITs [Institutes of Technology], I would know the heads...We meet regularly in Dublin, the heads of computing like a forum”</i>

Figure 7.23: Staff involvement with discipline specific networks

Another type of network suggested by interviewees, relating to business and industry stakeholders, is industry associations. A sample of interviewee comments in relation to networking opportunities with business and industry associations is shown in Figure 7.24 below:

Interviewee	Comment
HoD6	<i>“...we’ll say networking bodies, so they could be the likes of [city] Business Alliance or the [city] Chamber, it@[city], any of those would be important, the Marketing Institute, and the local CIPD branch and the local accountancy body groups”</i>
HoD13	<i>“Likewise we have engagement in Chem Eng [Chemical Engineering] with the pharma cluster. We have a member of staff there that is involved. It is based in [neighbouring HEI] ...”</i>

Figure 7.24: Networking with industry associations as a type of engagement

Networking is important for visibility of the case HEI, not least for funding. At a minimum external stakeholders should be able to put a face to the HEI. One interviewee highlighted networks as a type of engagement that facilitates such visibility:

“So, it’s a little bit about staying in touch with the industry associations, and meeting with them, and creating a face for [case HEI].” (HoD4).

In summary, networking as a type of engagement occurs from personal relationships, through discipline specific panels and forums, and through industry associations. The interviewees noted that this type of networking involves other HEIs and business and industry stakeholders.

7.3.2.5.2 Engaging to broaden access and compete for students.

The types of engagement necessary to broaden access and compete for students suggested by the interviewees include engagement with prospective students through schools or directly with students, with colleges of further education, and with other student cohorts. Findings relating to these types of engagement are presented in the following paragraphs.

Engagement through schools

Engaging with prospective students through their schools was very prevalent according to the interviewees, and the various types of engagement noted by respondents are shown in Figure 7.25, which shows an extract from NVivo.

Theme	No. of Interviewees suggesting
School Visits	12
Teacher interactions	9
Transition year programmes	5
Feeder college interactions	3
Competitions and quizzes	4
Workshops	1

Figure 7.25: Types of engagement interactions with schools

More detail on engagement with schools is presented in the following paragraphs and structured based on Figure 7.25.

As Figure 7.25 shows, most of the interviewees referenced school visits, making it the most popular type of engagement with prospective students through their schools. School visits occur where academic staff from the case HEI go to visit second level schools to market their courses and answer any questions that prospective students might have.

“...we would visit them [schools] each year on a cycle. Over a 3 year period every school would get a visit anyway.” (HoD13).

The case HEI also aims to reach prospective students through their teachers. This type of interaction was noted by half of the interviewees. Engaging with teachers takes place either within the case HEI or at the schools where the teachers work. The case HEI engages both with career guidance teachers and subject specific teachers through an annual dinner to which all career guidance teachers in feeder schools are invited (HoD13), day visits to the case HEI by the career guidance councillors (HoD4), regular communication by answering questions and providing information (HoD3 and HoD12), and working on events organised by the marketing department of the case HEI specifically for career guidance councillors (HoD14). One interviewee highlighted the importance of engaging with career guidance counsellors and stated:

“I think the career guidance teachers would be very important for that [student recruitment]. Like we’ve worked over the years in building up a rapport and a relationship with the career guidance counsellors. Now, I’m talking on a one-to-one, I’ve targeted them and they’ve targeted themselves in certain schools.” (HoD5).

Approximately one quarter of the interviewees suggested engaging directly with TY students. Transition year (TY) is designed to provide life skills to students, incorporating a work experience programme at the beginning of the senior cycle in second level schools. The interviewees explained that engaging with TY students may be done in two ways; students are invited into the case HEI for work experience, and also specific programmes are offered to the TY students such as those outlined above for STEM promotion (see section 7.3.2.4.2). Engaging with prospective students from TY through work experience in the case HEI was noted by a few of the interviewees. Interviewees who suggested this engagement said:

“... we take in two transition year students per week.... That has been very popular and students come in and work with our tactical supporters in the activities” (HoD2).

“We would have students coming in for work experience from TY, there’d be a lot of that going on.” (HoD7).

Some interviewees suggested that the case HEI had been involved in competitions or quizzes that were created for schools. For example, HoD1 hosted and ran “...*the Mathletes events*”, HoD4’s department runs a quiz for accounting students called “...*the CIMA Table Quiz*”, while HoD2 supported three different projects for the “...*BT Young Scientists*” competition.

Finally, one interviewee suggested that specific workshops had been offered as a means of engaging with prospective students through their schools:

“Were holding workshops with regard to diabetes type two. Whereby we have local schools coming in and measuring concentrations in the case study that we are developing...it's a good relationship...” (HoD2).

In summary, varied and intensive engagement activities are ongoing with prospective students through their schools, including school visits, teacher interactions, TY programmes, competitions and quizzes, and workshops.

Engaging directly with prospective students

Engaging directly with individual, prospective students and their sponsors, rather than engagement through their schools or through group interactions, is also undertaken in the case HEI. The NVivo extract shown in Figure 7.26 below shows the types of engagement with prospective students and their sponsors.

Theme	No. of Interviewees suggesting
Organised events	11
Parent/sponsor interactions	5
Web based interactions	2

Figure 7.26: Types of engagement directly with prospective students

Interview findings relating to engaging directly with prospective students are considered below using the three themes noted in Figure 7.26.

The interviewee findings show that organised events such as college open days and department specific open days, careers fairs, and road shows are the most popular ways in which the case HEI engages directly with prospective students. These were highlighted by a majority of the interviewees, most of whom engage with prospective students at the case HEI's organised open days. The importance of both college and departmental open days in engaging with prospective students was highlighted by one interviewee when he stated:

"I think people are making use of the open days ...the open day is huge, the college open day I should say...and then we have a little department open day where we bring in industry and prospective CAO [Central Applications Office] people, and they like that, they get a feel for the place." (HoD12).

Organised career fairs, and an engineering and science roadshow were also considered by interviewees.

"...we also have the engineering roadshow of course, which we partake in and it gives us access" (HoD14).

In terms of engaging directly with prospective students, some interviewees highlighted the importance of engagement with the parents and sponsors of these students. Such interactions range from “...talk to parents on the phone, or at our open days” (HoD3), to “...get an email...” (HoD11), to “...on occasion I’d have parents coming directly...” (HoD4).

A small number of interviewees highlighted the importance of the web in engaging with prospective students.

“We would give a questionnaire to our first years coming in on both sides, electrical and electronic [engineering courses], asking them how they got here, and the web is huge” (HoD12).

One interviewee noted prospective students’ use of the website to engage directly with the case HEI. They can have questions answered through the case HEIs website:

“... the students themselves do interact with the college to an extent, on the website, so, videos that are up online ...so that secondary school students can leave questions online,” (HoD4).

In summary, the case HEI engages directly with prospective students through organised events, engaging directly with parents and sponsors, and through web-based interactions.

Engaging to compete for other student cohorts

Some interviewees referenced colleges of further education (FE) or feeder college engagement when discussing prospective students. Work with the FE colleges is based on recognising courses for advanced entry for their students into programmes at the case HEI. Advanced entry is a way the case HEI broadens access for students who would not have qualified for entry using traditional routes. In terms of engaging, interviewees suggested further development of programmes with the FE colleges, with some interviewees trying to further promote these links:

Interviewee	Comment
HoD1	<i>“...with the FETAC [Further Education and Training Awards Council] sector, and that's an engagement I'd kind of like to develop further in the New Year”</i>
HoD4	<i>“I suppose in line with schools we'd put the further education colleges so [neighbouring FETAC college]. We are trying to do something with them where they would become a feeder college for us.”</i>

Figure 7.27: Developing engagement with FE colleges

Other interviewees discussed engaging with employers and industry associations to promote courses. For example, interviewees stated:

“[We] engage with employers in terms of promotion as well, because we have scholarships funded directly by employers. We have pamphlets and leaflets with Dupois and Jansen listed endorsing [case HEI] programmes in this department, which are unique in terms of the college and very unique in terms of other HEI's” (HoD8).

Therefore, the case HEI undertakes a wide range of engagements in order to broaden access and compete for students. These engagements include interactions with prospective students through schools, direct interactions with prospective students, and engaging to compete for other student cohorts such as students from FE colleges, international students and students that may be influenced by employers and industry associations.

In summary, in Chapter 3 other types of engagement were added to the Sheridan and Fallon (2015) framework. These were classified by the researcher as social enhancement and market advancement. In this section the types of engagement proposed by the interviewees that can be classified under these headings were outlined. A wide range of stakeholders are included in the five types of engagements and these are summarised below.

7.3.2.6 Summary

Figure 7.28 below summarises the types of engagement interactions with external stakeholders as noted in the research findings. It shows the three categories of engagement described in the Sheridan and Fallon (2015) framework being: graduate formation,

workforce development, and research and innovation. Also included are the two other categories of engagement identified from the literature and classified by the researcher as engaging for social enhancement and market advancement.

Section reference	Category of engagement	Type of engagement interaction	Stakeholders
7.3.2.1	Graduate formation	Curriculum design, panels and advisory boards, guest lectures, site visits, work-based projects, work placement, external examiners, mentoring and sponsorship, and course delivery.	Business and industry, other HEIs, alumni, government and their agencies, communities, professional bodies.
7.3.2.2	Workforce development	Recruitment, customised learning, CPD and practitioner skill development, accreditation, and exemptions.	Alumni, business and industry, and professional bodies.
7.3.2.3	Research and innovation	Consultancy, securing research funding, research contracts and collaborations.	Business and industry, government and their agencies, and other HEIs.
7.3.2.4	Social enhancement	Sharing of resources, staff volunteering activities, community education, meeting regional skill needs, public access to knowledge, and promotion of the region and HEI internationally.	Communities, business and industry, government and their agencies, and prospective students.
7.3.2.5	Market advancement	Involvement by HEI staff in committees, involvement with other networks, work through schools, engaging directly with prospective students, and engaging to compete for other student cohorts.	Government and their agencies, other HEIs, business and industry, and prospective students.

Figure 7.28: Summary of types of engagement with each stakeholder group (Source: Researcher)

The research findings summarised in Figure 7.28, show that engaging for graduate formation involves almost all stakeholder groups (prospective students being the exception). Engaging for workforce development involves three stakeholder groups; alumni, business and industry, and professional bodies. Research and innovation also involves three stakeholder groups; business and industry, government and their agencies and other HEIs. The categories added by the researcher social enhancement and market advancement, both have three stakeholder groups in common; business and industry, government and their agencies, and prospective students. Social enhancement also involves communities and market advancement involves other HEIs, totalling four stakeholder groups involved in each type of engagement. The number of stakeholder groups that the case HEI engages with for social enhancement and market advancement (four each) supports the extension made by the researcher to the Sheridan and Fallon (2015) framework to include these types of engagement.

7.3.3 Other influences on how HEIs engage: Legitimacy and isomorphism

This section considers the influence of legitimacy and isomorphic forces on how the case HEI engages. National documents, the case HEI's documents and the interviewees in this study have led to the legitimisation of many stakeholders for the case HEI, as discussed in section 7.2.1. Further analysis of these sources also shows a legitimisation of engagement activity itself.

Documentary analysis, for example, legitimises engagement activity. On a national level, engagement is recognised as '*...fundamental to the mission of higher education institutions.*' (Higher Education Authority, 2013, p.22). Irish State legislation supports social responsibility with the Institutes of Technology Act (2006) calling on IoTs to make a contribution to the promotion of the economic, cultural and social development of the State (Irish-Statute-Book, 2006). Engagement is also legitimised in the National Strategy for Higher Education 2030 (Hunt, 2011) and in performance evaluation documentation issued by the Higher Education Authority '*...as the third of the three interconnected core roles of higher education*' (Higher Education Authority, 2013, p.23) [the other two roles being teaching and learning and research].

At organisational level, the strategic plan for the case HEI legitimises engagement as an important part of their activities. It states: '*Engagement with enterprise and the extension*

of the campus into the workplace (and the wider community) is a key defining characteristic of [the case HEI]’ (Case HEI, 2012-2017, p.5). The external engagement strategy of the case HEI also highlights that engagement is “...fundamental to [the case HEI] since its foundation over one hundred years ago as the [the case HEI city] Municipal Technical Institute, and right through its time as [the case HEI city] Regional Technical College” (Case HEI, 2017, p.3).

Interviewees also legitimised engagement activity as a core role, positioning engagement as “...really important, not a luxury...” (HoD13) and contending that “...to be truly alive we need to do this engagement thing” (HoD13).

Having established that engagement is seen as a legitimate activity for the case HEI, the next section presents findings that further consider how engagement is legitimatised. More specifically, isomorphic forces which cause organisations to be more homogeneous to each other are presented. The isomorphic forces that cause organisations to become more homogeneous to each other are threefold; coercive, normative and mimetic. The findings relating to the influence of these three forces on engagement are considered below.

Coercive isomorphism

The first isomorphic pressure identified in the findings is coercion. Two forms of coercion were identified in the literature; regulatory coercion and social coercion. Regulatory coercion is enforced through rule of government, while social coercion depends on a perceived social contract between the HEI and its other stakeholders. All of the interviewees identified coercive influences in relation to engagement. Most mentioned coercion in the context of resources and regulation. Some noted coercion arising from professional bodies and employers. While others highlighted coercion as an imperative to engage with their communities because of the perceived social contract. Social coercion and this social contract will be discussed in section 7.3.4 below.

In the context of obtaining resources, one of the interviewees explained the funding dependence of HEIs on government and their agencies (regulatory coercion) stating that:

“...our funding model still is predicated around the funding follows the student and currently we don’t have the means to generate more income from non-exchequer” (TM3).

Interviewees also remarked on being dependent on government and their agencies through regulation and directives. For example, some of the interviewees suggested that they acted in accordance with regulation or directives issued by the government:

“...we would more get initiatives from them, or ... directives ... they more influence what we’re doing more than anything else” (HoD4).

Interviewees also recognised coercion from professional bodies and employers. Engaging with professional bodies gives the HEI legitimacy through accreditation of courses. Several interviewees highlighted the influence of accreditation. For example:

“Accreditation [from professional bodies] influences us. Being aware of the needs, the standards and requirements influences all of us” (HoD13).

Engaging with employers also coerces the institution into certain behaviours as one respondent noted that if the HEI doesn’t have employers *“...you’ve no business”* (HoD5). Another interviewee concurred that employers were able to coerce the HEI stating that they are:

“...telling us what we have to teach ... they can influence the research we do, the type of people we should hire, where we should go as a whole.” (HoD9).

In summary, the interviewees identified coercion as an influence on engagement. Firstly, the interviewees identified regulatory coercion in relation to resources and legislation from government and their agencies. Secondly, they considered the requirement to gain legitimacy through accreditation from professional bodies as being influential. Finally, interviewees considered that employers (business and industry stakeholders) are influential because they prescribe what to teach, what research to do and who to hire.

Mimetic isomorphism

Mimetic isomorphism refers to the processes of imitation that organisations often take to mimic organisations that they perceive as successful. The findings indicate the presence of mimetic isomorphism. A majority of the interviewees agreed that other HEIs, and what they are doing, has influenced them. Interviewees highlighted that they mimic the types of courses/programmes offered by other HEIs. For example:

Interviewee	Comment
HoD14	<i>“I think it would, we are in a competitive scenario, if Waterford decides to do something, we’d think what the hell are they doing and why aren’t we doing it.”</i>
HoD10	<i>“Well obviously I do need to look at what other providers are doing in context of competition for students and so forth”</i>
HoD12	<i>“I know what they teach by the way. I know their programmes quite well...”</i>

Figure 7.29: The influence of other HEIs on the case HEI

Interviewees noted that national forums and visits to other HEIs, as external examiners for example, has helped them to learn from and mimic best practice:

“... national forum [a research project ... in modelling and simulation], for example, is the engineers in Ireland who are involved in HE coming together and learn from best practice. Involvement as external examiner is a fairly good way to get a hands on experience of what is happening elsewhere. That would influence all of us.” (HoD13).

In summary, the interviewees noted the influence of other HEIs both Irish and international, on their engagement practices. They acknowledged mimicking these other HEIs in order to compete and to obtain best practice for learning opportunities.

Normative isomorphism

Normative isomorphism suggests that legitimacy and acceptance are achieved through conformity to usual or expected behaviour i.e. the norm. This form of isomorphism stems primarily from professionalisation as employees try to establish a cognitive base and legitimisation for their occupational autonomy. The findings indicate that being engaged is embedded in the case HEI’s “...DNA...” (TM3), that it is the norm. For example, one interviewee described engaging with stakeholders as being a usual and a worthy thing to do, the taken for granted norm:

“The prevailing dominant logic around [the Case HEI] is around that notion of us being connected to the outside world and that drives behaviour and it is behaviour that is a taken for granted norm” (TM3).

“Just to say that we are looking at introducing placement right across the faculty of business and humanities. Why is that? One of reasons we are trying to implement that is ...it is seen as being a legitimate and good practice for an organisation like ours, and a worthy thing to be doing.” (TM3).

As noted in section 7.3.2.4, one of the dominant forms of engagement behaviour for staff of the case HEI is to work voluntarily with external stakeholders. All of the interviewees described the voluntary work of their staff. No reward for such activity is provided but nevertheless it is carried out by the vast majority of staff in the case HEI. For example, one interviewee commented that:

“...we have a whole host of staff, who engage in community activity, between the GAA [Gaelic Athletic Association], between charity bodies, local enterprise initiatives” (HoD4).

In the findings, interviewees noted the academic and professional education of their staff and highlighted this normative influence on engagement. By being part of such networks, and engaging in training and CPD with them, staff perception of the way things are done is influenced by the norm for the professional network. Case HEI staff are active in many professional organisations which influences what they bring to the organisation. One interviewee described staff engagement with professional bodies:

“But they [case HEI staff] are active in their own professional bodies because we would have a share of accounting staff. We would have a share of HR staff. The same I would say with marketing staff. So they are all members of a body or an institute, so they have to have their own CPD as well ... [and they engage with] the local CIPD branch and the local accountancy body groups” (HoD6).

As well as the academic and continued professional development education of staff interviewees suggested that other professional networks influence engagement as staff become aware of what is happening for the professions in industry, for example:

“I am a member of a thing called the Gas Innovation Group (GIG), a governance body for distribution of funding for research ...you meet people of professorial status and you get a good sense of what is happening in an industry from being involved at that level.” (HoD13).

This awareness of what is the norm for industry influences staff perceptions of what should be the norm in the case HEI.

In summary, engagement is the norm for the case HEI, it is embedded in its DNA and considered a worthy activity. The incidence of normative isomorphism is evidenced by staff volunteering activities and by the educational and professional networks that staff belong to, which continue to reinforce engagement with communities, professional bodies and business and industry.

7.3.4 Other influences on engagement: Social and market pressures

Social pressure is based on the perceived social contract between the organisation and society and confers legitimacy through cultural expectations. The interviewees identified a perceived social contract with communities which influences engagement with their community stakeholders. They highlighted the influence that communities have due to the “...*moral imperative*...” (HoD1). HEIs have to be accountable to tax payers and communities. The interviewees discussed how the case HEI engages with their communities in a wide variety of ways. They do this because they consider it right to engage with their communities from “*a more ... philanthropic ... point of view*” (HoD1), because the HEI is “...*part of that community based contract with the outside world*...” (HoD12). Interviewees also indicated the importance of servicing communities because “...*they would be part of the broader mission*...” (TM4) of the case HEI and “... *we have an obligation to service them*” (HoD8).

Market pressures are also found to influence engagement with some stakeholders. For example, the case HEI wishes to exhibit close links with professional bodies to demonstrate their experience in the provision of appropriate education (via accreditation and delegation). Interviewees contend that such close links can satisfy market expectations, give competitive advantage and ensure continued intake of (and thus continued income from) students who wish to operate in certain professional environments post-graduation. One interviewee stated “*Our ... course is accredited ...to masters level which is very important to us as we are the only ones in [province] to have it. Only ourselves and UCD have it in Ireland, so it is a big marketing advantage to us.*” (HoD13). Close links to prospective students is also demonstrated in the case HEI as it strives to show the market its experience to gain competitive advantage. For example, one interviewee described a programme undertaken with trainee teachers so that they will

include the case HEI in recommendations made to prospective students “...we’d train them [trainee teachers] up in the business of making printed circuit boards and general fundamental electronics ... when they go out into secondary schools they’ll remember to include us” (HoD12). Being visible in the market is noted by another interviewee who undertakes engagements with prospective students, such as “...BT young scientists... we take in two transition year students per week.” (HoD2).

Similarly, market pressures have influenced engagement with alumni. Engaging with latent stakeholders is at the discretion of management of an organisation (Mainardes et al., 2010) and as alumni were classified by interviewees as latent stakeholders the case HEI need not engage with them. However, they engage because there is market pressure on them to do so. Interviewees noted competitive advantages to be gained from engaging with alumni, with one interviewee stating:

“Alumni provide placements and job opportunities for our graduates, they inform changes to programmes at programmatic review and, most importantly, they act as ambassadors for the programme, the department, and [case HEI] as a whole” (HoD6).

Another interviewee noted an advantage for alumni in dealing with the case HEI highlighting that *“The department also has a well-established practice of emailing graduates details of job opportunities which come to our attention, this is a very active provision.”* (HoD5).

In summary, the engagement undertaken by the case HEI with community groups has been influenced by social pressures comprising cultural expectations and a perceived social contract. Market pressures have influenced the case HEI’s engagement as it strives to demonstrate close links with professional bodies, prospective students, and alumni in order to gain competitive advantage.

This section presented the findings of this study in relation to engagement perceptions of what it is, how it is undertaken, and how it is influenced. The next section explores the findings relating to measurement of engagement performance.

7.4 Engagement measurement

This section presents the interview findings relating to the measurement of engagement activity; the types of engagement measures that are currently being reported internally and how they are used and reported externally.

7.4.1 Reporting engagement performance within the case HEI

Internal engagement performance reporting is completed for HEI management. This includes reporting information requested by the Institute's executive board, academic council and government body. In the interview findings respondents posited that measures of engagement with external stakeholders are used internally for programmatic reviews, faculty and departmental reporting, Extended Campus reporting, and for staff to get permission to do some work outside the case HEI.

One interviewee indicated that a comprehensive report of engagement activity with external stakeholders is required in programmatic reviews stating that: *“So, every five years, the documentation that would be put forward for programmatic review would seek to include information around engagement in terms of industry and the types of activities, but it wouldn't be a numbers thing, it would be the types of activities and maybe numbers I suppose, how many guest lecturers you've had ... but they're probably more interested in a sample of who came in.”* (HoD3).

Interviewees also suggested that engagement measures were being used for faculty reporting and described three purposes for this; firstly, in acknowledging staff engagement activity, secondly, for inclusion in the faculty's strategic plan, and thirdly, in reporting faculty performance to governing body. Examples of interviewee comments relating to these three purposes are shown in Figure 7.30 below.

Interviewee	Comment
<i>Acknowledgement of staff engagement activity</i>	
HoD11	<i>“...but equally I think it's for [the] acknowledgment thing. So I, for example, over the last couple of weeks, I have been sending emails about what the students in the winter wonderland are doing. And that to me isn't so much about what's happening but this is what this person is doing. Fair play to them. And that would be my kind of motivation on it.”</i>
<i>Inclusion in faculty strategic plan</i>	
HoD13	<i>“I know under our own strategic plan – that was an initiative within the faculty – we have put in a lot of metrics for measuring these [guest lectures and site visits].”</i>
<i>Reporting faculty performance to governing body</i>	
TM1	<i>“We have sought opportunity to include those [work placements] in reports to the governing body, reports to [the] Institute's Executive Board (IEB).”</i>

Figure 7.30: The purposes of reporting engagement performance at faculty level

Other interviewees suggested that engagement was reported in conjunction with the Extended Campus of the case HEI. Engagement data was input to the Extended Campus' customer relationship management system for college wide reports to be prepared. Another interviewee noted publishing engagement stories for his department in Extended Campus publications. These publications are sent to local press and published through the case HEI's website and social media accounts: *“I would work with the Extended Campus to highlight that because they have a publication that's sent out and frequently we would be highlighted in that”* (HoD14).

Interviewees' responses relating to the engagement activity that was being reported within the case HEI suggested interaction with a range of external stakeholders. To facilitate the presentation of findings Figure 7.31 shows the types of engagement reported for each stakeholder group, as noted by interviewees.

Stakeholder	Type of engagement reported	Interviewee
Business and industry	Guest lectures	HoD11, HoD13, HoD3, HoD6, HoD7
	Work placements	HoD10, HoD2, HoD4, TM1, TM3
	Collaborations	HoD1, TM1, TM2, TM3
	Licences, spin offs and patents	TM2, TM3
	Courses with industry staff	HoD5, TM1, TM3
	Site visits	HoD13
	Industry meetings	HoD3
	Live Cases	HoD11
	Research funding from industry	HoD2
Prospective students	Number of school visits	HoD5
Government and their agencies	Funding for research	HoD13
Other HEIs	Number of collaborations	TM2
Professional bodies	None	n/a
Communities	None	n/a
Alumni	None	n/a

Figure 7.31: Types of engagement reported in the case HEI

As Figure 7.31 shows, the case HEI engages with the business and industry stakeholder group in a wide range of activities. Fourteen of the interviewees described nine types of engagement reporting with business and industry stakeholders. Guest lectures and work placements were the most frequently cited types of engagement reported. Interviewees also described reporting of some engagement activity with prospective students, with government and their agencies and with other HEIs. Interviewees did not describe reporting on any engagement interactions with professional bodies, communities or alumni.

According to the interviewees, reporting on engagement activity of the case HEI with business and industry stakeholders far exceeds that reported for any other stakeholder group. Examples of interviewee comments relating to the types of business and industry engagement activity measured, and thus reported, are shown in Figure 7.32 below:

Business and industry types of engagement reported	
Type of engagement	Interviewee comment
Guest lectures	<i>"I suppose we would try to track guest lectures... has everyone brought in a guest lecturer, you might be looking at that, and that's not to say you'd achieve it, but you'd be trying to say, try to bring in one, a small number, trying to get everyone involved," (HoD3).</i>
Work placement	<i>"We measure how many students get placement, who they get placement with..." (HoD4).</i>
Collaborations	<i>"On the research side we would normally ... report on the number of collaborations that are co-funded...the number of co-authored publications, the distribution of those..." (TM2).</i>
Licences, spin offs and patents	<i>"So then – the research office and the ILO [industry liaison office] – The ILO prepared the targets for things like spin outs, licence and patents ... Also things where we co-patent or co-licence, so where intellectual property is shared and where students are co-supervised." (TM2).</i>
Courses with industry staff	<i>"...it's measured in so far as customised learning contracts are measured and counted...it's measured in so far as part-time learning, work based learning, recognition of prior learning, all of these things are counted and measured so if you go back to, we have a tabular format of this." (TM1).</i>
Site visits	<i>"Site visits are there. In one academic year there would have been twelve in one programme" (HoD13).</i>
Industry meetings	<i>"...we would try to track things like, if we have industry stakeholder meetings for panels, and we would have the minutes of those. In terms of how they would be measured, they'd be measured in the context, if you had one a year" (HoD3).</i>
Live cases	<i>"So, measure is probably an overstatement, but we try to acknowledge at least. So, live cases are probably the best example of it." (HoD11).</i>

Business and industry types of engagement reported	
Research funding from industry	<i>“...the funding for research from small and medium type businesses [is measured].”</i> (HoD2).

Figure 7.32: Reporting of engagement activity with business and industry stakeholders

In summary, interviewees suggested that measures of engagement activity with stakeholders are reported for many different purposes including programmatic reviews, faculty and departmental reporting, Extended Campus reporting, and for staff to get permission to do some work outside the case HEI. Reporting on business and industry interactions was the most noted measure.

7.4.2 Reporting engagement measures externally

In the interview findings respondents posited that measures of engagement with external stakeholders are used for annual reports, reporting to professional bodies, reporting to funding agencies, and reporting to the HEA through the strategic compact. Some interviewees commented on the use of engagement measures for the case HEI’s annual report. The interviewees perceive the reporting of engagement through the annual report as being unstructured and based solely on replies to calls for information: *“We’ll say in terms of engagement, annual reports. So, [the case HEI] would have an annual report and they’d put a call out for any information to go out in the report...”* (HoD3).

Some interviewees suggested that engagement was reported to professional bodies regarding accreditation: *“In truth that would have been done to meet the requirements of academic accreditation ... external body accreditation, where they would be looking for that type of detail as well.”* (HoD13).

“Our courses are accredited by Engineers Ireland on a five year cycle, and in that five year cycle, there is a significant report to be done on your activities for the preceding five years.” (HoD5).

Other engagement reported, as suggested by some interviewees, include: reporting on funding received, and performance compact reporting (see next section).

In summary, interviewees suggested that measures of engagement activity with stakeholders are reported for many different purposes including preparing annual reports, reporting to professional bodies, and other miscellaneous reporting. The next section considers the mandatory reporting of engagement activity for the performance compact.

7.5 Mandatory reporting of engagement

This section begins by introducing the strategic performance compact, the mandatory tool used by the HEA for HEIs to report performance to them. It then highlights awareness of the compact itself within the case HEI, before considering engagement measures therein. The later sections discuss the influences on measures selected for the strategic performance compact and the influence of the strategic performance compact on subsequent engagement interactions. Documentation provided by the Higher Education Authority (HEA), by the case HEI through internal email, from other HEIs' websites, and by the strategic management team of the case HEI (who were involved in compact implementation) was reviewed in preparing the following information on the performance compacts,

As highlighted in Chapter 2 (Section 2.5.3), in 2014, the HEA introduced performance compacts to align the missions, strategies and profiles of individual HEIs with national priorities, and to agree indicators of success against which institutional performance would be measured and funding would be allocated. In order to secure this funding all HEIs were required to establish their performance compact. Six categories of measures were proposed by the HEA and each HEI was required to translate these prescribed categories into their own priorities and then propose performance measures for each category. Subsequently a review was carried out and HEIs were required to identify and explain any areas where performance did not meet targets for measure outlined in the performance compact. One specific category of measures proposed by the HEA relates to engagement performance measures, additional engagement measures have also been included in some of the other categories. The performance compact prepared by the case HEI is shown in Appendix I.

According to one interviewee, the HEA provided guidelines on the type of performance measures that may be included in each category by reference to the engagement measurement systems in operation in Scotland and Australia (TM4). Other top managers

noted using other international systems to design measures for the strategic performance compact. For example, one interviewees stated she used groups she works with:

“From the viewpoint of the [case HEI] extended campus, we decided on them [performance measures] by work with international groups...U-multilink ...UIIN [Univarsity industry innovation network]...Nacro White paper (Network of academic corporate relations officers), so we did a lot of work internationally in saying how are these things done.” (TM1).

A review of the performance compacts shows that HEIs in Ireland chose very similar measures based loosely on what others are doing internationally, but taking into account the information that they can collect themselves. The researcher analysed each performance compact submitted to the HEA by all of the Irish Institutes of Technology (IoTs). Appendix D shows the measures chosen by each of these IoTs; both explicit quantifiable measures (√) and qualitative measure (X) are shown. The purpose of the analysis presented in Appendix D is to show the similarity of measures selected by Irish IoTs and this is discussed further in the next chapter.

The following sections present interview findings relating to general awareness of the performance compact, more specific awareness of measures in the compact, and the influence of the compact on engagement activity in the case HEI.

7.5.1 Awareness of the performance compact

During the interviews, the participants were asked about the performance compact. The responses indicate mixed awareness of the performance compact. Some interviewees noted awareness of the performance compact, arising from their role, others indicated knowledge of the compact through another means, such as membership of governing body and interview preparation. The different comments made by interviewees about compact awareness are shown in Figure 7.33 below:

Interviewee	Comment
<i>Some awareness of existence of performance compact</i>	
HoD3	<i>“So, I haven’t had a chance to read it yet, but I know there are targets in there, you know.”</i>
HoD12	<i>“I’ve heard of the compact before in fact it was explained to me in the last week, somebody at the coffee table, what the compact was and I’ve forgotten.”</i>
HoD13	<i>“I have heard of it but that is about it”</i>
<i>Awareness of the performance compact through their role</i>	
TM1	<i>“I understand it very well. The strategic performance based compact with the HEA is an agreement whereby Institutions develop their own particular pathways cognisant of their own unique position, strategies [and] regions. They agree this compact through strategic dialogue with the HEA....”</i>
HoD5	<i>“I’m writing our own department’s strategic plan at the moment and I decided that I’d do a first draft myself and then I’d have a look at exactly what is in the HEA [performance] compact. At the moment I’m working off of the faculty and the school plan, but I’m presuming they’ve been influenced by the HEA [performance] compact.”</i>
<i>Knowledge of the performance compact through means other than their role</i>	
HoD11	<i>“It came up in context with something else and I had a brief look at it, so I am aware of it... I had been conscious of it last year because of my interview for the head of department role. So, that’s where it was in my mind from.”</i>

Figure 7.33: Awareness of the performance compact

Overall, awareness of the performance compact is low among the interviewees, with the many interviewees being completely unaware of the compact or just having some minimal awareness that a compact existed. A limited number of interviewees had heard of the compact through a source other than through their roles as managers in the case HEI. Only a few interviewees were aware of the performance compact by virtue of their role as managers in the case HEI.

7.5.2 Measures within the performance compact

In terms of the content of the case HEI’s performance compact, for those interviewees aware of the document, half were unaware of the inclusion of any engagement measures, some stated that they were aware that engagement measures were included in the compact

but they did not know what they were, while others listed some of the performance measures related to engagement that were noted in the performance compact. Figure 7.34 below shows some examples of interviewee comments:

Interviewee	Comment
Unaware of engagement measures in performance compact	
HoD4	<i>“I have looked at it once so let me go back to it now. Okay, so, can I remember anything in it? Okay, no I can’t remember anything in it.”</i>
HoD9	<i>“I know that there are many things, probably there are some for engagement but I have no idea what they are.”</i>
Aware there are measures in performance compact but unaware of what they are	
HoD1	<i>“There are, but I can’t remember what they are”</i>
HoD3	<i>“Yeah. I suppose I’d be conscious of retention, research, entrepreneurship...the research building capacity...online would be driven by this, mature students...disadvantaged groups... getting the diversity of learner accommodated within the HEI.”</i> [Note: These are not the compact engagement measures]
HoD14	<i>“I can’t remember to be honest, it’s one of those documents where, now I did read it, but it’s been a while.”</i>
Able to list some of the engagement measures	
HoD6	<i>“Engagement wise now, I know we are to engage with other HEIs, so we are in a cluster there. So that ...engagement with other HEIs in that cluster are there as targets. I know that growing our own profile regionally and nationally is there.”</i>
TM1	<i>“There certainly are. We put them in there. I mean there are a number of different things in our particular institution’s compact with the HEA. That would relate to, for example, our work for workforce development, our work around graduate formation, our work around research and innovation, all of which are part of our landscape, or our continuum of interface and interactions. The measures that are in there at the moment tend to be around improvement in those things so there are very specific things – for instance the numbers of learning clinics we enact with companies and organisations, learning clinics is one of our specific work force development interactions... There is also measures in there for instance around recognition of prior learning (RPL) portfolios. So there are a number of very specific quantifiable metrics. There are other qualitative metrics in there.”</i>
TM2	<i>“There are engagement measures now so obviously in the research space it is things like co-authored publications and the research income...”</i>

Figure 7.34: Awareness of engagement measures in the performance compact

In summary, awareness among interviewees of the engagement measures in the performance compact is mixed. Most interviewees are unaware of engagement measures in the performance compact, or are aware that there are engagement measures but unaware what the engagement measures are. A limited number of interviewees were aware of engagement measures in the performance compact.

7.5.3 Influences on measurement selection

During the interviews the respondents were asked to consider the influences on the selection of engagement measures in the performance compact and were provided with a list of themes derived from the literature. The list is shown in Figure 7.35 below:

Theme	Section reference
Marketisation and Internationalisation of HE	2.4.3
The private sector	2.4.1
The drive for accountability to stakeholders	2.4.2
Government policy	2.5.2.4
Funding concerns	2.4.4
Quality	2.4.5
Other HEIs both at home and abroad	2.4.3

**Figure 7.35: Possible influences on measure selection
(Provided during interviews)**

The findings, analysed based on these themes, suggest the presence of coercive, mimetic and normative isomorphic mechanisms, as well as social and market pressures when selecting measures. These are presented in the following paragraphs.

Coercive isomorphism

Regulatory coercive isomorphism was suggested when one interviewee highlighted the importance of government policy in influencing the selection of metrics:

“Government policy clearly has to be taken into account. If the government was to set up some sort of measurement for engagement activity then you would have to take that into account.” (HoD10).

The interviewees considered that government influenced the selection of engagement measures in two ways: through policy and through funding requirements. Figure 7.36 shows some of the observations made by interviewees in relation to government policy

and engagement measures. These interviewees described how different government agencies require the selection of different measures:

Interviewee	Comments
TM2	<i>“If you go to Enterprise Ireland they are focused on the IP [Intellectual Property] side of things and the number of companies you work with. If you go towards the HEA [Higher Education Authority] they will look at things like... where you have courses, or publications that are generated together that type of thing.”</i>
TM3	<i>“The ones [measures] for the compact are nationally agreed with Knowledge Transfer Ireland”</i>

Figure 7.36: The influence of government policy

In terms of government influencing engagement measures through funding requirements, half of the interviewees cited funding as significant in the selection of measures. As discussed in section 7.3.3, HEIs are dependent on the government for funding so organisations are coerced to comply with government policy. One interviewee suggested that extra funding may be attained by being viewed as worth investing in, and are thus coerced to be mindful of generating benefit on any investments made:

“The other things that we all look at is return on investment ... if used wisely it can help in attracting additional funding because you are seen as worth investing in. Very similar to a business.” (TM2).

To summarise, the findings show that government and its agencies were considered by interviewees to influence the selection of engagement measures. Government policy forces the case HEI to include specified engagement measures and perform to a particular standard in order to secure funding.

Mimetic isomorphism

The majority of interviewees suggested that other national HE systems and other HEIs have influenced the selection of engagement measures in the case HEI’s performance compact. As discussed in section 7.5, some interviewees noted that the engagement measures selected are influenced by international systems such as the Scottish and Australian systems recommended by the HEA, Organisation of Economic, Co-operation and Development (OECD) or U-Multirank in the European Union. The case HEI has *“...piggy backed...”* (TM4) on measures from such international systems for

benchmarking purposes. Figure 7.37 shows some interviewee comments relating to how measures were selected by mimicking those used elsewhere:

Interviewee	Comment
TM1	<i>“From the viewpoint of the [case HEI] Extended Campus, we decided on them by work with international groups.”</i>
TM2	<i>“There are a number of measures broadly agreed ... So you will see them coming up time and time again in publications from the likes of the HEA or Enterprise Ireland. Yes basically [what is happening in the market]”</i>
TM4	<i>“So we took their model and we benchmarked ourselves against institutions which were of the type we wanted to be. So we took technological universities in Australia because they would be the type of university we would aim to become, if we were to get university designation.”</i>

Figure 7.37: Influence of national and international measurement systems

The interviewees noted that the benefit of mimicking measures from other systems is that *“...it allows you to compare yourself and benchmark yourself against others”* (TM3).

One interviewee suggested selecting measures based on what the case HEI aspired to be:

“Then there is a group called the European Consortium of Innovative Universities (ECIU) and again they would have a lot of the features that we would aspire to. So we picked a number of measures of that [engagement] as well to compare to. So we benchmarked ourselves against five other institutions. They would be two Australian and three from the European Consortium.” (TM4).

Other interviewees noted that they monitor what happens in other HEIs in their jurisdiction. For example, one interviewee spoke about how they might mimic other measurement systems because what happens in other HEIs filters into the case HEI:

“That kind of stuff will filter in from other places and become part of what we are expected to do here.” (HoD11).

Another interviewee noted that she would emulate an engagement measurement system for departmental reporting if she could see the benefit:

“I’d like to see what benefits they are after getting out of it, and if I saw the benefits, that would influence me in terms of copying their measurements” (HoD4).

Some other interviewees suggested that they look at what other HEIs do, but do not select measures for the case HEI as a result of what those HEIs were doing, but instead modify them to suit their own purposes: *“I’d have a look at it and do my own thing”* (HoD5). When preparing the performance compact, one interviewee noted informal *“... chats about the compact on a peer-to-peer basis rather than anything formal.”* (TM2).

To summarise, most of the interviewees agreed that engagement performance measures selected by other HEIs, and in other HE systems internationally, influence what happens in the case HEI. Therefore, if other HEIs had selected engagement measures the case HEI most likely would mimic these measures.

Normative isomorphism

During the interviews, respondents also identified themes considered to represent normative isomorphic pressures when selecting measures for the performance compact. One interviewee, for example, noted that some measures are the norm for measuring performance in knowledge exchange and so those norms were obviously selected: *“Now in some of the areas, so for example, knowledge exchange and the targets for licences and so on, [there] would be standard metrics for that. So there are some areas where the metrics were obvious...”* (TM4)

The findings show that top managers, with specific responsibility for knowledge exchange and research, consider certain measures obvious, or the norm, and have selected these for inclusion in the case HEI’s performance compact. Interviewees involved in engagement also proposed measures based on their perception of appropriate measures. One interviewee noted that her perception of normal and appropriate measures emanated from international groups she works with: *“I mean you can’t abstract yourself from the international groupings that you are in when you are asked to contribute [to the performance compact]. So I would have thought that at that stage, maybe even the UIIN [University Industry Innovation Network], the various groups that we are involved in here certainly played a part”* (TM1).

To summarise, the findings suggest that normative isomorphism has influenced the selection of engagement measures in the case HEI. Interviewees recognised that their perspectives regarding the norm in the fields within which they work had influenced the measures that were selected.

Social pressures

As discussed in section 7.3.3 it is important for the case HEI to appear legitimate. As a result social pressures were also identified in the selection of measures in the case HEI. Interviewees recognised pressure from their social environment to establish a measurement system in order to appear legitimate and be accountable to stakeholders. One interviewee for example, commented on proving his department's legitimacy through a measurement system: *"I think it looks good for the department...from that point of view it is very useful to measure these things..."* (HoD7). Another noted being *"...accountable to the taxpayer... [because] there's sort of a moral imperative"* (HoD1). Other interviewees agreed that what is happening in society, including the private sector, would influence measures selected in the case HEI. One interviewee stated that the selection of measures: *"...would be influenced by the private sector, I don't think we are that different."* (HoD4).

Conversely, other interviewees are of the opinion that stakeholders in society have no influence on how the case HEI measures, with one interviewee stating *"They don't have any say in how we measure. No."* (HoD3). Another interviewee agreed that stakeholders would not have a decision making role but *"...they play a role in having membership ... an advisory board."* (HoD9).

In summary, striving to appear legitimate has had the effect of applying some social pressure on the case HEI to measure engagement. Interviewees identified social pressure when outlining the influences on the selection of measures in the performance compact.

Market pressures

Market pressures include pressures to appear legitimate to HEIs' markets. This research has found that such market pressures also influence what the case HEI does in terms of measuring engagement. The case HEI aims to comply with market requirements as suggested by many interviewees. For example, interviewees identified:

"That kind of stuff will filter in from other places and become part of what we are expected to do here" (HoD11).

"...that what happens in Europe tends to come here after a while and then we are doing it next." (HoD7).

When discussing the influence of measures used by other HEIs, one interviewee stated he would be influenced by measures used in the case HEI's market *"Especially nationally, because this is our competition. We are fighting for the same pot of money essentially."* (HoD9). Another discussed comparing themselves to what was happening in the market stating that *"Efforts were genuinely made to benchmark ourselves against other organisations."* (TM3). As a result of this effort to benchmark themselves against other HEIs, the case HEI selected market acceptable measures. For example, one interviewee recalled selecting measures that were standard in the market:

"Now in some of the areas, so for example knowledge exchange and the targets for licences and so on, [there] would be standard metrics for that." (TM4).

"There are a number of measures broadly agreed...you will see them coming up time and again..." (TM2)

In summary, the case HEI's engagement measurement system was also influenced by market pressures, both in terms of the requirement to have a measurement system and the measures selected for that system. The purpose of including some measures was to ensure future funding and legitimacy for the case HEI.

Overall, the findings indicate the presence of coercive, mimetic and normative isomorphic influences, as well as social and market pressures, on the selection of measures for inclusion in the performance compact of the case HEI. Government expectations have coercively influenced the selection of measures through policy and funding requirements, however in practice, measures were also selected based on mimetic and normative influences, as well as social and market pressures.

7.5.4 Influence of measures on activity

In the findings, when asked if the performance compact had influenced the engagement activities, aims and priorities of the department or case HEI, the interviewee responses were mixed. Some interviewees stated that the performance compact had no influence on engagement activities of the case HEI, or that it had limited influence, while other interviewees considered that it had a strong influence on activity. Figure 7.38 shows

examples of interviewee comments with regard to the performance compact’s influence on engagement activity;

Interviewee	Comment
<i>Performance compact measures had no influence on engagement</i>	
HoD1	<i>“I don’t think it’s [performance compact] forcing us to do anything more than what we are doing at the moment, I don’t see that. I’m not aware of any increased work...”</i>
HoD10	<i>“Not directly...”</i>
HoD7	<i>“No, it’s [the performance compact] a new one on me”</i>
<i>Performance compact measures had limited influence on engagement</i>	
TM3	<i>“So from the point of view of ensuring you have an engagement strategy the compact has influenced us. It certainly has influenced us in terms of what headings would you have, what would you think about.”</i>
HoD14	<i>“It would influence my thinking ... it's something I would reference more than know off song and verse. “</i>
HoD2	<i>“I'm sure [it is in] the background of what our president would push ...”</i>
TM4	<i>“And I think also the compact is new and it hasn’t embedded itself into the culture of the place... The jury is out on that one.”</i>
<i>Performance compact measures had a strong influence on engagement</i>	
TM1	<i>“[The performance compact] Very much has for us. I mean we report based on the compact here in Extended Campus. We have developed our own strategic and tactical plans that are all aligned with the compact and the institute strategy. It has for us.”</i>
TM2	<i>“I would say that it [the performance compact] does for us because we have some quantitative targets, and it is in our strategic plan, so I think when you are looking at it I am quite happy for us to put those targets out there and for us to have to try to achieve them...”</i>

Figure 7.38 Engagement measurement and activity

In summary therefore, the findings suggest that the influence of the performance compact on engagement with external stakeholders was mixed. Some interviewees felt it had no impact, some stated it had a limited effect on their activity, and only the top managers interviewed stated that it had a strong influence on their engagement activity.

7.6 Conclusion

This chapter presented the findings of this study of HEI engagement with external stakeholders. First it provided an overview of the seven stakeholder groups proposed by the interviewees, highlighting stakeholder salience from interview findings and classifying stakeholders as latent, expectant or definitive. The next section addressed the meaning of engagement and identified engagement interactions classified based on five types of engagement; graduate formation, workforce development, research and innovation, social enhancement and market advancement. The types of engagement, stakeholders and their salience were then summarised before considering other influences on engagement. Interviewee findings relating to engagement being measured in the case HEI and the use of those reported measures were then presented. Next the findings focused on the performance compact. Interviewee awareness of the compact and any engagement measures therein was presented. The influences on engagement measures were identified by the interviewees and classified as isomorphic or relating to social and market pressures. Finally, the findings relating to the influence of the compact on engagement activity was described. Chapter 8 combines the findings and compares them to previous research as discussed in the literature review.

CHAPTER 8: DISCUSSION

8.1 Introduction

This chapter compares the findings presented in chapter seven with the literature from previous chapters. It begins by analysing the case HEI's stakeholders and then discusses the identification, importance and salience of each of these stakeholder groups. The theoretical framework proposed for the study is then used to consider the influences on salience. Next, definitions of engagement found in the literature are compared with those proposed by the interviewees. Subsequently, the types of engagement found in the case HEI are evaluated and the influence of stakeholder salience, legitimacy and isomorphism, and market and social pressures on engagement are examined. The chapter then discusses engagement measurement; how engagement measures are reported in the case HEI and why those measures were selected. It concludes with a discussion of the decoupling of the case HEI's measurement system from engagement activity.

8.2 Legitimate external stakeholders and their salience

Stakeholders are described in the literature (section 4.2) as all those persons or entities with an interest in the activity of an organisation: those that pay for it and/or those that benefit from it, both exerting some form of pressure on the organisation (Ackermann and Eden, 2011; Sarrico et al., 2010; Jongbloed et al., 2008). They are described as '*...persons or groups with legitimate interests in ... aspects of corporate activity*' (Donaldson and Preston, 1995, p.67). The interviewees in this study concur with the description of stakeholders found in the literature with one interviewee describing stakeholders as '*...people who have a valued interest in whether or not my department actually exists*' (HoD12). Interviewees have legitimised stakeholders because they '*... are very necessary. The nature of education and the nature of the world we live in and the nature of technology is that you've got to keep moving, and we need influences, we need information, and then we can establish our position within all of that*' (HoD12).

The broad description of stakeholders and their recognition as necessary for HEIs, both in the literature and in this research, has led to a corresponding broad legitimisation of multiple HEIs' stakeholders (Burrows, 1999). Mitchell et al. (1997) for example, propose that '*Persons, groups, neighbourhoods, organizations, institutions, societies, and even*

the natural environment are generally thought to qualify as actual or potential stakeholders' (Mitchell et al., 1997, p.855). Analysis of Irish government legislation and policy documents shows a legitimisation of a wide range of stakeholders in higher education in Ireland (Higher Education Authority, 2015a; Higher Education Authority, 2015b; Higher Education Authority, 2013; Higher Education Authority, 2012; Hunt, 2011; Irish-Statute-Book, 1992). For example, business and industry stakeholders were legitimised in several planning and evaluation reports as well as in government legislation which formed IoTs in Ireland (Higher Education Authority, 2013; Higher Education Authority, 2012; Irish-Statute-Book, 1992). Prospective students were legitimised in equity of access policies (Higher Education Authority, 2015a; Higher Education Authority, 2012). Government and their agencies were legitimised in reports on funding and system performance (Higher Education Authority, 2014b). Other HEIs were legitimised in policies promoting clusters and joint research, as well as in IoT legislation (Higher Education Authority, 2012; Irish-Statute-Book, 1992). Professional bodies were legitimised as stakeholders in the development of the performance compacts (Higher Education Authority, 2015b; Hunt, 2011). Communities were legitimised as stakeholders in future planning and evaluation documentation (Higher Education Authority, 2013; Higher Education Authority, 2012) and alumni were also legitimised where documents discussed HEIs' rankings (Higher Education Authority, 2013).

The interviewees agree and also legitimise the existence of multiple stakeholders with one interviewee stating; "*Our external stakeholders are multiple.*" (TM3). The specific stakeholders interviewees legitimised, together with the salience attributed to them, are shown in Figure 8.1 and discussed in the sections that follow.

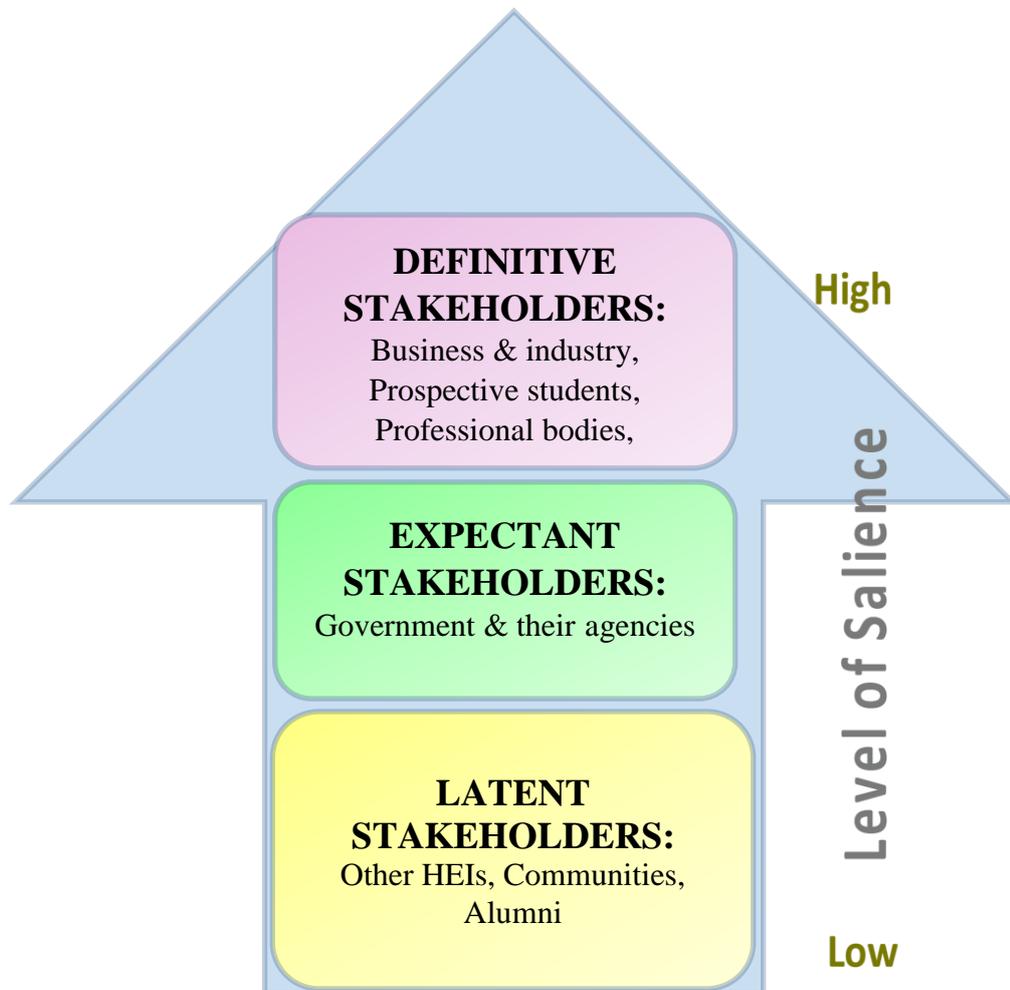


Figure 8.1: Stakeholder classification and levels of salience

(Source: Researcher)

8.2.1 Business and industry

Identification

According to the literature (Section 4.2.1.2), business and industry interact with HEIs in many, often ad hoc ways (Miller et al., 2014). These include interacting with the HEI: as employers of graduates; as providers of student placement opportunities; as sponsors of student events; in collaborative research (Cranfield University, 2015; Bekkers and Bodas Freitas, 2008; Azagra-Caro, 2007; Mueller, 2006; De Wit and Verhoeven, 2000); as investors and funders (Pollard et al., 2013a; Acworth, 2008; Jongbloed et al., 2008); as advisors on module and programme content (Eurydice Report, 2014; Miller et al., 2014; De Wit and Verhoeven, 2000); as guest lecturers; as suppliers of goods and services

(Maric, 2013); as part of entrepreneurial activities (Miller et al., 2014; Acworth, 2008); and in providing students for continuous professional development, retraining and reskilling (Jongbloed et al., 2008).

Previous researchers have offered suggestions as to how the size of business and the type of industry affects these interactions (Harmon and O'Regan, 2015; Bekkers and Bodas Freitas, 2008; Azagra-Caro, 2007; Magalhaes and Amaral, 2000). They identified that while more engagement occurs with larger multi-national firms than with small or indigenous firms, industry type was not found to be a significant determinant of engagement with HEIs. The different size and types of business stakeholders identified by the interviewees included small to medium sized enterprises, indigenous companies and multinational companies, industry associations and employers. One interviewee commented on the need “...to deal with them differently because of scale...” (TM2), which mirrors conclusions, drawn by Abreu et al. (2009), that the patterns of interaction vary by industry and size. These researchers stated that ‘*The patterns, and the importance attached to particular modes of interaction may ... vary by industry, size and life cycle of the business, and the form of production process.*’ (Abreu et al., 2008, p.54). Lifecycle and forms of production were not considered at interviews.

The most prominent theme identified both in the literature, and through documentary analysis and interviews, was the role of business and industry stakeholders as employers. Evidence of the importance of the employers strand is multiple. An analysis of relevant national reports (Higher Education Authority, 2012; Hunt, 2011) and the case HEI’s strategic plan, show an emphasis on career focused education. The Hunt (2011) report emphasises that in an IoT of the future ‘...the fields of learning will be closely related to labour market skill needs...’ (Hunt, 2011, p.105). Towards a future higher education landscape emphasised ‘...the continuing provision of labour-market oriented and practice-led specialist provision...’ (Higher Education Authority, 2012, p.8). The case HEI’s strategic plan states commitment to ‘*A relevant and flexible career-focused curriculum, developed in close partnership with industry*’ (Case HEI, 2012-2017, p.7).

With such strong legitimisation in national reports and the case HEI’s strategy, it is not surprising that all interviewees highlighted business and industry as their stakeholder, with most of the interviewees stating that one of the most prominent ways business and industry engage with HEIs is as employers of students. The majority of interviewees also

identified employers as their most important stakeholder, stating “...*the main stakeholders are obviously the employers and the potential employers.*” (HoD9).

Saliency

In the literature, De Wit and Verhoeven (2000) conclude that business and industry stakeholders are the most influential, or most salient, of the external stakeholders. Chapleo and Simms (2010) consider business stakeholders as increasingly more important to HEIs due to funding received from them. Other researchers assert that business and industry are salient stakeholders if their role as employers of students is recognised by HEIs (Jongbloed et al., 2008). Jongbloed et al., (2008) conclude that ‘...*increased demand for retraining and retooling their employees, moves businesses and employers’ organisations toward the definitive stakeholder status.*’ (Jongbloed et al., 2008, p.310). Combining their role as funders and as employers leads to classifying business and industry stakeholders as definitive.

The findings show that while interviewees considered business and industry stakeholders important in general, they also ascribed all three of the saliency attributes (power, legitimacy and urgency) (Mitchell et al., 1997) to this stakeholder grouping:

“...*if you look at industry, we have to make the programme attractive to industry [legitimacy]...that company had power because there could be a significant long-term relationship with significant numbers of students in the long-term...and that allowed something to be done very quickly [urgency]*” (HoD13).

Proximity is discussed in the literature (Section 4.3.1) as a determinant of stakeholder saliency. For example, Driscoll and Starik (2004) conclude that ‘...*the greater the proximity, the greater the likelihood of the development of the stakeholder relationships...*’ (Driscoll and Starik, 2004, p.63). The researcher contends that proximity to the case HEI may have contributed to the identification of business and industry as definitive stakeholders. Business and industry, and in particular employer stakeholders, are mostly located in close proximity to the case HEI. For example, when asked where the employers were located interviewees highlighted that most employers are located in proximity to the HEI, in the HEI’s local region: “*Employers wise again, would be majority [located in the city].*” (HoD6).

In summary the literature and the findings are in agreement in the identification, general importance and salience of the business and industry stakeholder group. The identification of this stakeholder group includes their trait as employers and thus has been classified as definitive in parallel with the literature. Business and industry possess all three salience attributes of power, urgency, and legitimacy. This salience is strengthened by its proximity to the case HEI.

8.2.2 Prospective students

Identification

In the literature (Section 4.2.1.2), prospective students, both standard and non-standard, are recognised as important stakeholders in the HE sector (Pollard et al., 2013b; Chapleo and Simms, 2010) given that ‘...without students, there is no university...’ (Mainardes et al., 2010, p.80). The importance of students for funding HEIs was suggested in the literature by research conducted by Mainardes et al. (2010), relating to a Portuguese university. Respondents in Mainardes et al. (2010) research stated that ‘...students [are important], as they represent the main source of university financing...’ (Mainardes et al., 2010, p.80).

The interviewees in this study also recognise the importance of prospective students with a large number of interviewees ranking prospective students as important stakeholders, with one interviewee for example saying “...the students are the most important, because if you don’t get the student, you are going nowhere” (HoD9) and another recognising the students as the main source of finance for the case HEI, saying “...I mean I think our perspective students are a core stakeholder. Given where our funding lies.” (TM3).

Salience

The literature attributes legitimacy and urgency to prospective student as they are the future of the HEI (Avci et al., 2015; Mainardes et al., 2010). The attribute of power was not ascribed to prospective students as, according to Burrows (1999), coalitions with other stakeholders would be necessary for this stakeholder group to have power. Hence, prospective students are classified as expectant stakeholders in the literature.

The interviewees for this research ascribe all three salience attributes to this stakeholder. For example, HoD13, recognising the need for coalition (as described by Burrows (1999)), said prospective students have legitimacy, power and urgency; “... at the end of

the day our most important stakeholder in terms of bums on seats is the second level students [legitimacy]... So they have power ... if they could send us a signal that they could provide a 100 students if you did this, boy would we jump at that [urgency]” (HoD13). The attribute of power was noted as arising from the position that ‘funding follows the student’ (utilitarian power – power based on material or financial resources) (Etzioni, 1964 quoted in Mitchell et al. (1997) and Neville et al. (2011); Parent and Deephouse (2007)). One of the interviewees suggested that “...our funding model still is predicated around the funding follows the student and currently we don’t have the means to generate more income from non-exchequer [sources]...” (TM3). The dependence on funding from student enrolments gives this stakeholder group power according to the interviewees.

The findings suggest that prospective students also have power due to their close proximity to the case HEI. For example, one of the interviewees observed: “...a very interesting demographic, showing dots on a picture of [the region], showing where the bulk of our students were coming from, and we were strong [case HEI’s city]...” (HoD12). This finding, linking power to proximity in the case HEI, is in agreement with the literature (Neville et al., 2011).

In conclusion therefore, prospective students are identified as HEIs’ stakeholders by both the literature and the interviewees in this research. However, the literature identifies them as expectant stakeholders who have the attributes of legitimacy and urgency, but not the attribute of power. Interviewees have ascribed all three attributes of salience to them due to funding following the students and prospective students’ location in proximity to the case HEI. This elevates prospective students from expectant stakeholders in the literature to definitive stakeholders for the case HEI.

8.2.3 Government and their agencies

Identification

As highlighted in the literature (Section 4.2.1.2), governments have a strong hold on HEIs due to the dependence of the HEI on funding from these sources as well as regulatory and assessment responsibilities (Avci et al., 2015; Miller et al., 2014; Mainardes et al., 2010; Jongbloed et al., 2008). HEIs are compelled to follow certain practices imposed by government steering bodies if they wish to operate legally or receive government-controlled designations associated with legitimacy (McQuarrie et al., 2013). This has led

researchers such as Jongbloed et al. (2008) and Miller et al. (2014) to consider government and their agencies among the most influential stakeholders.

In this study most of the interviewees included government and their agencies as stakeholders. They included government steering bodies such as regulators and policy makers as well as funders, and government as employers. *“They are [important] from a funding point of view but in particular ... the two bodies I suppose that would be looking over our shoulders in terms of steerage...”* (TM4). Interviewees considered government agencies and departments important because of the requirement for their courses and graduates to be registered and regulated by a government agency, or based on receiving direct funding allocation from them. For example:

“In terms of social care the most important external stakeholder would be Coru [Ireland’s multi-profession health regulator (from the Irish word ‘cóir’ meaning fair)] ... for registration of social care workers. [They] will register our students in future.” (HoD10).

“...the funding agencies are very important because they give us money ...” (HoD9).

Therefore, the interviewees’ identification of government and their agencies as influencers of behaviour, through funding and regulation, aligns with the literature in the identification of government and their agencies as stakeholders.

Saliency

The literature contends that the influence of government and their agencies arises from the dependence of the HEI on funding from these governmental sources (Avci et al., 2015; Miller et al., 2014; Jongbloed et al., 2008) (utilitarian and coercive power) and their legislative function (legitimacy and urgency) (McQuarrie et al., 2013; Mainardes et al., 2010). Thus in the literature government and their agencies are definitive stakeholders for HEIs, as they have all three saliency attributes power, legitimacy and urgency (Miller et al., 2014). However, few interviewees identified government and their agencies as being their most important stakeholders. The findings show that at most two attributes, power and legitimacy, were attributed to government and their agencies, classifying them as expectant stakeholders (some interviewees ascribed legitimacy only to them, classifying them as latent stakeholders). This contrasts with the literature, which classifies them as definitive stakeholders.

The researcher explored the role and position of the interviewees in the management structure of the HEI as one explanation for this difference. The literature recognises that the various management levels within the HEI may differ in their perspective on stakeholder salience (Jongbloed et al., 2008). Mainardes et al. (2010) concluded that “...different hierarchical levels identified practically the same stakeholders even though both their relevance and importance varied across actors in different hierarchical levels.” (Mainardes et al., 2010, p.82). For this research, members of the top management team and middle management team (heads of department) were interviewed (see Appendix A). However, regardless of their position in the management hierarchy there was consistency of perspective among interviewees that government and their agencies possess at most two salience attributes. Thus management level can be discounted as an explanation for the difference in salience.

Other explanations of the contrast between the literature and findings in relation to the salience of government and their agencies, may lie in the proximate/distal positioning of the stakeholder group and the long term nature of their demands. Most government agencies identified by the interviewees are not located in the case HEI’s region; instead “...the government agencies would be more national” (HoD4), thus diminishing their visibility from the perspective of the interviewees. This distal location is coupled with the long-term timescale that demands placed by government create for the interviewees. As identified in the literature as part of the general discussion on stakeholder salience (Section 4.3.1), managers tend to prioritise short-term demands so that long-term timescales lack urgency and hence diminish the salience of stakeholders (Driscoll and Starik, 2004). Applying the findings of the Driscoll and Starik (2004) study to this research implies that the longer term timescale of government demands diminishes their salience.

In summary, the identification of government and their agencies as stakeholders for the case HEI aligns with the identification of this stakeholder in the literature as funders and regulators. However, the literature classifies government and their agencies as definitive stakeholders whilst also recognising that different management levels may perceive them differently. This research finds that government and their agencies have not been ascribed the three attributes of salience by any of the interviewees regardless of management level. At best, government are classified as expectant by the interviewees in this research, with most interviewees contending they have legitimate claims on the case HEI (classifying

them as latent) and other interviewees ascribing them legitimacy and power (classifying them as dominant, expectant stakeholders who could act on claims they make on the case HEI if they choose to). The contrast between the literature and the findings of this study regarding the salience of government and their agencies may be explained by two factors. First, the distal positioning of government and their agencies relative to the HEI, and second, the long-term nature of the demands on the HEI from this stakeholder group.

8.2.4 Other HEIs

Identification

The literature, section 4.2.1.2, shows that Mainardes et al. (2013) found ‘...*disagreement resulted...*’ (p.445) in identifying other HEIs as stakeholders. However, some researchers propose that other HEIs are stakeholders in terms of benchmarking, collaboration, peer networking, sharing of best practice and competition (Hazelkorn, 2007; Keeling, 2006; Miclea, 2003; Gibbons, 2001).

Only eleven interviewees in this research identified other HEIs as stakeholders. Similar to the literature, interviewee opinions regarding other HEIs as stakeholders, are not homogeneous in this research. Some interviewees noted proximate HEIs as “...*people that we work with. People like [the neighbouring HEI] are a big stakeholder here*” (TM3). Others described benchmarking themselves against European and international HEIs (TM1, TM2, TM3 and TM4). Whilst one interviewee highlighted learning from other HEIs “...*that’s how you learn ...[from] how the rest of the world does things...*” (HoD1).

Salience

The literature (Section 4.4.1) contends that latent stakeholders have infrequent interactions or what Rawlins (2006) terms ‘diffused linkages’ with the primary organisation. In this research, only one interviewee considered other HEIs important to his department, and stated that “...*in the long term you need to have a good collaborator internationally because all of these things are peer reviewed.*” (HoD9). This low level of recognition of other HEIs as important stakeholders is supported by the view of the majority of the interviewees who more specifically have ascribed only one attribute, legitimacy, to other HEIs, classifying them as latent, discretionary stakeholders for the

case HEI (see Section 7.2.2.1). An explanation for this may be that most of the other HEIs stakeholder grouping are not located in close proximity to the case HEI and also that work with these HEIs is mainly on long-term timescales. As discussed in the previous section (8.2.4) distance from the case HEI as well as long term timescales diminishes stakeholder salience. The distance from the case HEI of other HEIs and the long-term timescales of engagement projects with these stakeholders suggests that neither power (from proximity) nor urgency (from short-termism) may be ascribed to this stakeholder group, further confirming their diminished salience.

In summary, the findings suggest some agreement with the literature, in that a number of the interviewees in the case HEI recognise other HEIs as their stakeholders in areas such as collaborations, benchmarking and sharing of best practice. The salience of other HEIs is identified as low; they are classified as latent stakeholders, and this concurs with the literature.

8.2.5 Professional bodies

Identification

In the literature (section 4.2.1.2) professional bodies are identified as stakeholders for HEIs because students strive to become part of their networks and staff are associated with them (Bjorkquist, 2010; Christopher, 2010; Jongbloed et al., 2008; De Wit and Verhoeven, 2000). Aligning HE courses with the standards of professional bodies is important for the HEI, with many syllabi determined by, or subject to, the approval of professional bodies (Norton, 2012). Jongbloed et al. (2008) notes the importance of professional bodies to some disciplines highlighting ‘... *fields like law medicine, and engineering, where academics are in continuous dialogue with professional associations to uphold the relevance and legitimacy of their field.*’ (Jongbloed et al., 2008, p.311). Professional bodies are therefore considered to be important stakeholders on whom the HEI depends.

In parallel with the literature, the case HEI’s engagement strategy identifies a wide range of professional bodies and states ‘...*[the case HEI] interacts with a wide range of accrediting bodies, and relationships with theses bodies are vital for [the case HEI’s] continued success.*’ (Case HEI, 2017, p.9). The interviewees also identified many professional bodies in the fields of accounting, human resource management, engineering, chemistry and others, depending on the academic department to which the

interviewees belonged (such as HoD2, HoD12, HoD13, HoD14). For example, one interviewee stated: *“So, you have the professional accountancy bodies... And then on one of our degrees and masters programmes, they are professionally accredited by CIPD, the professional body for HR professionals worldwide.”* (HoD6).

The identification of a wide variety of professional bodies, both in the case HEI’s documentation and in the interviewee comments, supports previous literature, which also finds a wide variety of professional bodies engaging with HEIs. Some interviewees in this research did report more professional body engagement than others, depending on the discipline field.

Salience

According to the literature (section 4.2.1.2 and 4.3.2), professional bodies have legitimacy and power, classifying them as expectant stakeholders (Jongbloed et al., 2008). They have legitimacy, as discussed above, as HEIs’ staff are in constant dialogue with their own professional associations. Professional bodies have power as they must accredit HEIs’ courses in order to legitimise the HEI’s offerings (Martin and Sauvageot, 2011; Mainardes et al., 2010)

In the findings (section 7.2.1.5), some interviewees’ comments are similar to the literature (Martin and Sauvageot, 2011; Mainardes et al., 2010; Jongbloed et al., 2008) as they stated that professional bodies have legitimacy and power and can thus be classified as expectant stakeholders. *“Well what you find is that things like the professional bodies have a big influence [legitimacy] ... where our students need to have professional qualifications then the power does lie with those externally [power].”* (TM2)

Other interviewees considered professional bodies generally unimportant and understood professional bodies to have the attribute of legitimacy only making them latent stakeholders. For example, one interviewee considered dealing with professional bodies to be at her discretion. For this interviewee the stakeholder group had legitimacy as the HEI is linked to the professional bodies: *“...we were linked to the professional bodies ...but it won’t be driven by it”* (HoD3). Without the attribute of power, this does not agree with the literature. Also, unlike the literature, the majority of interviewees considered that professional bodies possess all three salience attributes, making them definitive stakeholders. For example, one interviewee considered that Engineers Ireland were definitive stakeholders for the case HEI’s engineering departments: *“...the accreditation*

of programmes by Engineers Ireland means an awful lot to our engineers [legitimacy]. So, they're a stakeholder with a lot of clout [power]. So, we will jump when they come calling [urgency]..." (HoD1). Therefore unlike the literature, which concludes that professional bodies are expectant, the majority of interviewees in this research ascribe three salience attributes to professional bodies (making them definitive stakeholders).

The explanation for classifying professional bodies as definitive stakeholders is only partially due to the proximity of local branches of professional bodies. Most professional bodies are head quartered distally from the case HEI, either in another Irish city or further afield. Neither is definitive status due to short-term, immediate demands of professional bodies (as might be included in the urgency attribute, defined by Mitchell et al. (1997) as including the time sensitivity of claims). Instead, it may be because professional bodies possess all three forms of power when dealing with specific departments within the case HEI: normative (based on symbolic resources such as prestige), coercive (based on restraint from operating in a professional area) and utilitarian (based on physical resources such as funding and student intake) (Parent and Deephouse, 2007). As discussed in chapter 4 (Section 4.3.1), power is considered by some researchers to be the most salient attribute (Neville et al., 2011; Parent and Deephouse, 2007; Driscoll and Starik, 2004). For HEIs' departments that need professional bodies to show prestige, to gain accreditation and to obtain resources (including students) these three sources of power, held with urgency and legitimacy, elevate professional bodies to the most salient position, making them definitive stakeholders.

In summary, the literature classified professional bodies as expectant stakeholders, possessing two attributes. In the findings, while some interviewees agreed with this classification, some interviewees considered professional bodies to be latent, but a larger number of interviewees considered them to be definitive stakeholders. This definitive status may be explained by the possession of the three types of power; normative, coercive and utilitarian, in addition to legitimacy and urgency. Therefore in aggregate, professional bodies are classified as definitive stakeholders for the case HEI.

8.2.6 Communities

Identification

Previous research (section 4.2.1.2) proposes that HEIs have a range of moral, political and legal obligations, for example to taxpayers, to the wider public, to students and staff,

and to local stakeholders (Hildebrand and McDavid, 2011; Mulvihill et al., 2011b; Liefner, 2003; Brignall and Modell, 2000). Such social obligations or responsibilities require the organisation to consider the good of the wider community, local and global, within which they function in terms of the economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic impact of their way of conducting business (Jongbloed et al., 2008).

In this study, an analysis of the case HEI's strategy shows that its stated mission specifically refers to '*...benefit of the broader society in the region and beyond*' (p.4) while the strategic plan commits to '*...its role within the region and nationally*' (Case HEI, 2012-2017, p.5). Interviewees too recognise the HEIs social contract with their communities and comment on being part of an ecosystem in which the good of the wider community is also considered: "*... it is an ecosystem; everybody has a role, everybody feeds off of everyone else, in a positive way, and puts something back in again. You know, if you took one element out of the picture we're the less for it...*" (HoD12).

Saliency

In the literature, Mitchell et al. (1997) suggest that a social obligation to communities ensures legitimacy and the community's position as discretionary stakeholders (see section 4.4.1). Communities have no power or urgency to influence the HEI in normal conditions. As a latent stakeholder group with the attribute of legitimacy only, engagement with communities is at the discretion of an institution.

In this research, the strategic plan and objectives of the case HEI values communities (see references to mission and strategic plan in preceding section). The specific inclusion in the strategic plan of communities as the case HEI's stakeholders, indicates that the discretion described by Mitchell et al. (1997) in recognising communities as stakeholders is removed from interviewees. However, in the interviews (section 7.2.1.6) only one third of respondents identified communities as stakeholders, with those that did so recognising "*...we have an obligation to service them [communities]*" (HoD8) and communities are "*...part of our broader mission...*" (TM4). Additionally, none of the interviewees ranked communities as their most important stakeholder group. Instead, one interviewee suggested an ecosystem with communities as an element: "*...we are part of that community based contract with the outside world...*" (HoD12). The low-level of importance attributed to communities is further suggested by the lack of investment of resources by the case HEI, rather, the case HEI's staff, on a voluntary basis, undertake

engagement with this stakeholder grouping. One interviewee suggested that: “...*those stakeholders in the community may not be a very financially lucrative stakeholder, but we have obligation to service them*” (HoD8).

The long-term nature of relationships with communities and the lack of a clear distinction of communities from other stakeholders (i.e. communities might also include among the group; business & industry, alumni, government development agencies, other HEIs’ employees, prospective students etc.) may explain why interviewees have not prioritised them as a distinct stakeholder group.

In summary, both the literature and this research recognise communities as stakeholders for HEIs. Recognition by the interviewees of communities as part of the case HEIs ecosystem, their inclusion in the case HEIs strategy, and the work by staff with communities, aligns with the social contract concept discussed in the literature. Recognising the social need to engage with communities, the literature ascribes this stakeholder legitimacy. Stakeholders with the attribute legitimacy only have a low level of salience and so communities are classified as latent stakeholders. Interviewees in this research also ascribe a low level of salience to communities. Therefore, agreement between the literature and the findings in identifying communities as stakeholders and classifying them as latent is found.

8.2.7 Alumni

Identification

The literature (section 4.2.1.2) shows that alumni have many roles in HEIs; as brand ambassadors for the HEI (Nguyen et al., 2012), in evaluation of the quality of the academic process (Leisyte et al., 2013), in providing finance (Cranfield University, 2015), mentoring, and work opportunities for current students (Performance Compact: N.U.I.G., 2014). In return, the HEI offers recruitment and career services to alumni (Mora et al., 2010).

In this study, three interviewees identified alumni as stakeholders of the case HEI, one interviewee proposing a “...*continuum of engagement with a learner as an alumnus, as an employee, as a mentor, so there is what we consider to be a lifecycle of engagement with them. It is not that they are separate to the Institute we see them as partners with the institution in an ongoing way.*” (TM1). Interviewees also noted the reciprocal types of

engagement, discussing “...*helping graduates to position themselves for employment ...supporting things like graduate recruitment*” (HoD3) and alumni helping the case HEI “...*link industry with our student cohort*” (HoD3). This type of reciprocal engagement is also found in the literature, as discussed above.

Saliency

The literature (section 4.3.2) states that legitimacy gives stakeholders a low level of saliency (Mitchell et al., 1997), classifying them as latent stakeholders. Research conducted by Mainardes et al. (2010), proposes a ranking of stakeholders based on their saliency. This ranking placed the alumni stakeholder grouping near the bottom of the ranking in terms of its importance to HEIs.

In this research, similar to the literature, legitimacy was the only attribute ascribed to alumni by the interviewees classifying this group as latent stakeholders. A review of the case HEI’s strategic documents shows that alumni were not mentioned in its engagement strategy. Neither did any of the interviewees note alumni as the most important stakeholders. This lack of identification indicates that alumni are low in importance to the case HEI. Therefore, both the literature and the findings are in agreement and classify alumni as latent stakeholders.

As with communities, the long-term nature of relationships with alumni and the lack of a clear distinction from other stakeholders (as noted in section 8.2.6 above) may explain why interviewees have not prioritised this group.

In summary, a two way relationship with alumni was identified by the interviewees within which alumni provide benefits for the case HEI and the case HEI provide benefits to alumni. Despite these shared benefits, both the literature and these findings agree that alumni have a low level of saliency for HEIs, and are therefore latent stakeholders.

8.2.8 Stakeholder saliency: Literature versus findings

As section 8.2.1 to 8.2.7 show, the case HEI’s external stakeholders suggested by the interviewees are the same as those identified in the literature. Some differences have been noted between the saliency attributed to these stakeholder groups by interviewees and that ascribed by the literature. These differences are summarised in Figure 8.2 and discussed in the next section.

Section	HEI Stakeholder	Stakeholder Classification	
		<u>Literature</u>	<u>Findings</u>
8.2.1	Business and industry	Definitive	Definitive
8.2.2	Prospective students	Expectant	Definitive
8.2.3	Government and their agencies	Definitive	Expectant
8.2.4	Other HEIs	Latent	Latent
8.2.5	Professional bodies	Expectant	Definitive
8.2.6	Communities	Latent	Latent
8.2.7	Alumni	Latent	Latent

Figure 8.2: Stakeholder salience: Comparing literature and findings

(Source: Researcher)

The literature proposes that business and industry are definitive stakeholders. This research agrees with this classification. Both the literature and the findings of this research consider prospective students as important however, the interviewees in this research classify them as definitive stakeholders while the literature classifies them as expectant stakeholders. The researcher proposed that this may be explained by the dependence of the case HEI on funding from students and the proximity to the case HEI of this stakeholder group.

The literature posits that government and their agencies are among the most influential stakeholders due to the dependence of the HEI on funding (Jongbloed et al., 2008), and classifies them as definitive, possessing all three salience attributes. However, in this study the attribute of urgency was not ascribed to government and their agencies, hence, this grouping is considered expectant by the interviewees. The researcher suggests that this may be due to the distal location of government and their agencies and the long-term nature of their demands on the case HEI.

In relation to other HEIs, they are recognised in the literature as latent stakeholders. In this study, legitimacy was the only attribute ascribed to other HEIs, also classifying them

as latent stakeholders. The researcher suggests that the distal location of other HEIs is an influencing factor, determining a lower level of salience for this stakeholder group.

Professional bodies are significant stakeholders for many HEIs and in terms of salience are classified as expectant in the literature. The findings of this study show that a large group of interviewees, who engage directly with professional bodies, ascribe all three attributes of salience to professional bodies, which classifies them as definitive stakeholders. The researcher posits that for professional bodies, having the three sources of power; normative, utilitarian and coercive, has contributed to their classification as definitive stakeholders for case HEI departments that engage with them directly.

Both the literature and the interviewees in this research identify communities and alumni as stakeholders, but in terms of salience, only the attribute of legitimacy is ascribed to these groupings, classifying them as latent. Two possible explanations for this low level of salience are suggested by the researcher. Firstly, the lack of differentiation of these groups and the resulting overlap with other stakeholder groupings, and secondly, the long-term nature of their engagement with the case HEI.

In conclusion, the level of salience ascribed to stakeholders by interviewees aligns with the literature for some stakeholders and differs for others. The researcher proposes differences arise due to proximity, levels of power, long term time lines and indistinct groupings. The next section will discuss legitimacy from stakeholders for the case HEI and influences on the case HEI in selecting stakeholders.

8.2.9 Other influences on stakeholder salience

The previous sections summarise the legitimacy of stakeholders and their salience as revealed in the literature and, from the findings of this study, highlighting differences arising. The following paragraphs discuss other influences on stakeholder salience including legitimacy, proximate or distal factors, the institutional environment, and social and market pressures.

8.2.9.1 Legitimacy

As outlined above (section 8.2), the research findings and the literature both legitimise a broad range of stakeholders for HEIs, confirming Lee's (2011) proposition that

institutions provide legitimacy to stakeholders. In turn, the theoretical model for this study (see Figure 8.3) proposes that engaging extensively with the most salient stakeholders legitimises the case HEI by giving them value and relevance (Verbeke and Tung, 2012). For example, it is important for the case HEI to meet the needs of their most salient stakeholders, business and industry and especially local employers, as these stakeholders can legitimise the case HEI for prospective students, as outlined by one interviewee who stated “...one of the other factors in ensuring that we have good students coming in is our engagement with our industry, engagement with the world of work let’s say.” (TM3). The case HEI also gains legitimacy from another salient stakeholder group, prospective students, because if students select the case HEI for their studies, “...funding follows the students...” (TM3). Indeed, ascribing such a high level of salience to prospective students may have resulted from the need to future proof the case HEI (as funding is allocated from government based on student numbers). This is also the case with the definitive stakeholder group, professional bodies, because if “...programmes are accredited by Engineers Ireland ... the companies are happy then to hire ...” (HoD8), so students will continue to find the case HEI an attractive proposition. For the expectant stakeholder group, government and their agencies, interviewees contend that “...a lot of our engagement with the HEA, and the government, is demonstrating to them that we are meeting the needs of enterprise and prospective students.”(TM4). The case HEI needs to gain legitimacy from engaging with these more salient stakeholders in order to ensure relevance and thus future survival. The proposition of the theoretical model developed in Chapter 5 (see Figure 8.3 below), that institutions influence stakeholders and the more salient stakeholders influence institutions is therefore confirmed.

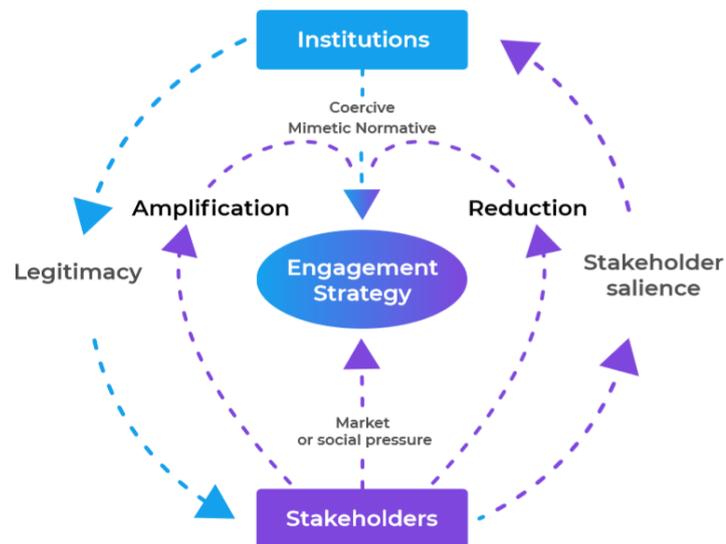


Figure 8.3: A model of the configuration of external influences on HEI engagement
 (Source: Adapted from Lee (2011))

8.2.9.2 Proximate or distal factors

As noted in Chapter 4 (Section 4.3.1) stakeholder proximity can also influence the salience of a stakeholder. Driscoll and Starik (2004) define proximity as ‘...*spatial nearness...*’ and conclude that ‘...*the greater the proximity, the greater the likelihood of the development of the stakeholder relationships...*’ (Driscoll and Starik, 2004, p.63).

This research concurs with the literature in reporting proximity as a strong influence on stakeholder salience. The findings indicate that business and industry, prospective students and professional bodies are the most definitive stakeholders. These stakeholder groups are located in close proximity to the case HEI and consequently interviewees consider that their needs must be addressed. For example, interviewees observed that prospective students are sourced mainly from the case HEIs city: “...*a very interesting demographic, showing dots on a picture of [the region], showing where the bulk of our students were coming from, and we were strong [HEI’s city]...*” (HoD12). Another interviewee when discussing stakeholder salience said local or proximate business needs are important to him because “...*if you have local industry keyed into you’re thinking and your philosophy, I think that is more powerful.*” (HoD14). The classification of the definitive stakeholder group, professional bodies, is only partially supported by proximity but is also influenced by other factors as discussed above (section 8.2.5).

Equally, lower levels of salience ascribed to some stakeholders by the interviewees may differ from the literature due to the distal location of stakeholders. For example, government and their agencies have only been ascribed the attributes of power and legitimacy by the interviewees, classifying them as expectant stakeholders in juxtaposition with the literature which identifies them as definitive stakeholders. One interviewee stated that engaging with government is not something he does and is for another management level within the case HEI and outside his sphere of interest. He said:

“I don’t think this is the kind of thing [influence of government policy] that would be on their radar at this level” (HoD11).

Awareness of engagement activity in the case HEI but at a different level from the interviewee indicates that government and their agencies are on the periphery of the interviewees priorities and therefore distal from them. This is also supported by the physical location of government and their agencies which interviewees describe as “... *more national*” (HoD4).

Overall, the findings suggest that proximity to the case HEI has influenced stakeholder salience. Proximity has supported the classification of definitive stakeholders who are located close to the case HEI. Lack of proximity has decreased the level of perceived salience that the case HEI’s stakeholders have. For example, it provides an explanation why government and their agencies are classified as expectant stakeholders for the case HEI. The explanation lies in the interviewees’ perception of government remoteness from the interviewee in terms of role and physical distal location, resulting in government and their agencies being classified as definitive in the literature and expectant in this research.

8.2.9.3 Institutional environment

This section considers macro influences on stakeholder salience, comprising coercive, mimetic, and normative influences, and micro influences comprising social and market pressures. It begins by briefly outlining findings from previous literature before discussing findings from this study on the influences on stakeholder salience.

Immergut (1998) contends that institutions provide the context that help to understand why actors make the choices they do. NIS studies, by ignoring the influence of actors, look to the macro factors such as policy, cultural norms, and routines as the main aspects shaping organisational behaviour (Burns, 2000). Since the behaviour of organisations is

to a large extent shaped by their institutional environments, it is natural to pay attention to the concerns that may be identified at a national/system level and that affect behaviour, such as rules, regulations, quality assessment procedures, accountability standards and incentive schemes (Jongbloed et al., 2008). Conversely, stakeholder influences are represented through social and market pressures. Organisations can change their social behaviour in response to the pressure of salient stakeholder groups (Lee, 2011) who can moderate the isomorphic pressures (Heugens and Lander, 2009). Lee (2011) posits that the micro concerns of salient stakeholders have the strongest influence on engagement (Lee, 2011).

The findings of this study also suggest that the level of salience ascribed to stakeholders is influenced by their institutional environment. The more environmental influences that are considered by the case HEI, the higher the level of salience that is ascribed to the stakeholder group. For example, in the findings business and industry are considered definitive stakeholders, the most salient classification, and they are influenced by both their macro environment and the social and market pressures used by stakeholders. The next paragraphs first discuss the case HEI's macro influences on stakeholder salience. It then discusses the influence of micro social and market pressures on stakeholder groups.

Macro influences

The findings show that the case HEI, and the resulting salience ascribed to stakeholders, is influenced by macro factors described in the literature as policy, culture and norms (Dougherty and Hong, 2006; Barringer and Harrison, 2000). As outlined in chapter 4 (section 4.5), macro environmental influences manifest themselves in new institutional sociology (NIS) and three forms of isomorphic pressures: coercive, normative and mimetic (de la luz Fernández-Alles and Valle-Cabrera, 2006). Coercive isomorphism proposes that external bodies exert formal and informal force on an organisation to adopt specific procedures or policies (Moll et al., 2006a). Mimetic isomorphism refers to the processes of imitation organisations take to become similar to other organisations in their environments (Di Maggio and Powell quoted in Yang and Hyland (2012)). Normative isomorphism suggests that legitimacy and acceptance are achieved through conformity to usual or expected behaviour i.e. the norm (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991).

In this research, coercion via government legislation, for example, has played a significant role in the case HEI recognising the importance of business and industry stakeholders. In

Ireland the Regional Technical Colleges Act provides an opening position where the needs of local business and industry stakeholders, in terms of the training requirements for their staff, is emphasised. This position is reinforced by more recent HEA publications such as the *Financial Review of the Institutes of Technology*, published by the Higher Education Authority (2016a), wherein they state ‘*The IoT role in meeting the needs of local industry is critical ...*’ (Higher Education Authority, 2016a, p.7). Therefore, coercive isomorphism via government legislation contributed to interviewees identifying business and industry as definitive stakeholders.

Coercion to engage with definitive stakeholders (business and industry, prospective students and professional bodies) is further evident in the interview findings as shown by one interviewee who confirms coercion by government and their agencies to engage business and industry and prospective students, stating:

“...in particular the government ... a lot of our engagement with the HEA and the government is demonstrating to them that we are meeting the needs of enterprise and prospective students.” (TM4).

The interviewees’ perceived benefit of engaging with business and industry stakeholders may also have contributed to mimetic isomorphism. This is because engaging with business and industry stakeholders has brought financial rewards for many HEIs “*The funding is going to come, mainly, 10% from industry...*” (HoD9). Indirectly financial benefits accrue from engaging with business and industry as the case HEI designs courses for them and upskills their staff (See section 7.3.2.2). Benefits for students also accrue from engaging with business in terms of the opportunities discussed in graduate formation (section 7.3.2.1). Such benefits are considered favourable for the case HEI. Consequently, they mimic best practice from other HEIs and engage with business and industry stakeholders in order to accrue similar benefits.

Normative forces also influence the legitimisation of business and industry, with organisations aiming to appease these pressures out of self-interest (Lee, 2011). According to DiMaggio and Powell (1991), two aspects of normative professionalisation are important sources of isomorphism. One relates to the formal education and legitimisation of education provided by HEI specialists (including universities and professional training institutions), the second, concerns the growth and elaboration of professional networks. The interviewees noted that they have been educated by similar

HEIs and as a result they consider engaging with business and industry stakeholders to be part of their normal activity. The findings from this study show that interviewees are involved in networks with other HEIs, professional bodies and research communities (See section 7.3.2.5.1). Therefore, it is suggested that normative pressures contributed to interviewees legitimising business as salient stakeholders.

In terms of another definitive stakeholder grouping, prospective students, coercive pressure to broaden access for all prospective students is found in government policy documents such as *The National Action Plan for Equity of Access* which renews government commitment to ‘...*broadening participation in higher education from groups and communities who have been under-represented up to now – in particular, those living with social disadvantage, mature students, people with disabilities and Irish Travellers.*’ (Higher Education Authority, 2015a). The policy which was formulated from this access plan has directed, and as a result, coerced HEIs so that ‘*The access mission must be fully integrated across all faculties and areas of work in institutions ...*’ (Higher Education Authority, 2015a). The interviewees in this study also identified mimetic pressure when considering engaging with prospective students. They discussed methods of engaging that they consider usual or standard and that are undertaken by other HEIs. For example, one interviewee stated “... *we are in a competitive scenario, if Waterford decides to do something, we’d think what the hell are they doing and why aren’t we doing it.*” (HoD14). The uncertain environment surrounding how a prospective student chooses a HE provider has led the interviewees to mimic behaviour in other HEIs and as a result has most likely elevated it to ‘norm’ status for the staff within the case HEI. Elevating such engagement to the norm indicates normative isomorphism.

Regarding professional bodies, also classified as definitive in terms of salience, the three isomorphic pressures were also highlighted in the research findings. The interviewees considered that they were being coerced to recognise and engage with professional bodies as stakeholders because of the need to attain legitimacy for the case HEI from professional accreditation. Mimetic practices are also evident in engagements with professional bodies as one interviewee noted getting accreditation because the neighbouring HEI had it, stating “...*we didn’t have that CIPD [Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development] accreditation until 2012, and we have seen our numbers increased, they’ve doubled really, in HR since then, because of getting the professional accreditation. [Our nearest neighbour] are doing a masters and Higher Diploma as well, which are CIPD*

accredited” (HoD6). In addition, many of the case HEI’s staff members belong to these professional bodies. Membership of such bodies heightens the recognition of professional bodies and makes engaging with them the norm for the case HEI. Elevation to normal status indicates normative isomorphism. Therefore, engaging with definitive stakeholders has been influenced by all three isomorphic pressures; coercion, mimetic, and normative. The findings suggest that isomorphic pressures appear to have a more limited influence on less salient stakeholders. For example, in relation to the expectant stakeholder grouping, government and their agencies, coercive and normative isomorphic pressures were noted as significant in the findings. Coercive pressures emanate from this stakeholder group as it has power, through the funding that it provides and the regulation that it enacts. The findings show that some interviewees recognised the coercive influences of government and their agencies. Normative influences were evident as interviewees work with government agencies on policy and standard settings. The interviewees considered this work as a normal undertaking for them and named numerous government agencies they are involved with. For example. *“I would work with them on HEA committees, in relation to skills initiatives and so on”* (HoD14), and *“We would have four staff on NSAI, National Standards Authority of Ireland. They would have a number of committees responsible for different design codes and standards. We would have a number of staff on that. I think one of our staff is a chair of a committee”* (HoD5). No mimetic influences were evident when discussing government and their agencies as stakeholders.

For the least salient, latent stakeholder groups, the same pressure from macro institutional influences is identifiable from government policy through legislation. For example, coercion to legitimise other HEIs as stakeholders is provided by the Irish government who require institutions to engage with each other. The Higher Education Authority, the government’s HE management agency (see Chapter 2, Section 2.5.2.2), stated that:

‘All higher education institutions will actively participate in regional clusters. Collaborative arrangements between institutes and universities that enhance the quality and effectiveness of their activities are expected...The clusters will also facilitate extensive engagement with other education providers at all levels, as well as with enterprise, business and community stakeholders.’ (Higher Education Authority, 2012)

The interview findings also noted that government research agencies are coercing HEIs to engage with each other as they increasingly favour funding research proposals that involve more than one HEI. For example, one interviewee stated: *“If you don’t have funding it becomes café shop talk and a philosophical talk. So it builds your ability to attract funding by building into strong consortia.”* (TM2). This interviewee also discussed government policy coercing them to change their strategy to ensure funding. He stated: *“So there is a bit of waiting around to see nationally what new initiatives will be opened out. We can plan and be strategic but we also have to be reactive because if someone opens up a new programme, and there is a lot of money in it, but they require you to do A, B, C and D, then you may have to amend your things to meet the A, B, C and D.”* (TM2). Overall, interviewees believe that government funding agencies have a strong coercive influence on their research collaboration, stating *“We are collaborating, if you take into consideration the research, well then you have to talk about the funding agencies.”* (HoD9). Indeed, such joint research is not new and collaborating with academics in other HEIs has become normative in many disciplines. This is evidenced by the commitments made by many HEIs in their performance compacts. Under government enforced clustering requirements interviewees highlight the need to continue for example, *‘...supporting the existing research centres in developing joint research projects...’* (Performance Compact: W.I.T., 2014) and *‘...further development of existing research collaborations...’* (Performance Compact: D.C.U., 2014).

In addition to the coercive influence of government legislation that interviewees noted as influencing engagement with other HEIs, another influence on this stakeholder group is the normative professional networks of academic staff who deliver joint programmes across HEIs, act as external examiners, and members of review panels and national forum. Interviewees, for example, commented: *“I would have contacts in the maths departments across Ireland really”* (HoD1) and *“Most of the other ITs [Institutes of Technology] I would know the heads”* (HoD14). This type of activity is carried out across all HEIs and through their own professional networks or participation in panels and forums. As a result, HEI staff consider engagement with other HEIs as the norm. Mimetic influences were also evident when discussing other HEIs as stakeholders, as one interviewee stated *“...hands on experience of what is happening elsewhere. That is what influences us all”* (HoD13). Therefore, all three isomorphic influences, coercive, normative and mimetic, were identified by interviewees in identifying other HEIs as stakeholders.

Isomorphic macro influences are also evident in engagements with community stakeholders. Coercive influences on recognising communities as stakeholders, according to the interviewees, derives from government legislation (regulatory coercion), as well as the moral imperative to be accountable to the tax payer. This moral imperative was termed social coercion in chapter 4 (Section 4.5.1.3). Regulatory coercion via national policy is found in documents reviewed for this research. The national objectives in the *National Strategy for HE to 2030* states: ‘*Higher education should be regionally and community-engaged*’ (Higher Education Authority, 2012; Hunt, 2011), thus coercing HEIs to engage with communities. The interviewees also recognise that volunteering in a host of community groups is the institutional norm or logic. For example, interviewees said: “...we have a whole host of staff, who engage in community activity, between the GAA [*Gaelic Athletic Association*], between charity bodies, local enterprise initiatives” (HoD4) and “...most of the staff are parents with young children, so there’s a lot of engagement with the community through that” (HoD5). The high levels of volunteering work and the willingness of staff to engage with communities, indicate that community engagement is influenced by normative isomorphism, that the case HEI considers such engagement as standard. There is no evidence in this research of community engagement being influenced by mimetic behaviour. Therefore, HEI engagement with communities engagement is influenced by macro institutional pressures that are coercive (regulatory and social) and normative.

Alumni are also latent stakeholders and isomorphic pressures on the case HEI to engage with this group have also been identified in this research. Coercion arises from the government in reports such as *Towards performance evaluation framework* (Higher Education Authority, 2013), which discuss the ranking of HEIs based on the achievements its alumni, and the *National strategy for higher education*, which advocates for the development of ‘...educated in Ireland networks of alumni’ (Hunt, 2011, p.85). The case HEI’s engagement strategy suggests coercing the interviewees into engaging with alumni stakeholders and announces, as one of the case HEI’s aims, a desire to ‘*Support engagement with ... alumni... through the effective use of all existing structures in [the case HEI].*’ (Case HEI, 2017, p.10). Interviewees consider engaging with alumni as the norm. One interviewee stated “...It is not that they [*alumni*] are separate to the Institute, we see them as partners with the institution in an ongoing way.” (TM1). No

mimetic pressures from alumni were highlighted by the interviewees as influencing the case HEI.

In conclusion, the findings show that isomorphic influences have contributed to the identification of stakeholders for the case HEI.

Social and market pressures on stakeholder identification and salience

As discussed in Chapter 5 (section 5.3), intense competition in the market (market pressures) makes organisations more sensitive to stakeholder concerns, as they search for new ways to differentiate themselves from competitors (King, 2008). Social pressures arise from renewed political focus on localism and civic society, for corporate responsibility and transparency, and technological advances in social networking and knowledge mobilisation (Mulvihill et al., 2011e). The literature concludes that stakeholders can use both market and social pressures to influence the focal organisation (Lee and Lounsbury, 2015; McConville and Hyndman, 2015).

This research also concludes that both market and social pressures influence the identification and salience of stakeholders. The study finds that the identification of the most salient stakeholders is amplified or reduced in the case HEI by deploying social and market mechanisms. For example, the importance of business and industry stakeholder groups, as influenced by the macro institutional environment, is amplified by social and market pressures exerted on the case HEI. This is evidenced by the number of interviewees who discussed the importance of meeting the concerns of local businesses' for training requirements, graduate recruitment, and research projects that employers need help with. One interviewee noted:

“Recently the paint company came to us with regard to contamination and paint and we were able to help with that...” (HoD2)

Many interviewees discussed specific employer requirements for different types of specialist graduates, such as chemical engineers with bioprocessing skills, or computing graduates with written skills. By helping local business with such needs, the case HEI is legitimising itself in the eyes of the market and society and amplifying the isomorphic pressures to engage with these salient stakeholders.

Interviewees also highlighted market pressures in attributing salience to other definitive stakeholder groupings in in this research. They discussed undertaking schools projects and transition year programmes to engage with prospective students so that the case HEI is visible in the market and helping society broaden access. One interviewee stated, for example, *“I think that for the institute the degree of which we engage is very important, I think in terms of bringing students in.”* (HoD1). There is also social pressure to engage with prospective students from more disadvantaged areas. These market and social pressures will amplify the coercive pressure from government to increase the proportion of students entering HE and thus amplify the identification and salience of prospective student stakeholders.

Though the literature only ascribed expectant status to professional bodies, this research finds them to be definitive for the case HEI. Strong market pressure is found in the identification and salience of professional bodies. This market pressure has amplified the isomorphic pressures, and especially the three sources of power that professional bodies possess. This is because graduates from many of the courses in the case HEI want to become members of these professional bodies. As a result, selecting a course is often dependant on professional body accreditation. As well as accreditation, professional bodies also provide students for professional courses and funding. Therefore market pressures for funding and students have amplified the selection of professional bodies as stakeholders.

The case HEI’s need for students and funding has ensured market pressures also influence the identification and salience of expectant stakeholders. For example, the concerns of a government health care agency would be taken into account because *“We would have students on placement in related [government social care] bodies.”* (HoD10). Due to market pressures the case HEI must deal with government and their agencies for funding. Some interviewees discussed, for example, pressure to engage with government funding agencies at different times depending *“...on what we are looking for. If we are looking for a grant ...”* (HoD8). While another talked about market pressures on the case HEI because *“...status matters in terms of getting the next round of funding”* (TM2). Thus market pressures have amplified the importance of government and their agencies to the case HEI.

Communities, alumni, and other HEIs were classified as latent stakeholders by interviewees. However, there is some social and market pressure on the case HEI to recognise the concerns of these stakeholders. There is social pressure to identify communities as stakeholders, for example, as “...*those stakeholders in the community may not be a very financially lucrative stakeholder but we have obligation to service them*” (HoD8). This social pressure combined with the isomorphic pressures identified above has contributed to the identification of communities as stakeholders.

Market pressures were also noted by interviewees in the identification of alumni. Complying with market pressure to engage with alumni affords the case HEI competitive advantage in two ways. Firstly, alumni can generate access to business and industry stakeholders from whom, De Wit and Verhoeven (2000) contend, the HEI can get improvement advice. One interviewee stated “...*alumni engagement draws into a work placement engagement, which eventually leads to a customised learning engagement, or a research engagement*” (TM1). Secondly, graduates who do well provide a good image and legitimacy for the case HEI. Interviewees noted that both of these competitive advantages may be gained from engaging with alumni, one interviewee stating: “*Alumni provide placements and job opportunities for our graduates, they inform changes to programmes at programmatic review and, most importantly, act as ambassadors for the programme, the department and [case HEI] as a whole*” (HoD6).

In this study, market pressures were also suggested in the legitimacy of other HEIs. The identification of research collaborators brings funding to the case HEI with one interviewee stating “*In the case of other HEI we often find ourselves as collaborators or partners on projects that they lead.*” (TM2). Thus the interviewees identified market pressures amplifying the legitimacy of other HEIs as their stakeholders.

To summarise, the findings of this research show that the identification and salience of stakeholders is amplified by social and market pressures. Unlike the theoretical framework proposed by the researcher (Figure 8.3), no social and market pressures were identified by the interviewees that reduce the identification and salience of stakeholders for the case HEI.

Overall, the findings indicate that identification and salience is influenced by the need for the case HEI to appear legitimate, spatial location (proximate or distal) of the stakeholder grouping, and the environment of the case HEI. The institutional environment comprises macro influences (coercive, mimetic and normative pressures) and micro influences (social and market concerns). The research suggests that the closer the stakeholder is located to the case HEI the more salience they are ascribed. Similarly, the more institutional macro and micro pressures in the environment the more salience that is attributed to stakeholder groups.

8.3 Engagement

This section begins by comparing the definition of engagement that emerged from this research with that of the literature. Next, the types of engagement are discussed under five headings as noted in the literature: graduate formation, workforce development, research and innovation, from the Sheridan and Fallon (2015) framework, and social enhancement and market advancement, as additional classifications added by the researcher. Finally, the effect of stakeholder salience and other influences on engagement are discussed.

8.3.1 Defining engagement

Definitions of engagement vary widely and depend often on a HEI's history, location, ethos, administrative structures and leadership (Mulvihill et al., 2011b; Jongbloed et al., 2008). However, many common tenets of engagement are recognised including: a focus on partnership and mutually beneficial relationships (Jongbloed et al., 2008), volunteering, putting knowledge into practice, technology transfer, knowledge for the benefit of external audiences, and mutuality. According to the Association of Commonwealth Universities engagement implies interaction with the non-HEI world in at least four spheres: setting HEIs aims, purposes and priorities; relating teaching and learning to the wider world; the back-and-forth dialogue between researchers and practitioners; and taking on wider responsibilities as neighbours and citizens (Hart et al., 2009).

All of the interviewees participating in this study are currently working in the same HEI and therefore share the same institutional history, location, ethos, administrative structures and leadership. Unsurprisingly therefore, descriptions of engagement offered

by the interviewees show a large overlap, with six key tenets emerging, as noted in Chapter 7 (Section 7.3.1); mutual benefit, partnership, communication, getting the good word out, community/philanthropic/neighbours, consulting. The interviewees rated partnership and mutual benefit most highly, describing engagement as “...*building two way reciprocal relationships with external organisations...*” (TM3). This concurs with the literature.

However, the interviewees did not discuss all of the four spheres proposed by the Association of Commonwealth Universities, noted above, as indicated by their comments shown below:

Sphere	Support in describing engagement	Sample comments
Setting HEIs aims, purposes and priorities	Discussed by two interviewees	<i>“You’re then looking at industry to participate in stakeholder consultations around programme development”</i> HoD3
Relating teaching and learning to the wider world	Discussed by most of the interviewees	<i>“...teaching and learning is a delivery, research is a delivery and engagement ... enables the outputs of the other two to be appropriate and meet the needs of the external stakeholders”</i> TM4
The back-and-forth dialogue between researchers and practitioners	Discussed when some interviewees spoke about the types of engagement undertaken but not when defining engagement.	
Taking on wider responsibilities as neighbours and citizens	Discussed by some interviewees	<i>“Engagement can also broaden to say ... how would you deal... with the neighbours”</i> HoD1

Figure 8.4: Spheres of engagement

(Source: Researcher)

In summary, there is alignment between this research and the literature regarding the definition of engagement, both agreeing that the most important elements of engagement are partnership and mutual benefit. However, the four spheres of interaction highlighted by the Association of Commonwealth Universities were not all included by the interviewees when defining engagement. The omission of a dialogue between researchers

and practitioners may indicate a lower level of priority assigned to research engagement for the interviewees, who work in a teaching intensive HEI but time constraints during the interviews may also explain the omission.

8.3.2 Types of engagement

The following sections discuss the types of engagement identified in the literature and in this research. The structure is based on the literature in Section 3.4 and the findings in Section 7.3.2. There are five categories of engagement, three identified by Sheridan and Fallon (2015), graduate formation, workforce development and research and innovation. The remaining two categories, social enhancement and market advancement, are so labelled by the researcher.

8.3.2.1 Graduate formation

As outlined in chapter three (section 3.4.1), graduate formation involves equipping students with “...*the employability skills to make a successful and impactful transition into the workplace*” (Sheridan and Linehan, 2013, p.7). Engagement is one way in which students can acquire employability skills. All of the types of engagement discussed in this section can help students acquire these skills.

A review of the case HEI’s strategy supports engagement for graduate formation and states as its aim the formation of “...*graduates who are professionals and practitioners, distinguished in their chosen career by their ability to effectively create and apply knowledge, engage in ongoing learning, and act in entrepreneurial and innovative ways*” (Case HEI, 2012-2017, p.5). This emphasis on career focused graduates emanates from the strategy and is propagated by the interviewees who suggest that more types of engagement with external stakeholders may be classified as graduate formation than any other type of engagement. One interviewee defined graduate formation as:

“...where the outside world, not just industry, helps shape what types of graduates we are producing, and they do that in lots of ways. They help with course design. They help with course review. They help with live cases, projects, work placement. They come in and do Gradfest. They help prepare our graduates before they come out.”(TM3).

As indicated in this statement, and in agreement with the literature, interviewees identified a wide variety of stakeholder interactions that could be classified as graduate formation. Engagement interactions with each stakeholder grouping as compiled from

interviewees' comments are summarised in Figure 8.5 below. This list of stakeholder interactions is more extensive than that offered by Sheridan and Fallon (2015).

Graduate Formation	
Stakeholder	Type of Engagement
Business and industry	Work placement and graduate recruitment
	Adjunct & guest lectures
	Sponsors & mentors
	External examiners
	Panels & advisory boards regarding curriculum design
	Site visits, work based projects, live cases
Government and their agencies	Work placement and graduate recruitment
Other HEIs	Panels in case HEI for programme and module approval, staff interviews, strategy development etc.
	Panels with case HEI's staff on other campuses for programme and module approval, staff interviews, strategy development etc.
	External examiners in case HEI
	External examiners with HEI staff on other campuses
Professional Bodies	Guest lectures
	Course delivery
Communities	Work placement
	Live cases
Alumni	Work placement and graduate recruitment
	Guest Lectures
	Mentors
	Sponsorship

Figure 8.5: Engagement for graduate formation

Arranged by stakeholder group

(Source: Researcher)

As Figure 8.5 shows, almost all of the external stakeholders identified by interviewees (Section 8.2) are involved in graduate formation interactions. Prospective students are the only stakeholder group not involved in graduate formation engagement (as they have as yet not become students of the HEI). The findings show that interviewees highlighted additional types of engagement to those discussed in the literature for some stakeholders.

For example, while significant overlap between the literature and this research is found when considering business and industry engagement interactions, interviewees noted two additional types: engagement as external examiners, and as mentors and sponsors of students.

When broadening the stakeholders beyond those proposed in the Sheridan and Fallon (2015) framework (business and industries and community employers), a range of engagement types classified as graduate formation with government and their agencies, other HEIs, professional bodies, and alumni, were suggested by the interviewees, as shown in Figure 8.6 below:

Stakeholder	Engagement interaction	Sheridan & Fallon (S&F) (2015) framework	Researcher extended S&F (2015) framework
Business and industry	Curriculum design, panels and advisory boards	X	X
	Guest lectures	X	X
	Site visits	X	X
	Work placement and graduate recruitment	X	X
	Work based projects, site visits, live cases	X	X
	Employability and entrepreneurship	X	X
	Mentoring and sponsoring		X
	External examiners		X
Government and their agencies	Work placement and graduate recruitment		X
Other HEIs	Curriculum design, panels and advisory boards		X
	External examiners		X
Professional bodies	Guest lectures		X
	Course delivery		X

Stakeholder	Engagement interaction	Sheridan & Fallon (S&F) (2015) framework	Researcher extended S&F (2015) framework
Communities	Curriculum design, panels and advisory boards	X	X
	Guest lectures	X	X
	Site visits	X	X
	Work placement	X	X
	Work based projects, site visits, live cases	X	X
	Employability and entrepreneurship	X	X
Alumni	Work placement		X
	Graduate recruitment and employment		X
	Guest lectures		X
	Mentoring and sponsoring		X

Figure 8.6: A comparison of engagement for graduate formation

(Source: Sheridan and Fallon (2015) and researcher)

As Figure 8.6 shows, more types of engagement have been identified in this research for some stakeholders and less for others. For business and industry stakeholders many of the engagement interactions were noted by the Sheridan and Fallon (2015) framework and this research. Additional types of interaction, mentoring and sponsors, and external examiners, were included by interviewees. Interviewees added government and their agencies and suggested they engage for work placement and graduate recruitment with this stakeholder group. Regarding other HEIs, additional types of engagement were noted by interviewees including: external examiners in from other institutions and serving as representatives of the case HEI. In relation to the professional bodies' stakeholder group, engagement interactions suggested by interviewees include: course delivery on behalf of professional bodies and members of professional bodies acting as guest lecturers. Interviewees also noted the engagement with alumni as mentor and sponsors of students.

Therefore, in summary, it is suggested that this research is more comprehensive than the literature, in terms of the types of engagement classified as graduate formation, and the number of stakeholder groups who contribute to graduate formation engagement.

8.3.2.2 Workforce development

Workforce development is one of the national aims for higher education in many European countries, including Ireland (Eurydice Report, 2014). The Irish Department of Education policy states that *‘Our long term objectives are to increase the levels of overall educational attainment in the workforce and increase participation of under-represented groups in higher education.’* (Department of Education, 2011, p.12). According to Sheridan and Fallon (2015), workforce development involves supporting new and exploring and responding to emerging workforce reskilling and upskilling needs, for regional and national development. These types of engagement include: recruitment of graduates, customised course development, continuing professional development (CPD), recognition of prior learning (RPL), and work-based learning (WBL) (Sheridan and Fallon, 2015).

From documentary analysis, the strategy of the case HEI proposes a desire to create *‘...agile and flexible learning pathways in partnership with enterprise and the communities...’* (Case HEI, 2012-2017, p.7), highlighting two stakeholder groups, enterprise (business and industry) and communities. In the interview findings, a respondent described workforce development as:

“...where we help them [business] develop their own workforce, so whether they are looking for people that are suitable, whether they have skill shortages that we can contribute to filling via bespoke course, or specialised modules. Whether we can put on special purpose awards just for them, or to provide them with any training ... so we can contribute to the growth of the workforce of the outside world” (TM3).

This interviewee only included business and industry stakeholders when describing workforce development. However, during the interviews the respondents listed different types of engagement that have been categorised as workforce development. Three stakeholder groups were suggested by interviewees, as shown in Figure 8.7.

Workforce development	
Stakeholder	Type of engagement
Business and Industry	Recruitment Customised learning and CPD
Professional Bodies	Accreditation Networking Exemptions
Alumni	Recruitment Customised learning and CPD

Figure 8.7: Engagement for workforce development

Arranged by stakeholder group

(Source: Researcher)

Some types of engagement are noted in both the literature and this research (recruitment, customised course development and CPD) while others are not. For example, Recognition of Prior learning (RPL) and Work Based learning (WBL) are included in the literature as workforce development types of engagement, but were not mentioned by the interviewees. The researcher suggests that this may be explained by the distal relationship between these types of engagement and the interviewees in this research. RPL and WBL are undertaken by a central unit in the case HEI and so the interviewees do not undertake this type of engagement themselves or within their departments. Conversely, interviewees suggested engagements with professional bodies and alumni, including accreditation and exemption interactions as well as networking opportunities. These were not included in the Sheridan and Fallon (2015) framework. The differences are summarised in the Figure 8.8.

Stakeholder	Engagement interaction	Sheridan & Fallon (S&F) (2015) framework	Researcher extended S&F (2015) framework
Business and industry	Recruitment	X	X
	Customised course development	X	X
	Continuing professional development	X	X
	Recognition of prior learning	X	
	Work-based learning	X	
Professional bodies	Accreditation		X
	Exemptions		X
	Networking		X
Communities	Recruitment	X	
	Customised course development	X	
	Continuing professional development	X	
	Recognition of prior learning	X	
	Work-based learning	X	
Alumni	Recruitment		X
	Customised course development		X
	Continuing professional development		X

Figure 8.8: A comparison of engagement for graduate formation

(Source: Sheridan and Fallon (2015) and Researcher)

In summary, by expanding the number of stakeholders, the interviewees included workforce development engagements involving professional bodies which were not included in the Sheridan and Fallon (2015) framework. However, they did not include the communities stakeholder group in this type of engagement.

8.3.2.3 Research & innovation

In creating human capital and carrying out research and innovation, HEIs should play a role in major world issues that resonate in their local and regional communities (Garlick and Langworthy, 2008). The types of engagement included in the Sheridan and Fallon (2015) framework and classified as research and innovation include: consultancy, use of equipment and facilities, exploitation of research outcomes, licencing and patents, incubation centres, and contract research.

The documentary findings for this study show that the strategic plan highlights that case HEI aims to concentrate on research activity in certain disciplines, stating:

'Our research strategy will focus on developing expertise, critical mass and research excellence in specific disciplines' (Case HEI, 2012-2017, p.10).

In this study, one of the top managers interviewed commented that “...*research and innovation is always an engagement anyway...[but] ...if it doesn't involve the generation and dissemination of new knowledge...then you can't call it engagement...*” (TM2).

The interviewees confirmed research activity has been removed from the academic departments and concentrated in discipline specific clusters. One interviewee stated that “...*the main research people in the department moved to NIMBUS [Research Centre in Cyber-Physical Systems and Internet of Things], they operate as an entity, in terms of their own accounting and recruiting and all of that*”(HoD12). It is likely that, as a result of the removal of research from academic departments, a limited amount of engagement interactions relating to research and innovation were suggested by interviewees. Interviewees only listed: work with government and their agencies on research projects, consultancy, and for research funding, and work with other HEIs on joint research. Hence, the findings show fewer types of engagement than posited in the literature as shown in Figure 8.9 below.

Stakeholder	Engagement interaction	Sheridan & Fallon (S&F) (2015) framework	Researcher extended S&F (2015) framework
Business and industry	Consultancy	X	X
	Use of equipment and facilities	X	
	Exploitation of research outcomes	X	
	Licencing and patents	X	
	Incubation centres	X	
	Short contract research	X	
	Funding		X
Government and their agencies	Short contract research		X
	Funding		X
	Collaborations		X
Other HEIs	Collaborations		X
Communities	Consultancy	X	
	Use of equipment and facilities	X	
	Exploitation of research outcomes	X	
	Licencing and patents	X	
	Incubation centres	X	
	Short contract research	X	

**Figure 8.9: Engagement for research & innovation
Arranged by stakeholder group**

(Source: Researcher)

As can be seen in Figure 8.9 above, only three stakeholders, business and industry, government and their agencies, and other HEIs, were suggested by interviewees in this type of engagement. The researcher suggests that, research and innovation engagement interaction in the academic departments of the case HEI is limited by its strategy, removes and concentrates research into discipline clusters. The types of engagement noted by interviewees are therefore also limited and do not include the breadth of engagement types displayed in the Sheridan and Fallon (2015) frameworks, most notably engagement with the business and industry and communities stakeholder groups.

8.3.2.4 Social enhancement

As outlined in Chapter 3 (Section 3.4.4) other types of engagement were found in the literature which were not included in the framework proposed by Sheridan and Fallon (2015). These were classified by the researcher as social enhancement and market advancement engagements. The Bologna Follow-Up Group (2014) highlight higher education's crucial role in supporting social cohesion and economic growth, which have become the two tenets of social enhancement for this study. Social cohesion includes the spread of democratic values and respect for multiculturalism, the promotion of political participation, the strengthening of civil society, and the promotion of democratic governance (J.I.C.A., 2005). Social cohesion is important as more cohesive, equitable and democratic local communities create improved capacity for society to analyse and address local problems and conflicts (Pearce et al., 2007). Therefore, having a HEI in a region as a significant local stakeholder and employer, and provider of a host of intellectual resources, could appreciably not just improve the social well-being of the community but also its economic well-being (Mulvihill et al., 2011e; Bromley, 2006).

Engaging for social cohesion

As a means of improving social capital, HEIs engage with their communities in sharing of cultural, intellectual, architectural, aesthetic, artistic, athletic, recreational and medical resources (Hart and Northmore, 2011; Abreu et al., 2009; Charles et al., 2009; Lester, 2005), as well as public events and lectures (Abreu et al., 2009), staff volunteering activities, and outreach programmes (Pollard et al., 2013b; Hart and Northmore, 2011; Padfield et al., 2008a). The aim is that as social capital improves so too does social cohesion. For example, Pearce et al. (2007) posit that *'As social networks and social trust are enhanced over time, social capital will accumulate. This is likely to contribute to more cohesive, equitable and democratic local communities...'* (Pearce et al., 2007, p.5).

The findings of this study indicate that this research concurs with the literature as both documentary and interviewee evidence show the case HEI expending resources that contribute to social cohesion. With regards to documentary evidence, the case HEI's strategic plan allows for *'...public access to all [case HEI] campuses and facilities'* (Case HEI, 2012-2017, p.12). The interviewees went further than the strategic plan and highlighted the sharing of resources, staff volunteering activities, courses provided for community development, as the types of engagement they undertake to help their region

in social cohesion. Some comments from interviewees, classified as engaging for social cohesion, are shown by stakeholder grouping in Figure 8.10 below.

Social cohesion		
Stakeholder	Type of engagement	Sample comment
Communities	Sharing of resources	<i>"...giving them [community groups] our space, using their space perhaps..." (TM3)</i>
	Staff volunteering activities	<i>"...we have a whole host of staff who engage in community activity, between GAA, between charity bodies, local enterprise initiatives..." (HoD4)</i>
	Community education	<i>"... [communities] are also part of the specific mission so for example we have delivery provision in the area of sport, culture..." (TM4)</i>

Figure 8.10: Engagement for social cohesion

Arranged by stakeholder group

(Source: Researcher)

As Figure 8.10 shows, only one stakeholder group, communities, was noted when the interviewees discussed engaging for social cohesion. The interviewees and documentary analysis agree with the literature and show HEIs expending resources for social cohesion using many types of engagement.

Engaging to improve the economic health of the community

Engaged institutions can help tackle disadvantage and promote sustainable development through partnership working (Hart et al., 2009). The types of engagement that improves the economic health of the community include: engagement to meet regional skill needs and public access to knowledge (Abreu et al., 2009; Lester, 2005).

There is some agreement between the literature and the findings from this research. The types of engagement suggested by the interviewees that could be classified as engaging to improve the economic health of the community include meeting regional skills needs, and public access to knowledge, as described in the literature. Interviewees also included events to promote the region and HEI internationally as a means of improving the economic health of their region. The stakeholders engaged with for this type of interaction are shown in Figure 8.11 below:

Engaging to improve the economic health of the community		
Stakeholder	Type of engagement	Sample comments
Business and industry	Public access to knowledge	<i>"I suppose the research arm of the department has the ability to support the issues or problems that arose in the region. Recently the paint company came to us with regard to contamination and paint and we were able to help with that..." (HoD2).</i>
	Meeting regional skills need	<i>"... [that course is] driven by a request from an industry partner for graduates who could actually write" (HoD14).</i>
Prospective Students	Meeting regional skills needs	<i>"We would also run and organise the exploring technology programme which is run for transition year students. They would get talks from all the different branches of engineering while they are in here." (HoD13).</i>
Government and their agencies	Promotion of region and HEI	<i>"In terms of our general internationalisation, there'd be interaction with City Hall on joint events. We had the Asian business week here last July, and equally [Head of faculty] went to Shanghai recently....as part of that ecosystem, maybe led by city council [government agency]...." (HoD11).</i>
	Meeting regional skills needs	<i>"...under Springboard, through various [government] initiatives around increasing the output of computing graduates" (HoD14).</i>
Communities	Public access to knowledge	<i>"...we tend to do projects that are practical and that involve people in the community and region. And the example of that would be the MA in Public Relations, where we did a project with the ...Arts centre last year...which is a local group." (HoD7).</i>
	Meeting regional skills needs	<i>"We run a degree by night the BSc [Bachelor in Science] in computing. I think that's a community based one, the fees are low, it attracts in students who are working and that may not have been given the opportunity or circumstances might have prevented them from going to college. ... I think it's reaching out to the community at large. It's an accessible affordable course. It gives them opportunities to upskill and to get a professional qualification, an academic qualification in computing." (HoD14).</i>

Figure 8.11: Engagement to improve the economic health of the community

Arranged by stakeholder group (Source: Researcher)

This figure shows that interviewees referred to business and industry, prospective students, government and their agencies, and communities as the stakeholders they engage with in improving the economic health of their region. They supplemented methods mentioned in the literature with engagement interactions undertaken to promote their region and HEI.

8.3.2.5 Market advancement

The types of engagement that are classified by the researcher as market advancement are those that help the HEI create a positive impression (Mora et al., 2010), and increase the market of available students by broadening the diversity of those choosing HE. The types of engagement discussed as market advancement comprise engaging to justify funding and engaging to broaden access and compete for students.

Engaging to justify funding

In recent years accountability structures have been used by ‘... *political leaders and the general public to evaluate public agency outputs and to impose sanctions when agencies fail to produce desired results*’ (Rabovsky, 2012, p.675) (Section 2.4.2). There is increasing pressure on HEIs to demonstrate greater accountability for public funding received (Ankrah et al., 2013). The drive for accountability has led engagement responsibilities of HEIs to feature increasingly in audit assessments (Garlick and Langworthy, 2008) with phrases such as ‘public benefit’ and ‘impact on society’ dominating HE policy statements (Mulvihill et al., 2011d).

Linking funding to performance has led to HEIs engaging with external stakeholders in order to justify this funding (Hart et al., 2009; Pearce et al., 2007). Two types of engagement interaction were identified in the literature that are classified as engaging to justify funding; public access to resources and involvement by HEI staff in various government regulation and policy networks. Public access to resources was discussed in the previous section, social enhancement. Networking is a key type of engagement that HEIs undertake to justify and guarantee future funding. It includes networking by HEI staff in government regulation and policy committees (Hart and Northmore, 2011; Charles et al., 2009) and involvement in other networks.

The findings from documents reviewed show an acknowledgement in the case HEI’s 2016 *Annual Report* that the case HEI was commended for its progress towards achieving

the various targets [including engagement targets set out in the performance compact] and was awarded the full quantum of funding allocated for institutional performance as a result (Case HEI, 2016). This allocation of funding based on meeting performance targets provides justification for engaging. In agreement with the literature, networking was highlighted in many areas in the case HEI's annual report for example, one of the networks the report details is the launch of the *Creative Digital Network* by Mr. Damien English, TD, Minister for Skills, Research & Innovation at the case HEI (Case HEI, 2016).

Interviewees also noted engaging to justify funding by engaging with business and industry, government and their agencies, professional bodies, and other HEIs. This is in agreement with the literature. Figure 8.12 below shows the types of engagements identified by the interviewees which can be classified as engaging to justify funding:

Engaging to justify funding	
Stakeholder	Type of engagement
Business and industry	Networking at industry association events.
Government and their agencies	Research agencies and funding for research
	Membership of committees and panels involved in regulation and policy
	Policy submissions
Other HEIs	Discipline specific networks
Professional bodies	Other networks

Figure 8.12: Engagement to justify funding

Arranged by stakeholder group

(Source: Researcher)

Networking with business and industry associations for example was highlighted by one interviewee who stated that he engages with “...we’ll say networking bodies, so they could be the likes of [city] Business Alliance or the [city] Chamber, it@[city], any of those would be important” (HoD6).

In summary, interviewees included four stakeholder groups when discussing engaging to justify funding, business and industry, government and their agencies, professional bodies, and other HEIs. Interviewees are in agreement with the literature that they engage with these stakeholders to justify funding.

Engaging to broaden access and compete for students

With the introduction of higher student fees, a significant cut to teaching budgets and new regulatory roles for HE authorities, the HE sector will become even more competitive (Mulvihill et al., 2011d) (Section 3.4.5.2). At the same time European policy documents have set targets for general participation, as well as targets relating to mature students, disadvantaged socio-economic groups and students with disabilities (Eurydice Report, 2014). Broadening access involves alternate forms of educational delivery, to new types of students in an interdisciplinary fashion, with the provision of supports to make the transition to HE easier for disadvantaged groups (Higher Education Authority, 2015a).

In alignment with the literature, the case HEI's strategic plan acknowledges the need to broaden access and compete for students. It states that the case HEI: '*...will offer increased flexible learning opportunities ... and programmes across all disciplines and levels*' (Case HEI, 2012-2017, p.10) and '*...will continue to facilitate inclusive access to higher education for increasing numbers of individuals, particularly among under-represented groups in society*' (Case HEI, 2012-2017, p.11). Hence, the strategic plan reflects the policy set out in European policy documents for greater representation among mature students, disadvantaged socio-economic groups and students with disabilities (Eurydice Report, 2014).

In the literature, a broad range of engagement types are included by various researchers to broaden access and compete for students (see Section 3.4.5.2). For example, Abreu et al. (2009) include school projects, open lectures, public exhibitions and community-based sports, as the types of engagement necessary to broaden access. Other authors include: schools projects (Abreu et al., 2009; Padfield et al., 2008a), sharing of resources (Abreu et al., 2009; Lester, 2005), widening participation initiatives, such as broadening of entry routes (Charles et al., 2003), and engaging directly with prospective students and their sponsors (Eurydice Report, 2014). In agreement with the literature, the interviewees in this study also suggested a large range of engagement activities to increase awareness of the case HEI, and help broaden access and compete for students. For example, the benefits

of engaging with business and industry to compete for students was mentioned by one interviewee who stated:

“[We] engage with employers in terms of promotion as well... We have pamphlets and leaflets with Dupois and Jansen listed endorsing [the case HEI] programmes in this department, which are unique in terms of the college and very unique in terms of other HEI’s” (HoD8).

A wide range of engagement interactions with prospective students through their schools were highlighted by interviewees, with interviewees expressing an interest in expanding these interactions to compete for non-standard students and thus broaden access. For example, one interviewee stated:

“I suppose in line with schools we’d put the further education colleges so [neighbouring FETAC college]. We are trying to do something with them where they would become a feeder college for us.” (HoD4).

Figure 8.13 below is a comprehensive list of the types of engagement by stakeholder grouping that were suggested by interviewees.

Engaging to broaden access and compete for students	
Stakeholder	Type of engagement
Business and Industry	Course promotion
	Industry associations
Prospective Students	School visits
	Teacher interactions
	Workshops
	Transition year programmes
	Feeder college interactions
	Competitions and quizzes
	Open days
	Career fairs
	Roadshows
	Parent/sponsor interaction
Web based interactions	

Figure 8.13: Engagement to broaden access and compete for students

Arranged by stakeholder group

(Source: Researcher)

To summarise, alignment is evident between the case HEI's strategic plan and the literature in relation to engaging with stakeholder groups to broaden access and compete for students. The broad range of engagement types identified in the literature also correspond with those highlighted by interviewees. Only two stakeholder groups, were suggested, business and industry and prospective students.

8.3.2.6 Summary

Sheridan and Fallon (2015) propose a framework comprising three types of engagement, graduate formation, workforce development and research and innovation. This framework facilitates our understanding of the types of interactions between HEIs and

two stakeholder groups, enterprise (business and industry) and communities (Section 3.4). This study has added to their framework by including more stakeholder groupings and also a greater range of engagement interactions. The other stakeholder groupings identified by interviewees comprise prospective students, government and their agencies, other HEIs, professional bodies, and alumni. As discussed in Chapter 3 some of these classifications were identified in the literature in the Sheridan and Fallon (2015) framework (graduate formation, workforce development, and research and innovation), two others were identified in other literature and classified by the researcher as social enhancement and market advancement. Figure 8.14 below is based on the extended Sheridan and Fallon (2015) framework. It shows these five classifications and the engagement interactions as noted in the literature. It also highlights the additional interactions arising from the findings of this study.

Types of engagement interactions from the literature and the interviewees		
Category of engagement	Interactions noted in literature	(additional) Interactions suggested in findings
Graduate formation	Curriculum design, course review boards, guest lectures, site visits, work placement, work-based projects, employability and entrepreneurship.	Mentors and sponsors, external examiners, live cases, graduate recruitment, course delivery.
Workforce development	Recruitment, customised course development, continuing professional development, recognition of prior learning and work-based learning.	Accreditation, exemptions, networking.
Research and innovation	Consultancy, use of equipment and facilities, exploitation of research outcomes, licencing and patents, incubation centres, short contract research.	Collaborations, securing research funding.
Social enhancement	<u>Engaging for social cohesion:</u> sharing of resources, public events and lectures, staff volunteering activities, outreach programmes. <u>Engaging to improve the economic health of the community:</u> meet regional skills needs, public access to knowledge.	<u>Engaging for social cohesion:</u> community education. <u>Engaging to improve the economic health of the community:</u> Promotion of region and HEI internationally.

Types of engagement interactions from the literature and the interviewees		
Category of engagement	Interactions noted in literature	(additional) Interactions suggested in findings
Market advancement	<p><u>Engaging to justify funding;</u> Public access to HEI resources such as sports facilities, laboratories and lecturer theatres.</p> <p>Involvement of HEI staff in government regulation & policy committees.</p> <p><u>Engaging to broaden access and compete for students</u> School projects, sharing of resources, activities aimed at widening participation, activities with prospective students.</p>	<p><u>Engaging to justify funding;</u> Involvement with other networks.</p> <p><u>Engaging to broaden access and compete for students;</u> Engaging with prospective students through their schools (school visits, teacher interactions, workshops, transition year programmes, competitions & quizzes).</p> <p>Engaging directly with prospective students (open days, career fairs, roadshows, work with teachers, parents & feeder colleges, web based interactions, industry association networking, feeder college interaction).</p>

Figure 8.14: Engagement interactions

(Source: Sheridan and Fallon (2015) and findings)

In conclusion, Figure 8.14 shows that this study has identified a much broader range of engagement interactions than were identified in prior research.

8.3.3 Stakeholders and Engagement

Overall, both the literature and the findings from this research concur that HEIs engage with external stakeholders in a very broad way. Figure 8.15 summarises the stakeholders and types of engagement identified.

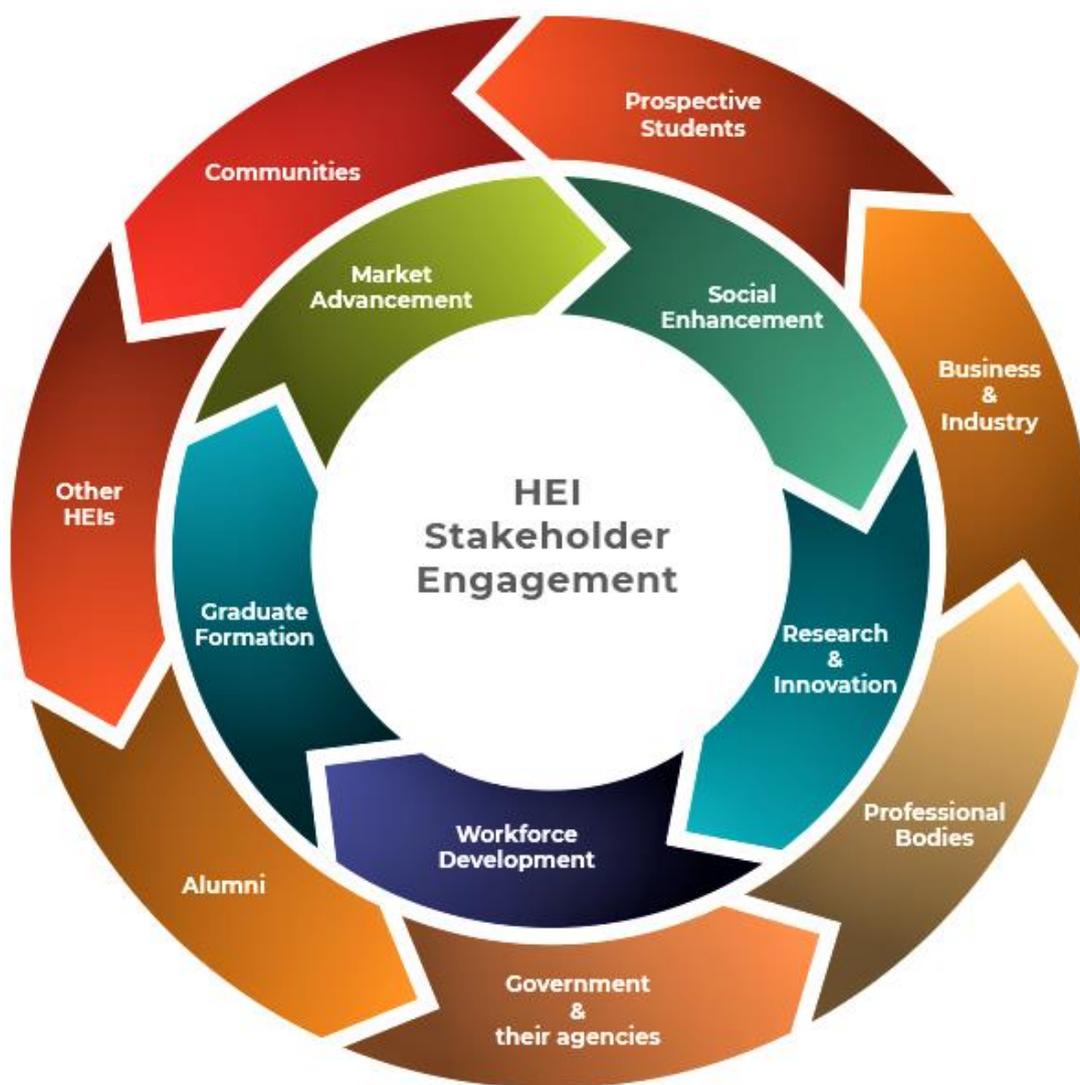


Figure 8.15: HEI external stakeholders and engagement

(Source: Researcher)

A wide range of stakeholders have been legitimised by the interviewees during this research including, business and industry, prospective students, government and their agencies, other HEIs, professional bodies, communities, and alumni. This legitimisation has occurred as a result of environmental forces comprising isomorphic pressures and social and market influences.

This study proposes that there is a link between stakeholder salience and the number of engagement categories that the case HEI is involved with. Figure 8.16 shows, from the research findings, the category and types of engagement interaction that each stakeholder

grouping is involved in, alongside the reported stakeholder salience. The proposal is that the more salient the stakeholder group, the more engagement interactions that occur with the case HEI.

Types of engagement by stakeholder group			
Stakeholder	Category of engagement	Type of engagement	Stakeholder classification by salience
Business and industry	Graduate formation	Curriculum design	Definitive
		Panels and advisory board	
		Guest lectures	
		Work placement	
		Work based projects and live cases	
		Customised learning	
		Mentors and Sponsors	
	External examiners		
	Workforce development	Recruitment	
		Customised courses	
		Continual professional development	
	Research and innovation	Funding	
		Consultancy	
	Social enhancement	Public access to knowledge	
Meeting regional skill needs			
Market advancement	Course promotion		
	Industry associations		
Prospective students	Social enhancement	Meeting regional skill needs	Definitive
	Market advancement	School visits	
		Teacher interactions	
		Workshops	
		Transition year programmes	
Feeder college interactions			

Types of engagement by stakeholder group			
Stakeholder	Category of engagement	Type of engagement	Stakeholder classification by salience
		Competitions and quizzes	
		Open days	
		Career fairs	
		Roadshows	
		Parent/sponsor interaction	
		Web based interactions	
Government and their agencies	Graduate formation	Work placement	Expectant
	Research and innovation	Funding for research	
		Research contracts	
		Collaborations	
	Social enhancement	Meeting regional skill needs	
		Promotion of region and HEI	
Market advancement	Research agencies and funding for research		
	Networking on government committees		
Other HEIs	Graduate formation	Panels in case HEI/ in other HEIs with case staff	Latent
		External examiners in case HEI	
		External examiner with HEI staff on other campuses	
	Research and innovation	Collaborations	
	Market advancement	Other networks	
Professional bodies	Graduate formation	Guest lectures	Definitive
		Course delivery	
	Workforce development	Accreditation	
		Exemptions	

Types of engagement by stakeholder group			
Stakeholder	Category of engagement	Type of engagement	Stakeholder classification by salience
	Market advancement	Other networks	
Communities	Graduate formation	Work placement	Latent
		Live cases	
	Social enhancement	Public access to knowledge and sharing of resources	
		Community education	
		Meet regional skill needs	
		Staff volunteering	
Alumni	Graduate formation	Work placement	Latent
		Guest lectures	
		Mentoring and sponsorship	
	Workforce development	Customised learning	
		Continual professional development	
		Recruitment	

Figure 8.16: Stakeholders and types of engagement

(Source: Researcher)

Figure 8.16 shows that definitive stakeholders have the largest number of engagement interactions. For example, business and industry, one of the definitive stakeholders, are involved in the most categories of engagement and have the largest number of engagement types. This stakeholder group is involved in all five categories of engagement; graduate formation, workforce development, research and innovation, social enhancement, and market advancement. Prospective students, as definitive stakeholders, are also involved in a large number of engagement types but all in the social enhancement and market advancement categories. Marginally fewer types of engagement take place with the expectant stakeholder group; government and their agencies, and fewer again with the latent stakeholder groups, other HEIs, communities and alumni.

The exception is professional bodies, who were classified as definitive stakeholders by the interviewees but who are only engaged with in three categories; graduate formation, workforce development, and market advancement. This relates to previous comments regarding the salience of this stakeholder group being based on power. As discussed in section 8.2.5, the classification of professional bodies as definitive stakeholders may be due to the power that they have over some departments within the case HEI. Professional bodies possess all three forms of power when dealing with specific departments within the case HEI, normative (based on symbolic resources such as prestige), coercive (based on restraint from operating in a professional area) and utilitarian (based on physical resources such as funding and student intake) (Parent and Deephouse, 2007). As discussed in chapter 4 (Section 4.3.1), power is considered by some researchers to be the most salient attribute (Neville et al., 2011; Parent and Deephouse, 2007; Driscoll and Starik, 2004). For HEI departments that need to engage with professional bodies in order to show prestige, to gain accreditation and to obtain resources (including students) these three sources of power, combined with urgency and legitimacy, elevate professional bodies to the most salient form, definitive stakeholders. The types of engagement undertaken with professional bodies are reflective of the power bases that professional bodies have. In the case HEI the power base of professional bodies is for prestige, accreditation and exemptions, and future students. These bases require the HEI to engage in graduate formation (for prestige and future students), workforce development (for accreditation and exemptions, and future students) and market advancement (for future students) categories. Consequently, the researcher concludes that the case HEI engages with professional bodies to harness these bases and not for any other purpose, thus excluding social enhancement and research and innovation categories of engagement.

Overall, the findings suggest that the extent of engagement, in terms of the number of categories and the types of interactions, is influenced by stakeholder salience. However, salience is not the only factor to influence engagement. Other influences on engagement with HEI stakeholders are discussed in the next section.

8.3.4 Other influences on engagement: Legitimacy and isomorphism

The next sections propose that engagement is also influenced by the need for the case HEI to appear legitimate, isomorphic environmental pressures and social and market

influences. First, legitimacy is discussed and the influence of isomorphic pressures are considered.

8.3.4.1 Legitimacy

Legitimacy has been defined as ‘... *a generalised perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions*’ (Suchman, 1995, p.574) (Section 4.5.1.1). In order to survive organisations need to appear legitimate by conforming to prevailing social norms, rules and requirements (Covaleski and Dirsmith, 2012; Barringer and Harrison, 2000). This research (section 7.3.5) has found evidence that engagement is influenced by the need for the case HEI to appear legitimate by conforming to social norms, rules and requirements. The Higher Education Authority (HEA) recognises stakeholder engagement as the norm for HEIs and encourages fostering these interactions. For example, the *National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education 2015-2019* explicitly states that: “*Fostering partnerships between key stakeholders is critical to articulating the value and benefits of higher education and building social capital in communities with low levels of participation*” (Higher Education Authority, 2015a, p.19). This influences the case HEI’s external engagement strategy, in which engagement is seen as ‘...*fundamental to [the case HEI] since its foundation over one hundred years ago as the [constituent college of case HEI], and right through its time as [case HEI city] Regional Technical College*’ (Case HEI, 2017, p.3). In turn the interviewees’ perception of engagement (influenced by reference to stakeholder engagement found in case HEI’s strategy and the HEA), has lead interviewees to engage to gain and maintain legitimacy for the case HEI (Toylan and Semerciöz, 2012). They recognise the legitimacy to be attained from engagement and commented that “...*to be truly alive we need to do this engagement thing*” (HoD13). This reference to the link between engagement and legitimacy concurs with the literature which highlights that in order to survive organisations need to appear legitimate (Barringer and Harrison, 2000).

8.3.4.2 New Institutional Sociology

New Institutional Sociology (NIS) assumes that organisations who share the same environment will strive to be legitimate by employing similar practices and thus become isomorphic (similar or corresponding) to each other (Claeyé and Jackson, 2012). NIS has been used by researchers to study how information is sometimes used ceremonially and how practices conform to external pressures (Robalo, 2014). These external pressures

have been classified as coercive, mimetic and normative isomorphism (DiMaggio and Powell (1983) quoted in Nanka-Bruce (2009)). According to NIS, organisations are socially rewarded by legitimacy, resources, and survival based on their acceptance of these coercive, mimetic and normative isomorphic mechanisms (de la luz Fernández-Alles and Valle-Cabrera, 2006). These mechanisms are discussed in the following paragraphs.

Coercive isomorphism

As discussed in section 4.5.1.3, coercive pressures can force an organisation to behave and to structure itself in a certain way (Collin et al., 2009). Institutions may experience these pressures as economic control, force or persuasion (Gounko and Smale, 2007). McQuarrie et al. (2013) propose two types of coercion: regulatory and social. Regulatory coercion is enforced through rule of government and strong stakeholders (Arbo and Benneworth, 2007; Csizmadia et al., 2007), while social coercion depends on a perceived social contract between the HEI and its other stakeholders (McQuarrie et al., 2013). Both forms of coercion were identified by the interviewees. Social coercion or pressure is discussed in more detail in section 8.3.5.

In agreement with the literature, regulatory coercion was highlighted by interviewees who suggested that they acted in accordance with initiatives or directives issued by the government: “...we would more get initiatives from them, or ... directives ... they more influence what we’re doing more than anything else” (HoD4). Economic pressure forced the case HEI to follow regulatory directives as they “...don’t have the means to generate more income from non-exchequer” (TM3).

The literature also suggested coercion from other strong stakeholders (Arbo and Benneworth, 2007; Csizmadia et al., 2007). In this study interviewees highlighted coercive influences from two definitive stakeholder groups, professional bodies and employers (business and industry). Accreditation of courses by professional bodies persuades interviewees to engage. One interviewee stated “Accreditation influences us. Being aware of the needs, the standards and requirements influences all of us” (HoD13). Engaging with employers also coerces the institution into certain behaviours as one respondent noted that employers were able to force the HEI into certain behaviour stating employers are “...telling us what we have to teach ... they can influence the research we do, the type of people we should hire, where we should go as a whole.” (HoD9).

In summary, coercion to engage was identified by interviewees as an influencing factor. Government directives which can control funding; persuasion of the need for accreditation from professional bodies; and forceful demands emanating from employers; influence how the case HEI engages with external stakeholders. This concurs with the literature as researchers, such as Gounko and Smale (2007), state that institutions may experience coercive pressures as economic control, persuasion or force.

Mimetic isomorphism

Inter-organisational imitation within a sector reinforces coercion (Claeyé and Jackson, 2012; Gounko and Smale, 2007). The processes of imitation that an organisation takes to become similar to other organisations in their environments is referred to as mimetic isomorphism (Di Maggio and Powel quoted in Yang and Hyland (2012)). Gounko and Smale (2007), while investigating the adoption of admissions and funding policies in Russian HE, found that HEIs model themselves on other HEIs that they perceive as more prestigious or innovative.

The findings of this study concur with the literature. Interviewees noted instances of mimicking other HEIs. For example, one interviewee stated “... *we are in a competitive scenario, if Waterford decides to do something, we'd think what the hell are they doing and why aren't we doing it.*” (HoD14). Another interviewee said “... *I do need to look at what other providers are doing, in the context of competition for students and so forth*” (HoD10). National fora and external examining were noted by the interviewees as “...*a fairly good way to get a hands on experience of what is happening elsewhere. That would influence all of us.*” (HoD13)

In summary, interviewees stated that if they observe other HEIs doing something (such as engaging) they consider worthy or which can show the case HEI in a positive light they will do the same. This confirms prior studies in the literature and highlights that mimetic isomorphism does influence engagement activity in the case HEI.

Normative isomorphism

NIS theorists contend that managers make decisions based on the normative rationality for their profession, which is rooted in historical precedents and trajectories, social justification, norms, and habits (Verbeke and Tung, 2012). Legitimacy and acceptance are achieved through conformity to usual or expected behaviour i.e. the norm. Normative isomorphism stems primarily from professionalisation as members try to establish a

cognitive base and legitimisation for their occupational autonomy (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991).

Many professions are represented in the case HEI, as seen by one interviewee who stated staff “... *are active in their own professional bodies because we would have a share of accounting staff. We would have a share of HR staff. The same I would say with marketing staff... [and they engage with] the local CIPD [Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development] branch and the local accountancy body groups*” (HoD6). It is unsurprising therefore that decisions are made based on the normative rationality rooted in three conditions termed historical precedents and trajectories, social justification, and norms and habits (Verbeke and Tung, 2012). Interviewees recognise these rationalities. Firstly, interviewees acknowledge that they engage to conform to the usual or expected behaviour found in historical precedents and trajectories, stating that in the case HEI engagement is in its “...*DNA...*” (TM3). Secondly, interviewees and case HEI staff also engage because they are socially aware, offering their time voluntarily to external community stakeholders. Interviewees stated they “...*have a whole host of staff, who engage in community activity, between the GAA [Gaelic Athletic Association], between charity bodies, local enterprise initiatives*” (HoD4). Thirdly, established norms or habits were highlighted by interviewees who stated that “*The prevailing dominant logic around [the Case HEI] is around that notion of us being connected to the outside world and that drives behaviour and it is behaviour that is a taken for granted norm*” (TM3).

In summary, the case HEI comprises many staff who are members of professional networks. These staff consider engagement the norm and both voluntarily and professionally undertake engagement activities. This is in agreement with the literature which concludes that professional networks can influence perceptions of legitimacy and acceptance of activity. Normative forces rooted in the three conditions termed historical precedents and trajectories, social justification, and norms and habits by Verbeke and Tung (2012) were highlighted by interviewees. Hence the findings indicate that the case HEI’s engagement activity is influenced by normative forces.

Overall, the case HEI’s engagement activity is influenced by the need to appear legitimate to their stakeholders. This has caused them to adopt isomorphic behaviours through

coercion, mimetic and normative actions. Other influences on engagement will be discussed in the following section.

8.3.5 Other influences on engagement: Social and market pressures

Social and market pressures may also influence engagement as discussed in section 8.2.9 above. These influences are considered in the following sections. The relationship between these pressures and institutional forces is then discussed.

8.3.5.1 Social pressures

Social pressures may be based on a perceived social contract between the organisation and the society in which it operates (Deegan, 2006). Clemens and Douglas (2006) suggest that it may be in the best interest of the organisation to adopt social initiatives, as it will be rewarded with competitive advantage. Langford et al. (2006) and Gounko and Smale (2007) posit that informal pressure may arise from cultural expectations in the society within which organisations function. In the context of HEI engagement engaging with society involves the communities stakeholder group. According to the literature, because of their classification as latent stakeholders (Mitchell et al., 1997), it appears that the case HEI need not engage with communities at all.

However, this research has identified a perceived social contract between the case HEI and communities. The interviewees recognise that they need to put something back into society as a result of this contract. One interviewee stated “... *it is an ecosystem; everybody has a role, everybody feeds off of everyone else, in a positive way, and puts something back in again.*” (HoD12). The case HEI engages with its communities in a wide variety of ways (see Figure 8.13). It does this because the case HEI is “...*part of that community based contract with the outside world...*” (HoD12) and interviewees consider it right to make a social contributions to the case HEI’s communities as “... *part of the broader mission...*” (TM4). Other interviewees indicated the importance of servicing communities because cultural expectations mean they “... *have an obligation to service them*” (HoD8) from “*a more ... philanthropic ... point of view*” (HoD1).

The level of engagement with communities, the recognition of a community based contract with the outside world and the importance attached by interviewees to such engagement, demonstrates the influence of cultural expectations on the case HEI and

confirms informal pressures highlighted in the literature (Gounko and Smale, 2007; Langford et al., 2006).

8.3.5.2 Market pressures

Market mechanisms, that prioritise profit, cost reduction, and competitive advantage can also be harnessed by stakeholders to influence firms (Lee and Lounsbury, 2015). Market pressures can lead organisations to build relationships with stakeholders that exhibit closeness, possibly through the experience or visibility of the organisation's activities (McConville and Hyndman, 2015).

In this study (section 7.3.5), market pressures are found to influence engagement with some stakeholders as the case HEI strives for competitive advantage. For example, the case HEI wishes to exhibit close links with professional bodies to demonstrate their experience in the provision of appropriate education (via accreditation and delegation). Interviewees contend that such closeness can satisfy market expectations and ensure continued intake of students, with one interviewee highlighting that his "*... course is accredited ...to masters level which is very important to us as we are the only ones in [the province] to have it...*" (HoD13). Being the only HEI with this accreditation gives the case HEI competitive advantage.

Close links to prospective students are also demonstrated in the case HEI as it strives to show the market its experience by undertaking engagements with prospective students. Interviewees mentioned engagement with prospective students such as "*...BT young scientists... [and] we take in two transition year students per week.*" (HoD2). Similarly, market pressures have influenced engagement with alumni. Engaging with latent stakeholders is at the discretion of management of an organisation (Mainardes et al., 2010), and as alumni are classified as latent stakeholders the case HEI need not engage with alumni at all. However, they do so because there is market pressure on them to do so. For example, one interviewee recognised these market pressures stating: "*Alumni provide placements and job opportunities for our graduates, they inform changes to programmes at programmatic review and, most importantly, they act as ambassadors for the programme, the department, and [case HEI] as a whole*" (HoD6).

Overall, social and market pressure can also influence engagement in the case HEI. The next section demonstrates the relationship between isomorphic pressures and social and market pressures.

8.3.5.3 Amplification or reduction

According to the theoretical model adapted from Lee (2011) (See section 5.4 and Figure 8.3), the engagement of the case HEI with its external stakeholders is also influenced by stakeholders' ability to amplify or reduce the institutional pressures on the organisation. For example, business and industry, as one of the most salient stakeholder groups (definitive), has strong potential to influence the case HEI by either amplifying or reducing the coercive, mimetic or normative isomorphic mechanisms in the institutional environment by using social and market pressures. At a fundamental level the identification of business and industry as important stakeholders for the case HEI is amplified by the three isomorphic influences as well as social and market pressures imposed on the case HEI by the stakeholders themselves. As discussed in previous sections, government policy coerces engagement with business and industry. The case HEI mimics other HEIs that are perceived as successful, and professional staff within the case HEI consider engaging with business and industry the norm. In addition to the isomorphic pressures, market pressures require the case HEI to engage with business and industry in order to ensure employment for their graduates and consequently continued demand from prospective students. Hence, the isomorphic influences on the case HEI's engagement interactions are amplified by market pressures from its stakeholders.

A further example is apparent in relation to prospective students (definitive stakeholder), who can also influence how the case HEI engages. Interviewees highlighted the importance of being able to meet the micro concerns of prospective students by answering the questions they pose to the HEI directly such as "... *What are the points, what kind of prospective jobs can you get out of this course ...*" (HoD4) or "...*what [are the] Maths requirements*" (HoD1). As a result of market pressure, some interviewees further engage with prospective students by running STEM information session for prospective students, such as "... *the exploring technology programme, which is run for transition year students ...*" (HoD13) or "... *There's a new one for female students, I-WISH ...*" (HoD5). This amplifies national policy aimed at increasing STEM graduates and female STEM graduates. Therefore, coercive government policy, amplified by market demands from

prospective students for information, can ensure continued intake of students. HEIs are therefore more likely to continue such engagement interactions.

However, engagement with some stakeholders can also reduce isomorphic pressures from the environment. For example, business and the industry as a stakeholder group, specifically as employers, can also reduce the isomorphic influences on the case HEI. In the findings (Section 7.2.2.4) interviewees discussed the importance of being able to meet this stakeholder's proximate and micro concerns such as the concerns of "*...core employers in the region...*" (TM3). Therefore, even though national policy exerts a coercive influence on the case HEI to provide STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) graduates, businesses (and specifically employers) in the case HEI's local area have reduced this effect by using market pressures and demanding different skills for graduates. For example, one interviewee commented that an employer was looking for "*...graduates who could actually write*" (HoD14), so he designed a course with this in mind. This example shows how coercion from government policy (coercive isomorphism) is reduced by local business and industry stakeholder demands (proximate concerns) because the case HEI is influenced by its market.

Overall, and in agreement with the theoretical model adapted from Lee (2011) (See section 5.4), engagement is not only influenced by stakeholder salience, legitimacy and isomorphism but also by social and market pressures on the case HEI. Interviewees suggested that social pressure has influenced the case HEI's engagement with community stakeholders in terms a cultural expectation and this concurs with the literature. Market pressures are also highlighted by the interviewees as they attempt to demonstrate what the literature identifies as close links to stakeholders through the experience or visibility of the organisation's activities. Interviewees said market pressures have influenced their engagement with professional bodies, prospective students and alumni. The proposition in the literature that stakeholder concerns amplify or reduce isomorphic pressures was also confirmed in this study (Lee, 2011). The findings show that definitive stakeholders such as business and industry and prospective students can amplify or reduce the isomorphic influences by using market and social pressures.

This section discussed engagement including its identification, definition, and types of engagement undertaken in the case HEI. It also discussed the role of stakeholder salience and other influences on engagement. The next section focuses on engagement measurement.

8.4 Engagement measurement

This section examines the engagement measures found in the case HEI using the approach taken by the researcher in previous sections, graduate formation, workforce development, research and innovation, social enhancement and market advancement. Internal engagement measurement is discussed first, followed by a discussion on mandatory engagement performance.

As outlined in Chapter 3 (section 3.5.2.4), a large number of measures are available to HEIs when measuring their engagement performance. For ease of discussion, measures noted in the literature were categorised by the researcher under five headings; graduate formation, workforce development, research and innovation, social enhancement, and market advancement. Graduate formation is described as equipping graduates ‘...with the academic excellence, practitioner knowledge and entrepreneurial skills and capabilities...’ (Sheridan and Fallon, 2015, p.1). Workforce development is described as upskilling of the labour force and lifelong learning (Arbo and Benneworth, 2007). Engaging for research and innovation exposes HEI researchers to a wide range of problems identified by industry and other external stakeholders, opening an array of research avenues that otherwise would not have emerged (D’Este and Patel, 2007). Social enhancement is described as engagement which is undertaken for the good of society and draws on the concept of the social contract proposed by many researchers (Jongbloed et al., 2008; Padfield et al., 2008b; Arbo and Benneworth, 2007). Engaging for market advancement are those interactions that help create and maintain a positive impression of the HEI (Mora et al., 2010). Measures cited in the literature (as noted in Appendix C) are broad and dependent on the focus on engagement at the specific HEI. Therefore, ‘...we always have to ask ourselves the question: are those the right measures for us?’ (Pollard et al., 2013b, p.45).

8.4.1 Reporting engagement within the case HEI

The interviewees in this study outlined a large number of engagement measures as being reported (See Figure 7.30). Figure 8.17 below shows the stakeholder groupings that engage with the HEI and classifies the interactions based on the five engagement categories found in the literature (see section 3.4). The figure also shows the types of engagement reported by the interviewees and confirms if, in the opinion of the interviewees, the engagement is reported/measured in the case HEI.

Types of engagement by stakeholder grouping				
Stakeholder	Category of engagement	Type of engagement interaction	Engagement measured/ reported within case HEI	
Business and industry	Graduate formation	Curriculum design	Yes	
		Panels and advisory board	Yes	
		Guest lectures	Yes	
		Work placement	Yes	
		Work based projects and live cases	Yes	
		Customised learning	Yes	
		Mentors and sponsors	No	
		External examiners	No	
	Workforce development	Recruitment	No	
		Customised courses	Yes	
		Continual professional development	No	
		Research and innovation	Funding	Yes
			Consultancy	Yes
	Social enhancement	Public access to knowledge	No	
		Meeting regional skill needs	No	
	Market advancement	Course promotion	No	
Industry associations		No		
Prospective students	Social enhancement	Meeting regional skill needs	No	
		School visits	Yes	

Types of engagement by stakeholder grouping			
Stakeholder	Category of engagement	Type of engagement interaction	Engagement measured/ reported within case HEI
	Market advancement	Teacher interactions	No
		Workshops	No
		Transition year programmes	No
		Feeder college interactions	No
		Competitions and quizzes	No
		Open days	No
		Career fairs	No
		Roadshows	No
		Parent/sponsor interaction	No
		Web based interactions	No
Government and their agencies	Graduate formation	Work placement	No
	Research and innovation	Funding for research	Yes
		Research contracts	Yes
		Collaborations	No
	Social enhancement	Meeting regional skill needs	No
		Promotion of region and HEI	No
	Market advancement	Research agencies and funding for research	Yes
Networking on government committees		No	
Other HEIs	Graduate formation	Panels in case HEI/ in other HEIs with case staff	No
		External examiners in case HEI	No
		External examiner with HEI staff on other campuses	No
	Research and innovation	Collaborations	Yes
	Market advancement	Other networks	No
Professional bodies	Graduate formation	Guest lectures	No
		Course delivery	No

Types of engagement by stakeholder grouping			
Stakeholder	Category of engagement	Type of engagement interaction	Engagement measured/ reported within case HEI
	Workforce development	Accreditation	No
		Exemptions	No
	Market advancement	Other networks	No
Communities	Graduate formation	Work placement	No
		Live cases	No
	Social enhancement	Public access to knowledge and sharing of resources	No
		Community education	No
		Meet regional skill needs	No
		Staff volunteering	No
Alumni	Graduate formation	Work placement	No
		Guest lectures	No
		Mentoring and sponsorship	No
	Workforce development	Customised learning	No
		Continual professional development	No
		Recruitment	No

Figure 8.17: Engagement reported or measured within case HEI.

Arranged by stakeholder group and type of engagement

(Source: Researcher)

Figure 8.17 shows that while interviewees identified many types of engagement they were unaware of measures corresponding to these interactions. In the findings chapter (section 7.4.1), interviewees noted measures that they report within the case HEI for engagement with business and industry, with prospective students, with government and their agencies and with other HEIs. No measures were reported by interviewees for engagement with professional bodies, communities and alumni. Figure 8.17 shows for the stakeholder groups business and industry, prospective students, government and their agencies, and other HEIs, many types of engagement reported by interviewees do not have corresponding measures. For business and industry, seventeen types of engagement were

identified by interviewees but just nine of those are reported or measured in the case HEI. Interviewees highlighted twelve types of engagement with prospective students but one measure is reported in the case HEI. Eight engagement interactions with government and their agencies were highlighted by interviewees but only three funding measures were identified as being reported. Finally, five types of engagement with other HEIs were noted by interviewees with just one measure being reported in the case HEI.

Conversely, the interview findings show that some measures were identified by respondents but corresponding types of engagement were not noted by the interviewees. For example, licences, spin offs and patents are reported as measures but are not included in the types of engagement by interviewees.

The salience of stakeholders appears to have limited impact on the selection of performance measures within the case HEI. Limited social and market pressures to measure engagement has been identified in this research. Internal reporting measures of engagement were identified for the two of the definitive stakeholders (business and industry and prospective students), the expectant stakeholder group (government and its agencies), and one latent stakeholder (Other HEIs). The interviewees identified some market pressure to measure engagement with other HEIs because “...*we are fighting for the same pot of money essentially...*” (HoD9). Social pressure to measure engagement with communities was also identified with interviewees stating “...*we are accountable to taxpayers ... [because] there is a moral imperative*” (HoD1).

Stakeholder	Engagement interactions	Engagement measures
Definitive stakeholders		
Business and industry	17	9
Prospective students	12	1
Professional bodies	5	0
Expectant stakeholders		
Government and their agencies	8	3
Latent stakeholders		
Other HEIs	5	1
Communities	6	0
Alumni	6	0

Figure 8.18: Engagement interactions and measures reported

Arranged by stakeholder group

(Source: Researcher)

Figure 8.17 and 8.18 show that lots of types of engagement occur in the case HEI that are not reported internally. Overall, this suggests a decoupling between the types of engagement, as influenced by stakeholder salience, and the reporting of engagement within the case HEI (see section 8.5 for a more detailed discussion on decoupling).

8.4.1.1 How engagement is reported within the case HEI

When discussing how HEI performance should be measured, Pollard et al. (2013b) suggest that HEIs should not ‘... *measure anything unless you know why and what you are going to do with the information - ‘What are they for? Who is the audience?’*’ (Pollard et al., 2013b, p.79). These authors contend that ‘*Measures should not exist just for the sake of measurement; they should exist only where there is a clear intended use for obvious benefit*’ (Pollard et al., 2013b, p.80). Furthermore, where the activities of an organisation can be observed, the need for a formal account would decrease (Gray et al., (2006) quoted in McConville and Hyndman (2015)).

The findings show that engagement is measured and reported through a broad range of mechanisms within the case HEI. The mechanisms for reporting engagement internally include; programmatic reviews, faculty and departmental reports, reports for extended campus, reports for funding, and permission to do external work. For example, one interviewee stated that her department had “... *sought opportunity to include those [engagements] in reports to the governing body, reports to [the] Institute’s Executive Board (IEB).*” (TM1). Interviewees report on the types of engagement interactions in programmatic reviews which “... *would seek to include information around engagement in terms of industry and the types of activities...a sample of who came in.*” (HoD3). Engagement is also recorded informally by interviewees for acknowledgement of the activity, by using the case HEI’s internal email system.

8.4.2 Mandatory reporting of engagement

As discussed in the previous chapter (section 7.5), the performance compact is the official performance reporting mechanism required by the Higher Education Authority (HEA) in Ireland (Higher Education Authority, 2014b). HEIs select the engagement measures that they consider most appropriate to their organisation, and through strategic dialogue with the HEA, performance targets are established (Higher Education Authority, 2015b). However the findings show that those measures that are in the performance compact do not include much of the stakeholder engagement activity undertaken. Figure 8.19 below presents the stakeholder groupings, classifies the types of engagement based on the five engagement categories found in the literature, and lists the types of engagement noted by interviewees as reported to the HEA based on the performance compact.

Type of engagement by stakeholder			
Stakeholder	Category of engagement	Type of engagement interaction	Engagement measured in the compact
Business and Industry	Graduate formation	Curriculum design	Yes
		Panels and advisory board	Yes

Type of engagement by stakeholder			
Stakeholder	Category of engagement	Type of engagement interaction	Engagement measured in the compact
		Guest lectures	Yes
		Work placement	Yes
		Work based projects and live cases	No
		Customised learning	Yes
		Mentors and sponsors	No
		External examiners	No
	Workforce development	Recruitment	No
		Customised courses	Yes
		Continual professional development	No
	Research and innovation	Funding	Yes
		Consultancy	Yes
	Social enhancement	Public access to knowledge	No
		Meeting regional skill needs	No
	Market advancement	Course promotion	No
		Industry associations	No
Prospective students	Social enhancement	Meeting regional skill needs	No
	Market advancement	School visits	No
		Teacher interactions	No
		Workshops	No
		Transition year programmes	No
		Feeder college interactions	No
		Competitions and quizzes	No
		Open days	No
		Career fairs	No
		Roadshows	No
		Parent/sponsor interaction	No
	Web based interactions	No	

Type of engagement by stakeholder			
Stakeholder	Category of engagement	Type of engagement interaction	Engagement measured in the compact
Government and their agencies	Graduate formation	Work placement	No
	Research and innovation	Funding for research	Yes
		Research contracts	Yes
		Collaborations	No
	Social enhancement	Meeting regional skill needs	Yes
		Promotion of region and HEI	No
	Market advancement	Research agencies and funding for research	Yes
		Networking on government committees	No
Other HEIs	Graduate formation	Panels in case HEI/ in other HEIs with case staff	Yes
		External examiners in case HEI	No
		External examiner with HEI staff on other campuses	No
	Research and innovation	Collaborations	Yes
	Market advancement	Other networks	No
Professional bodies	Graduate formation	Guest lectures	No
		Course delivery	No
	Workforce development	Accreditation	No
		Exemptions	No
	Market advancement	Other networks	No
Communities	Graduate formation	Work placement	No
		Live cases	No
	Social enhancement	Public access to knowledge and sharing of resources	No

Type of engagement by stakeholder			
Stakeholder	Category of engagement	Type of engagement interaction	Engagement measured in the compact
		Community education	No
		Meet regional skill needs	Yes
		Staff volunteering	No
Alumni	Graduate formation	Work placement	No
		Guest lectures	No
		Mentoring and sponsorship	No
	Workforce development	Customised learning	Yes
		Continual professional development	No
		Recruitment	No

Figure 8.19: Engagement reported in the performance compact

Arranged by stakeholder group and type of engagement

(Source: Prepared by the Researcher using the case HEI's performance compact (case HEI (2014))

Figure 8.19 shows that many types of engagement identified by interviewees are not reported by the case HEI in the performance compact. For example, interviewees noted interactions with business and industry as mentors and sponsors and external examiners as a type of engagement (graduate formation), but no measures for this type of engagement are reported in the performance compact. Conversely, there are engagement measures in the compact relating to types of engagement not discussed by the interviewees. For example, the compact includes measures for licences and patents but, as Figure 8.9 shows, interviewees did not report this type of research and innovation engagement interaction. Appendix F combines both Figures 8.17 and 8.19 to show all measures used by the case HEI.

The interviewees identified some different measures being reported internally to those reported in the performance compact. Focusing on the types of interactions suggested by

interviewees, Figure 8.20 below summarises the differences arising in Appendix F, between measures reported for internal use and those reported in the performance compact. For example, as shown in Figure 8.20, measures were reported internally for business and industry and prospective students, and not reported in the performance compact. Conversely, measures were included in the performance compact and not reported internally for government and their agencies, other HEIs, communities and alumni. No engagements with professional bodies are reported either internally or in the performance compact. Measures of research and innovation interactions are the only category of engagement that all of the same engagement measures are reported both internally and in the performance compact.

Stakeholder	Category of engagement	Type of engagement interaction	Engagement measured/ reported within case HEI	Engagement measured in the compact
Business and industry	Graduate formation	Work based projects and live cases	Yes	No
Prospective students	Market advancement	School visits	Yes	No
Government and their agencies	Social enhancement	Meeting regional skill needs	No	Yes
Other HEIs	Graduate formation	Panels in case HEI/ in other HEIs with case staff	No	Yes
Professional bodies	Nothing reported internally or in the compact			
Communities	Social enhancement	Meet regional skill needs	No	Yes
Alumni	Workforce development	Customised learning	No	Yes

Figure 8.20: Differences in engagement reported internally and in the performance compact.

(Source: Researcher based on interviewee findings and the case HEI's performance compact (Performance Compact: case HEI, 2014b))

Explanations of the differences in the types of engagement interactions suggested by interviewees and the reporting of those measures (internally and externally) are proposed in the following section.

8.5 Decoupling

This section begins by drawing on literature to describe how decoupling may apply to engagement and its measurement in the case HEI. Instances of decoupling are suggested in the findings and these are discussed in this section.

As noted in section 4.5.1.2, decoupling is a characteristic of NIS commonly discussed in the literature. A decoupled system is one where there is distinctiveness (work processes reflecting indeterminate task technologies), without responsiveness (work processes not reflecting formal structure or the institutional environment) (Orton and Weick, 1990), where actual organisational structures and procedures may be decoupled from external expectations, or compromised in order to avoid dysfunction and a loss of legitimacy (Fogarty and Dirsmith, 2001, Lester, 2005, Moll et al., 2006, Pache and Santos, 2013, Janićjević, 2015). In order to avoid losing legitimacy, institutions and individuals often display '*...regulatory ritualism: reports are produced, assessments performed, performance indicators reported*' (Jarvis, 2014, p.249), but in a manner that is disconnected from the culture, practices and the behaviours of individuals and institutions. The theoretical model adopted for this exploratory research study recognises the possibility of decoupling, proposing that stakeholder influences can either amplify or reduce institutional influences (see Section 8.5.3).

Based on the descriptions of decoupling in the literature, the findings of this study indicate three incidences of decoupling, as shown in Figure 8.21. Firstly, the performance compact (influenced by coercion from the HEA) was decoupled from engagement practice in the case HEI, such that interviewees are unaware of its existence and report no influence on their engagement activity since its implementation. Secondly, the institutional environment in the form of government policy and guidelines attempted to coerce the case HEI into selecting engagement performance measures, yet the specific measures chosen were influenced instead by mimetic and normative forces. Thirdly, in the findings evidence of decoupling is suggested by the gap identified between engagement activity and practice, as influenced by stakeholder salience, and those practices that are actually

measured. Strong stakeholder influences that are in conflict with institutional influences may result in engagement and its measurement being decoupled from institutional requirements (see sections 8.5.2 and 8.5.3). Each of these incidences of decoupling is discussed in more detail below.

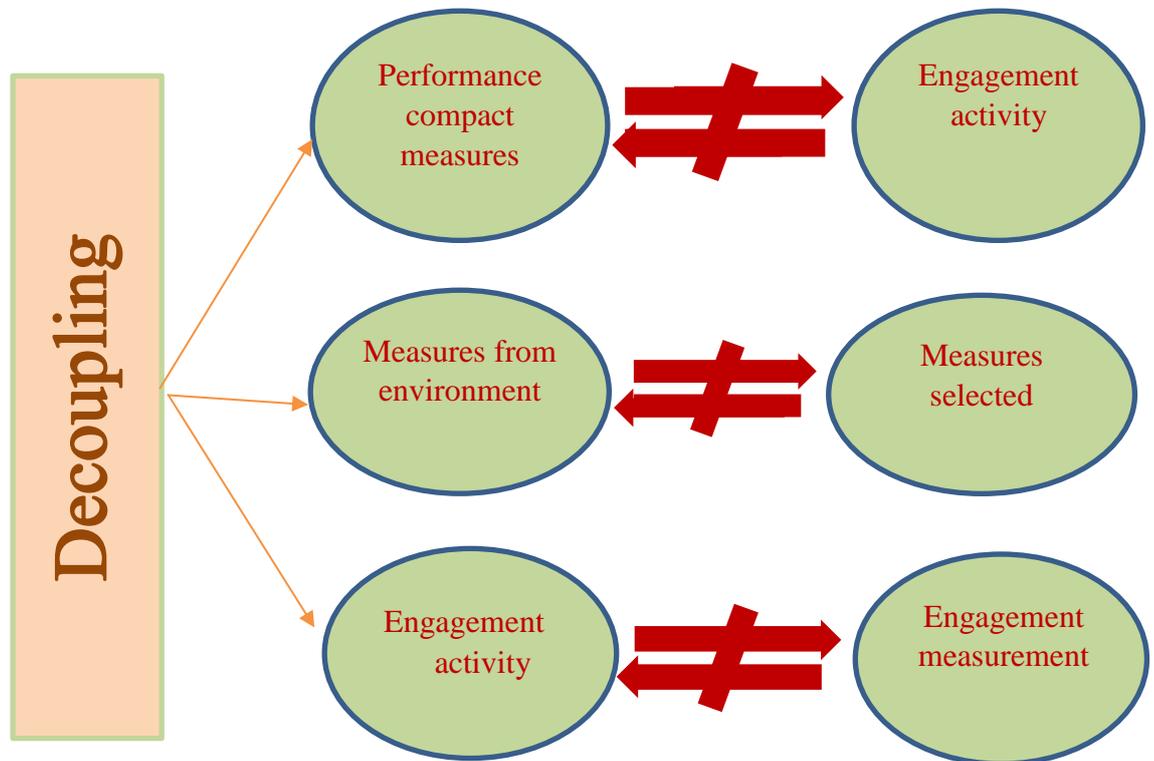


Figure 8.21: Incidences of decoupling

(Source: Researcher)

8.5.1 Establishment and impact of the compact

The first indication of decoupling in this study is found when looking at the establishment of the performance compact. In order to demonstrate legitimacy to the government and to secure funding, the case HEI was required to establish a performance compact. As discussed in Chapter 2 (section 2.5.2), the HEA introduced performance compacts to align the missions, strategies and profiles of individual HEIs with national HE priorities (Higher Education Authority, 2014b). The rationale was that the compacts would establish indicators of success against which HEI performance would be measured and funding allocated. The HEA (2014b) stated that the aim of the performance compact was ‘... to allow the system to deliver on a set of outcomes identified as essential for Ireland’s

social and economic well-being.' (Higher Education Authority, 2014b, p.99). Recognising the differing strategies of Irish HEIs, the HEA required the creation of an institutional performance compact but allowed them to establish their own measures.

'The Compact recognises that there is a tension between providing a transparent framework of public accountability for performance in relation to funding, and risks of unintended behaviours related to measurements. It addresses this tension by requiring higher education institutions themselves to propose the qualitative and quantitative indicators against which their performance should be assessed by the Higher Education Authority.' (Performance Compact: case HEI, 2014b, p.3).

By being allowed to establish its own measures it is suggested that the case HEI should have chosen measures that best suited its operations and strategy. All management levels could have been involved in compact preparation. However, heads of department (operational level managers) were excluded when establishing the compact and subsequently were not aware of either the performance compact (section 7.5.1), or the specific measures that it contains (section 7.5.2). The findings indicate that some HoD interviewees were unaware of the compact stating they hadn't heard of it at all or had heard of it but had no knowledge of what it is: *"I have heard of it but that is about it."* (HoD13). Furthermore, suggestions of the lack of awareness of the performance measures contained in the compact are shown by comments such as: *"I have looked at it once so let me go back to it now...no I can't remember anything in it"* (HoD4). These comments were not isolated incidences. Lack of awareness of the contents of the performance compact was common among interviewees, with very few aware of any engagement measures therein. For example, one interview stated *"I know that there are many things, probably there are some for engagement, but I have no idea what they are"* (HoD9). Top managers, and those who knew of the performance compact separately from their role as head of department, were the only interviewees who were aware of the performance compact. This indicates that although the case HEI is demonstrating legitimacy to government, by establishing a performance compact, the desired outcomes are unlikely to be attained due to the low level of awareness of the compact by the operational managers (HoDs). This is confirmed by a top manager who noted that the performance compact has yet to make an impact that *"...it hasn't embedded itself..."* (TM4). None of the heads of department interviewed noted any relationship between the performance compact and their activity, contending that the performance compact had no effect. One

interviewee stated the performance compact does ‘*Not directly...*’ (HoD10) impact them. Therefore, the findings of this study suggest that when establishing its compact the case HEI appears to have decoupled its performance compact from its operational managers (HoDs). Since implementation, the compact continues to be decoupled from subsequent engagement activity.

8.5.2 Selection of engagement reporting measures

The second incidence of decoupling relates to the institutional environment that comprises of the three isomorphic influences (coercive, mimetic, and normative) as well as social and market pressures. The findings show that the case HEI has complied with the legislative requirements for selecting engagement measures: interviewees identified the effect of coercive influences stating “*Government policy clearly has to be taken into account*” (HoD10). Similarly, a 2013 document produced by the HEA entitled *Towards a performance evaluation framework* also requires HEIs to consider the European Commission-funded U-Multirank, which assesses ‘*...institutions’ engagement (‘third mission’) activities through three dimensions: ‘knowledge transfer’, ‘international orientation’, and ‘regional engagement’...*’ (Higher Education Authority, 2013, p.26). These three measurement themes are also contained in the performance compact templates issued to HEIs (Performance Compact: A.I.T., 2014, Performance Compact: D.C.U., 2014). In addition, some funding for the case HEI is contingent on meeting targets set in legislative requirements. Hence, it appears that the case HEI is being coerced into selecting certain engagement performance measures. This is supported by documentary analysis (minutes of the strategic dialogue between the case HEI and the HEA which reviewed this compact) which assured the case HEI that they had chosen the correct measures when it stated “*...the HEA and [the case HEI] agree that the mission, planned profile and targets, as now set out in the accompanying Compact, are consistent with the national objectives set for the higher education system and are appropriate to the place of [case HEI] within the system.*” (Performance Compact: case HEI, 2014a, p.1). The case HEI received funding based on the first performance compact (only one has been released at time of writing) that they submitted for the period 2014-2016 (Performance Compact: case HEI, 2014b). The compact states ‘*Having regard to the performance of [the case HEI] in the strategic dialogue process leading to this compact, performance funding of €257,000 has been allocated to the Institute.*’ (Performance Compact: case HEI, 2014b, p.39).

Though the case HEI has selected measures based on government coercion, they appear to have been engaged in what Jarvis (2014) has termed regulatory ritualism. McQuarrie et al. (2013) define regulatory ritualism as ‘... *the force by which governments set boundaries for the category of legally operating organisations...*’ (McQuarrie et al., 2013, p.156). Regulatory ritualism has coerced the case HEI to comply with the regulation and prepare a performance compact. However, the case HEI has done so in a ritual manner because although measures selected were influenced by government coercion they were also influenced by other institutional forces and market pressures. This finding indicates that interviewees proposed mimetic behaviour in the selection of measures for the performance compact. This type of behaviour is often undertaken where organisations aim to maintain legitimacy by imitating others that they perceive as more legitimate and successful (Langford et al., 2006, Arbo and Benneworth, 2007). In addition, market pressures have amplified the need to mimic best in practice. One interviewee confirmed that they mimicked other HEIs that were considered best in class stating: “*So we took their model and we benchmarked ourselves against institutions which were of the types we wanted to be...*” (TM4).

Interviewees also recognised normative pressure in the selection of measures, suggesting that the case HEI selected measures based on the normative perceptions embedded within the case HEI from “...*work with international groups...*” (TM1) and the society in which staff operate (social norms). Interviewees noted that measures were selected based on those already in use by international measurement systems such as the aforementioned U-Multirank system, the HEA and Enterprise Ireland. For example, one interviewee stated “*The ILO [Industrial Liaison Office] prepared the targets for things like spin outs, licence, and patents, and so forth, and that was largely because that is driven by enterprise Ireland*” (TM2). As some funding comes from Enterprise Ireland, there is market pressure amplifying this normative isomorphism. A comparison of the performance compacts submitted to the HEA shows, for example, that measures used by Enterprise Ireland (government and their agencies stakeholder group) such as spin outs, patents and licences, were selected by the majority of HEIs for inclusion in their performance compacts (see Appendix D). Interviewees, working on Enterprise Ireland projects and research, consider such measures the norm, even though none of the interviewees reported such activity as a type of engagement. For example, one interviewees stated: “...*There is no internationally or nationally agreed way ... However,*

there are a number of measures broadly agreed ... So you will see them coming up time and time again in publications from the likes of the HEA or Enterprise Ireland.” (TM2). As a result of the frequent reoccurrence of certain measures, interviewees would expect them to be included in the performance compact showing normative isomorphism. Therefore, the institutional environment has caused decoupling between government demands, via regulatory coercion impressed on the HEI (i.e. a performance compact and guidance on measure selection), and the mimetic and normative pressures (amplified by market pressures but no social pressures on measurement selection were identified as proposed by the theoretical model) in the institutional environment that have influenced the contents of the performance compact.

8.5.3 Measurement of engagement

The third indication of decoupling is suggested since the selection of measures for the performance compact does not appear to have been influenced by engagement activity within the case HEI. Figures 8.16 and 8.18 show the wide range of engagement activities undertaken by the case HEI and the lack of alignment between these and the performance measures selected. The figures show that neither the internal reporting system, as reported by the interviewees, nor the external measures found in the performance compact, reflect the actual engagement being undertaken by the case HEI. Looking at decoupling through the lens of the theoretical model, the findings show that engagement activity is decoupled from engagement measurement because stakeholders have a stronger influence on engagement than the institutional environment but the the institutional environment has a stronger influence on engagement measurement than stakeholders.

One finding of this study is that stakeholder salience influences the types of engagement interactions in the case HEI (see section 8.3.3). The findings also suggest that a substantial amount of the stakeholder engagement activity undertaken goes unmeasured in the case HEI. Figure 8.17 shows business and industry (definitive stakeholder) has the highest number of engagement interactions and also the highest number of measures for those interactions. However, the other definitive stakeholders, prospective students and professional bodies, have just one and no measures reported respectively. The expectant stakeholder, government and their agencies has eight types of engagement interaction and three interactions reported. The latent stakeholders other HEIs have five interactions with

one measure reported and communities and alumni have six types of interaction with no measures reported. Therefore, it is suggested that though the salience of stakeholders has influenced the level of engagement and as a result engagement interactions are aligned with it, stakeholder salience has had little impact on the measures of engagement. There appears to be a decoupling of actual engagement interactions from engagement measurement that has led to the case HEI ignoring stakeholder salience.

In summary, Figure 8.21 shows, there are three instances of decoupling evidenced in this research. Firstly, in establishing the performance compact it was expected that HEI management would be actively involved and that HEA guidelines would be adhered to. However, in the case HEI management involvement in establishing the performance compact was extremely limited thus causing a decoupling effect. This effect continues as engagement activity since the implementation of the compact is not effected by the measurement system. Secondly, government policy and guidelines attempted to coerce the case HEI into selecting certain engagement performance measures, however the specific measures chosen were influenced by mimetic and normative forces amplified by market pressures. Consequently, the development of an engagement measurement system for the case HEI was decoupled from coercive pressure by mimicking other HEIs, implementing the norm and supported by market pressures. Thirdly, in the findings evidence of decoupling is suggested by the differences identified between engagement activities of the case HEI and those practices that are actually measured. There are measures in the compact relating to types of engagement not identified by the interviewees, and there are types of engagement identified which are not included as measures in the performance compact. As a result the engagement measurement system meets Orton and Weick (1990) criteria of a decoupled system, there is distinctiveness without responsiveness.

8.6 Conclusion

The chapter first discussed a wide variety of external stakeholders identified both in the literature and by the interviewees in this study. Next, the salience of these stakeholders was discussed and reasons for the difference between this research and the literature were suggested as proximity to the case HEI, levels of power, and environmental influences. Subsequently, engagement was discussed in terms of its definition, and the five main categories of engagement being graduate formation, workforce development, research

and innovation, social enhancement, and market advancement were considered. The chapter then discussed other influences on engagement including institutional environment and social and market pressures. Finally, measurement and reporting of engagement measures within the case HEI and externally was discussed and incidences of decoupling were highlighted. The next chapter presents overall conclusions, implications and recommendations arising from this study.

CHAPTER 9: CONCLUSION

9.1 Introduction

This chapter draws together all aspects of this exploratory research study. First, the research question and objectives are presented. Next, contributions of this study and conclusions are outlined. This is followed by a description of the contribution of this study to the literature and its implications for HE policy. Finally, limitations of the study and suggestions to further this research are presented.

9.2 Research question and objectives

There is a paucity of literature and empirical studies in the field of external stakeholder engagement and its measurement in the HE sector (Miller et al., 2014; Mainardes et al., 2010; Jongbloed et al., 2008). Furthermore, calls for robust research in this area, particularly in Ireland, have also been posited (Sheridan and Fallon, 2015; Boland, 2014). These calls for further research, coupled with the recent adoption of a national performance measurement system for managing and improving performance in publicly funded HEIs in Ireland, have provided the major drivers and key justifications for this study. Consequently, this exploratory research study has addressed the following question:

How do Irish HEIs engage with their external stakeholders and how is the engagement measured?

To address this question the following research objectives have been developed:

- 1: To determine how Irish HEIs engage with external stakeholders.*
- 2: To identify techniques currently used to report engagement practices in a HEI setting.*

3: *To explore the key influences on engagement practices and on measures selected to report engagement performance.*

The sections below identify the conclusions arising from this study as they relate to both the research question and the specified objectives.

9.3 Conclusions of this study

This section addresses the research objectives and outlines the conclusions for each. It considers how the case HEI engages with its external stakeholders, how that engagement is reported, and the influences on engagement. It then examines the umbrella research question: *How do Irish HEIs engage with their external stakeholders and how is the engagement measured?*

9.3.1 Conclusions: Irish HEI engagement with external stakeholders

This section addresses the first research objective: *To determine how Irish HEIs engage with external stakeholders.* Interviewees and documentary analysis, identified seven categories of external stakeholders with whom the case HEI engages across five broad types of engagement. The seven types of stakeholders include business and industry, prospective students, professional bodies, government and their agencies, communities, other HEIs and alumni. The research explored the salience of these external stakeholders. It classified them as being definitive, expectant or latent and concludes that proximity to the case HEI has a significant impact on these classifications. Proximity can explain why stakeholders who were classified as expectant in previous research have been classified as definitive by the interviewees in this research.

The research noted five types of engagement; graduate formation, workforce development, research and innovation, social enhancement and market advancement. As highlighted in previous chapters (see sections 3.4, 7.3.2 and 8.3.2) social enhancement and market advancement are added to the categories of engagement previously discussed in the literature. In this study, the interviewees identified a much broader range of engagement interactions within these five categories, than had been classified in the extant literature. The case HEI also has a broader range and higher levels of engagement

with definitive stakeholder groups (business and industry, professional bodies and prospective students) and with expectant stakeholder groups (government and their agencies), than with latent stakeholder groups. Engagement with latent stakeholders occurs in a much narrower way, involving fewer categories of engagement.

9.3.2 Conclusions: Reporting engagement performance

This section addresses the second research objective: *To identify techniques currently in use to report engagement practice in a HEI setting.* In this study the interviewees identified many ways in which engagement is reported in the case HEI. Documentary analysis has also identified other engagement reporting methods. These were discussed in this research as reporting engagement for internal and external use. Formal reporting of engagement for governing body or programmatic reviews is supplemented with informal reporting through emails to staff and departmental reports. The mandatory performance compact was identified as the main way external engagement was reported.

The findings show that there is overlap between measures reported for other uses and those reported in the performance compact (see Appendix F). However, regardless of how engagement is reported, engagement performance reporting shows limited links with engagement practice. As a result this study has identified three types of decoupling (section 8.5.) Firstly, the establishment of the performance compact was decoupled from engagement practice resulting in measures that did not reflect external engagement activity at the time of implementation. Neither does the performance influence subsequent engagement activity in the case HEI. Secondly, measures that were selected for the performance compact were based on normative and mimetic forces rather than what government required through coercive forces. Therefore the measures selected are those that are used (and would be expected) in the HE arena but government wanted measures that were appropriate for individual HEIs rather than generic measures of activity. Thirdly, engagement practice is decoupled from engagement measurement. Whereas the findings indicate that stakeholder salience influenced engagement activity, it had limited influence on engagement measurement in the case HEI.

In conclusion, the case HEI measures engagement in a number of ways. However, engagement measurement does not reflect engagement interactions.

9.3.3 Conclusions: Influences on engagement practices and reporting measures

This section addresses the third research objective: *To explore the key influences on engagement practices and on the measures selected to report engagement performance.* The theoretical model developed for this research (Figure 9.1) was utilised to describe engagement between the case HEI and its external stakeholders. Each element of the model was probed with interviewees and in case HEI documentation.

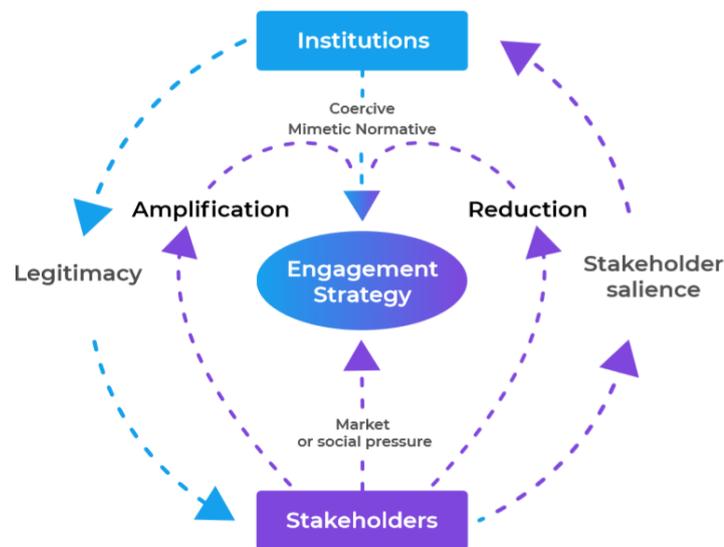


Figure 9.1: Theoretical model

(Source: Researcher (2019) adapted from Lee (2011))

Figure 9.1 shows the case HEI confers legitimacy on stakeholders, and the stakeholders in turn confer legitimacy on the case HEI (see section 8.3 above). The model also shows that engagement is influenced by two forces; institutional forces (coercive, mimetic and normative), and market and social pressures from stakeholders who can amplify or reduce the institutional influences. The following sections look at how these influences have affected engagement practice and engagement measurement in the case HEI.

Isomorphic pressures on the case HEI were identified in this study. The findings suggest coercive, mimetic and normative influences on the case HEI. These pressures have been identified in this research: they have legitimised external stakeholders, and influenced engagement strategy in HEIs, both in terms of engagement practice and engagement measurement. The research identified significant isomorphic pressures on the

performance compact of the case HEI, resulting in a measurement system of limited relevance to engagement activity between the case HEI and its stakeholders.

As well as isomorphic influences, this research has also identified social and market pressures or influences. Interviewees identified social pressure by highlighting a perceived social contract between the case HEI and communities. They recognised the need to put something back into society as a result of this social contract. Similarly, interviewees identified market pressures on the case HEI to compete for students.

Overall, this study suggests that HEI engagement with external stakeholders is also influenced by stakeholder ability to amplify or reduce the institutional pressures on the organisation. For example, government policy coerces engagement with business and industry stakeholders. The case HEI mimics other HEIs that are perceived as successful, and professional staff within the case HEI consider engaging with business and industry the norm. In addition to the isomorphic pressures, market pressures require the case HEI to engage with business and industry in order to ensure employment for their graduates and consequently continued demand from prospective students. Hence, the isomorphic influences on the case HEI's engagement interactions are amplified by market pressures from its stakeholders.

To summarise, engagement practice and measurement in the case HEI appears to be influenced by both isomorphic institutional forces and market and social pressures. The institutional pressures manifest themselves as coercive, mimetic and normative mechanisms. Through social and market pressures stakeholders can either amplify or reduce institutional pressures.

9.3.4 Overall conclusions

The umbrella research question for this study posited: *How do Irish HEIs engage with their external stakeholders and how is the engagement measured?* This section summarises the findings for this research question in two parts: how HEIs engage, and how it is measured.

Firstly, with regard to how Irish HEIs engage with their external stakeholders, this study identified a wide range of stakeholders with whom the case HEI engages in a broad manner. By relating the case HEI's stakeholders to engagement, this study has identified more types of engagement than previous studies. These types of engagement are indicated

in Figure 8.15 and include; engagement for graduate formation, workforce development, research and innovation, social enhancement, and market advancement. This is a more comprehensive list than identified in previous research. In particular engagement for social enhancement and market advancement need to be added to previous research by Sheridan and Fallon (2015) in order to identify all of the types of engagement HEIs undertake.

The second part of the research question addresses how engagement is measured. The findings of this study show that engagement is measured both in internal reports in the case HEI and in the performance compact mandated by the HEA. As a result a broad range of engagement measures are used. However, neither of the reporting mechanisms (in isolation or combined) measure all of the types of engagements undertaken by the case HEI, and indeed include measures for types of engagements not identified by interviewees in this study. Instead of being influenced by the types of engagement interactions, engagement measurement is influenced by institutional pressures and social and market pressures from the HEIs environment. The strength of the theoretical model apoted for this exploratory research study lies in its inclusion of these sometimes aligning, sometimes conflicting influences on HEI engagement and its measurement.

In conclusion therefore, the case HEI undertakes a large array of engagements with a wide range of external stakeholders. However, the engagements measured are not the same as the types of engagements undertaken.

9.4 Contribution of this study

Arising from the conclusions outlined in previous sections, there are five main contributions from this research and these are outlined below.

The first contribution of this exploratory research is the development of a theoretical model to examine the influences on HEI stakeholder engagement strategy. The model is based on Lee's (2011) model of the configuration of external influences on corporate social responsibility (CSR) (Lee, 2011). As a response to calls by Lee (2011) to test his model of influences on CSR, this study is the first to undertake any empirical testing of the model. The configuration proposed makes a contribution to the literature as few researchers have set out to examine the effect of multiple environmental influences (though literature does recognise that multiple stakeholders attempt to exert influence

over organisations). Therefore the contribution of this study is the combination of concepts from stakeholder and institutional theories to review stakeholder engagement practices in HE. It is used in this study to evaluate influences on external stakeholder engagement in HEIs. The study is the first to show through empirical testing that the configuration proposed by Lee (2011) and adapted by the researcher can explain environmental influences. This researcher tested model should help our understanding of the influence of external forces on engagement practices and measurement.

The second contribution is in response to calls for the development of a broader approach to engagement that facilitates linkages with a wider set of external stakeholders and thus includes more types of engagement than previously identified. Prior research has called for a broader approach as studies focused on few stakeholders in a more limited spectrum of engagement (Sheridan and Fallon, 2015; Miller et al., 2014; Mainardes et al., 2010; Jongbloed et al., 2008). Indeed researchers such as Lester (2005) contend that the ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach pursued by so many universities, with a focus on business stakeholders for engagements such as patenting, licensing, and new business formation, should be replaced with a more comprehensive, more differentiated view of the university role (Lester, 2005). This research addresses this gap by developing a more expansive approach that considers linkages between many stakeholders, engaging in multiple ways with the HEI. The study has identified seven external stakeholder groups whose engagement with the case HEI incorporates all five engagement categories as shown in Figure 8.15. In answering calls for a broader approach, this research has extended work conducted by Sheridan and Fallon (2015) by adding two further categories of engagement (market advancement and social enhancement) to the three categories they had previously identified (graduate formation, workforce development and research and innovation).

The third contribution is in the coupling of stakeholder salience with engagement. Previous research suggests that HEIs are strongly influenced by a wide range of external stakeholders (see section 9.3), but there is a lack of knowledge regarding how ongoing stakeholder relationships have shaped HEIs (Miller et al., 2014). This research is the first to ascertain HEI external stakeholders before combining salience and engagement to conclude that the more salient the stakeholder the more engagement types that are utilised in Irish HEIs.

The fourth contribution of this study relates to the influence of proximity on stakeholder salience. This research proposes that proximity to the case HEI is a key feature in ascribing salience to stakeholders and consequently how managers engage with them. Most work on stakeholder salience recognises that power, legitimacy and urgency influence salience. More recently however, other researchers have identified proximity as important in the identification of salient stakeholders (Neville et al., 2011; Driscoll and Starik, 2004). This study supports this recent research in its conclusions on the importance of proximity. The findings show that all definitive stakeholders are located close to the case HEI. The importance of government and their agencies fell from definitive status to expectant status due to their distal location from the case HEI. Not being recognised as definitive stakeholders makes the case HEI less responsive to their demands.

The fifth contribution relates to the limited work that had previously been conducted in measuring the engagement performance of HEIs. This research improves our understanding of the gap that exists between HEI stakeholder engagement and the measurement of that engagement. At present, the study shows that HoDs of a HEI have little or no understanding of the measurement system. Those in senior management designing and selecting metrics for the HEI seem to do so without consulting with operational managers. The HoDs appear to prioritise engagement practice based on stakeholders' requirements, however, the metrics are prepared by the case HEI with reference to government requirements, norms for other measurement systems, and practices of other HEIs, both within Ireland and Internationally. This has caused a decoupling between engagement practice and its measurement. This decoupling of engagement practice from engagement measurement means that HEIs may be meeting government imposed measurement requirements (they prepare a performance compact as mandated by government), but the engagement metrics selected are decoupled from engagement practice. According to the literature, decoupling the new engagement measurement system from engagement practice allows the HEI to appear legitimate to government and their agencies and other stakeholders, while continuing with previous engagement practices not reported in the performance compact. Measures are prepared that meet stakeholder expectations and isomorphic pressures, but these measures are not reflective of engagement practice within the case HEI.

Having discussed the five main contributions of the study implications of this research for HE policy are outlined in the next section.

9.5 Implications for HE policy

Having completed this study of external stakeholder engagement with HEIs, some recommendations for national policy in HE and the management of engagement within the case HEI are proposed and these are outlined below.

From a national policy perspective

- (i) It is important for the Department of Education and Skills and the HEA to reassess engagement measures included in the performance compacts to ensure that future measures selected by HEIs are integrated with their practice. This will reduce the possibility that the measurement system may become decoupled from engagement activity, and it will facilitate achievement of government strategy.
- (ii) The benefit of knowledge about stakeholder salience lies in its ability to help higher education authorities understand why HEIs engage more with certain stakeholders than with others. This understanding could help authorities formulate strategies that move stakeholders to a more salient position, thus encouraging certain types of engagement over others.
- (iii) The findings of the study suggest that training is necessary to ensure that individuals participating in engagement measurement have the knowledge and skills necessary to select measures that reflect practice. Such training could help participants select measures that enable the attainment of national HE strategy (the purpose of the performance compact) and the desired performance of the case HEI

From the perspective of managing engagement in the case HEI

- (i) The findings of the study show a lack of awareness of the performance compact itself, and the measures that it contains, suggesting that the compact does not guide performance, as was the desired HEA purpose of the document. It would be beneficial for the case HEI to review how measures selected for the compact were communicated to operational level managers and staff. Improved communication will help the case HEI better align its goals with engagement practice and subsequently improve its engagement performance.

- (ii) The study suggests that awareness of salient stakeholders is important for HEIs in eliminating noise so they can focus on what is important. This awareness could help the HEI management formulate strategies that may move stakeholders to a more salient position for HE practitioners.
- (iii) The research indicates that awareness of external influences that may affect the case HEI's engagement practice and measurement will also help managers within a HEI to take action to either amplify or reduce these influences to their advantage.
- (iv) This study will be of use to those managing engagement in HEIs that seek to benchmark and improve their own engagement activity, by cautioning them about the decoupled approach being adopted for engagement measurement. This decoupling reduces the impact of engagement activity on improving measures and reduces the impact of measures on improving engagement.

9.6 Limitations of the study

There are a number of limitations inherent within this research. As this thesis now draws to a close, this presents a timely opportunity for them to be restated:

Firstly, like many studies in this area, the researcher has selected a single case HEI. In conducting a single case study, this research has thus limited the scope for the generalisability of the findings to other organisations. Without resource and time limitations, the research might have been conducted on all HEIs in Ireland to explore the extent to which the influences and issues that have been revealed in this study are mirrored elsewhere in similar organisations.

Secondly, the researcher is responsible for undertaking all aspects of this study and, as such, has been subject to the limitations of time and personal resources. Without this constraint, or alternatively working with other researchers, there may have been scope to collect further data, particularly relating to the number of participants in the study. This resource constraint was one of the factors limiting the research to the main campus of the case HEI. However, the researcher believes the high level of participation by interviewees in the sample selected (almost 80% of HoDs participated) has delivered a good range of opinions.

A third limitation of this study relates to researcher bias (see section 6.5). As the researcher is personally familiar with the case HEI she immediately realised that she

likely had preconceived expectations and perceptions about engagement and its measurement in the case HEI. The potential for bias is a feature for pragmatic researchers, wherein researchers are forced to be cautious and self-conscious (Ormston et al., 2013) (see section 6.2.2). As a result, the researcher worked to negate her perceptions, personal and professional values and potential biases, through the careful and systematic planning and execution of this study. Early interviews were conducted with HoDs from many faculties to ensure that questions were worded to allow for any differences that might have been pertinent to the study.

A fourth limitation relates to timing and interviewee perspectives. The research was conducted at a single point in time, during the first three year cycle of the performance compact. A study at later dates may yield different management perspectives and opinions.

The final limitation relates to the inherent threat of respondent bias in the semi-structured interviews themselves due to probing and/or leading by the researcher. The possibility that the responses provided by interviewees may be an inaccurate reflection of interviewees' experiences have been limited by the researcher by both preparing for, and managing the interview process effectively, and ensuring to probe responses throughout the process in order to enhance accuracy of response. Transcripts were also provided to all interviewees to ensure the research had captured the essence of their perspectives and opinions as they intended.

9.7 Recommendations for future research

During the course of and upon completion of this study some opportunities for further research were identified and these are described below.

A logical suggestion arising from this research would be to continue the study of engagement interactions with external stakeholders and their measurement at the case HEI. It is likely that the next performance compact will be formulated and agreed within one year of completing this research hence it would be possible to ascertain if the measures selected in future cycles are influenced by the same external pressures as noted in this study and if there continues to be evidence of decoupling of the measurement system from engagement practices.

As this research is based on a single case, clearly there is scope to extend this to other HEIs to explore the extent to which the influences and issues that have been revealed in this study are mirrored elsewhere in similar organisations, both within Ireland and also in other countries. Such extension may be achieved by adopting a research design incorporating multiple case studies to facilitate cross-case comparison. Furthermore, the type of HEI (research intensive or teaching intensive) may influence the extent of successful stakeholder engagement and it may be possible to incorporate this into the criteria for case study selection.

Another area for future work is testing of the theoretical model in other organisational environments. For example, the framework could be applied in other non-profit organisations that also engage with multiple stakeholders. Such a study could support the findings in relation to the theoretical model in areas outside of the HE environment.

This research has addressed engagement measurement during its initial implementation at the case HEI, however, it may be valuable to conduct similar research in countries where engagement measurement has had a longer history of implementation, for example, in Australia and Scotland. Much of the work in these countries focuses on the measures that are the best/most appropriate/effective (Hanover Research, 2011), on success factors (Ferreira and Otley, 2009), the implementation process (Garlick and Langworthy, 2008), the users of performance reports (Habersam et al., 2013), or the appropriateness of HE strategy or national policy (Huisman and Currie, 2004; Gibbons, 2001). There seems to be a lack of research on factors influencing the selection of measures. Conducting such research may provide insights as to whether the influences that are reported in this study, also apply in organisations where engagement measurement, might logically be expected to be more embedded and advanced.

There may be value in exploring the views of other agents of engagement. For example, views of academics at the front line in relation to engagement practice could be explored, with the particular objective of identifying any barriers or impediments to their active participation in engagement. Of value also may be a more in-depth exploration of individual stakeholder groups, including how they interact, cooperate and form alliances or coalitions with other stakeholders and with managers as agents of the HEI. Such research could go further still and look in more detail at subsections of stakeholder groups.

For example, different types of business stakeholders might include, multinational corporations, small to medium sized enterprises, or service companies.

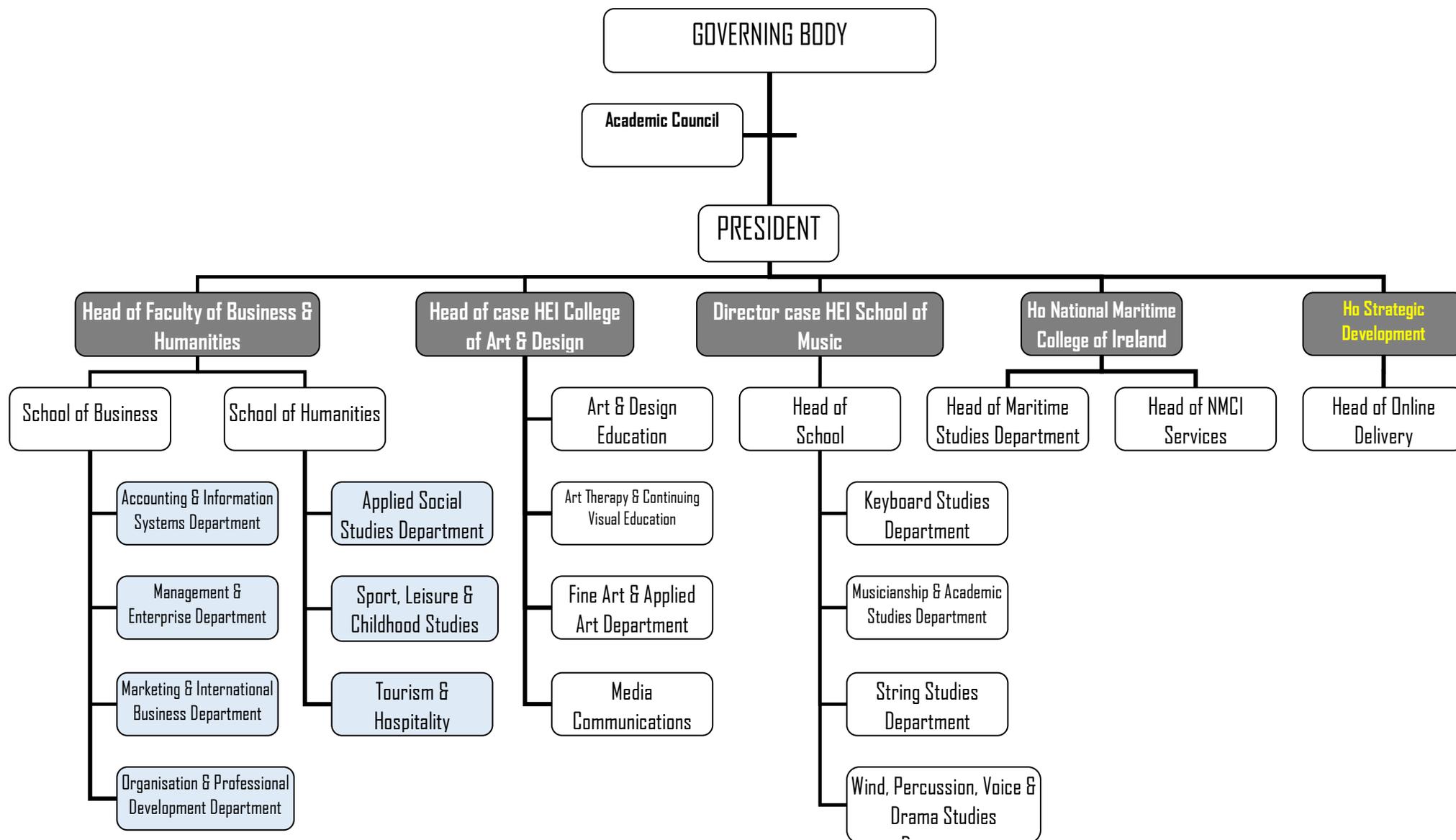
A longitudinal study may also be appropriate to ascertain if the stakeholders' level of salience remains the same over time. It may be that policy interventions, such as changes in HEI funding regimes, will have a significant impact on the salience of stakeholders and how HEIs engage with them. An equally valid pursuit is to establish what 'institutions' are in action in a given field, and how the influence of these institutions are maintained or changed over time.

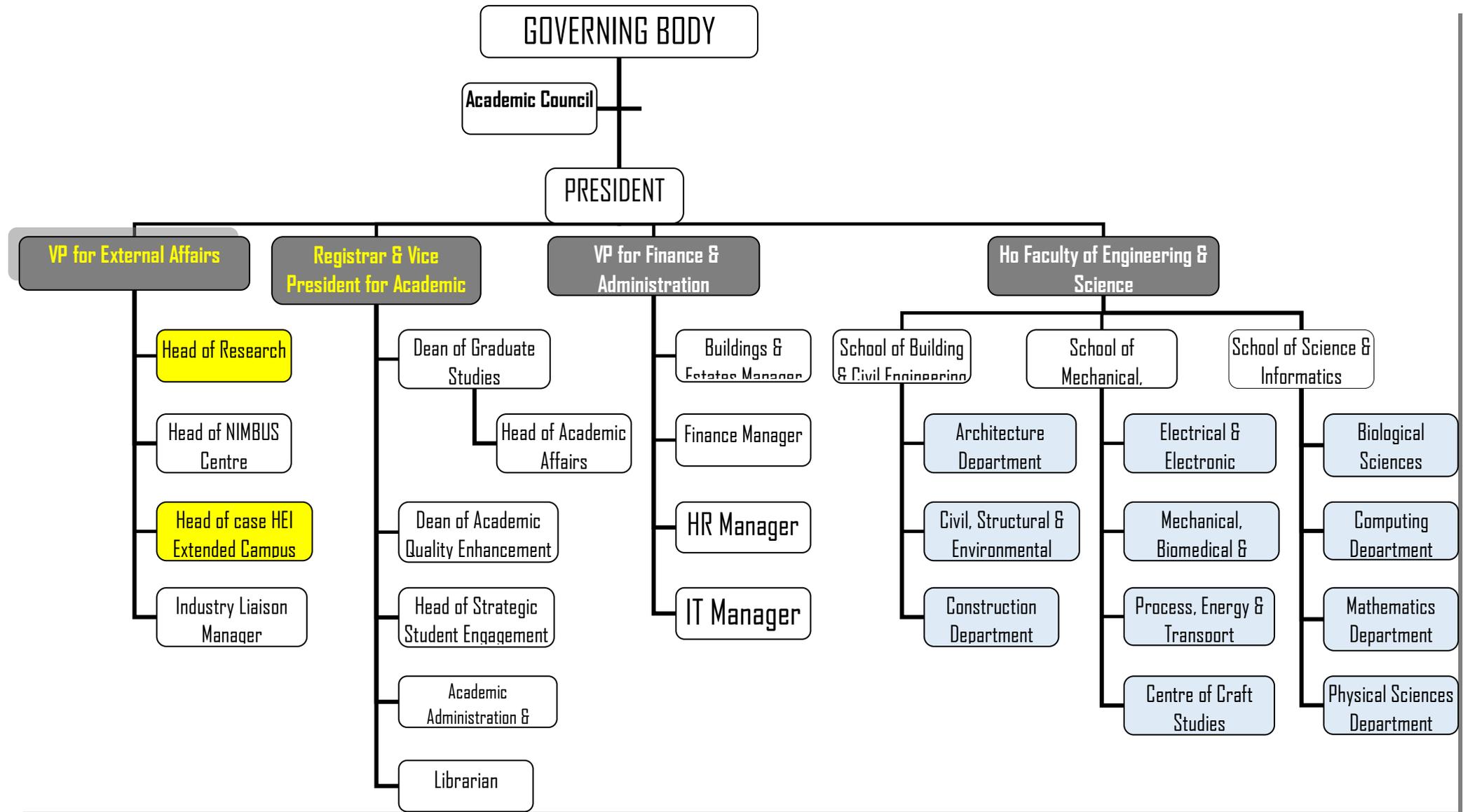
In summary, there are many avenues open to extend this research.

9.8 Conclusion

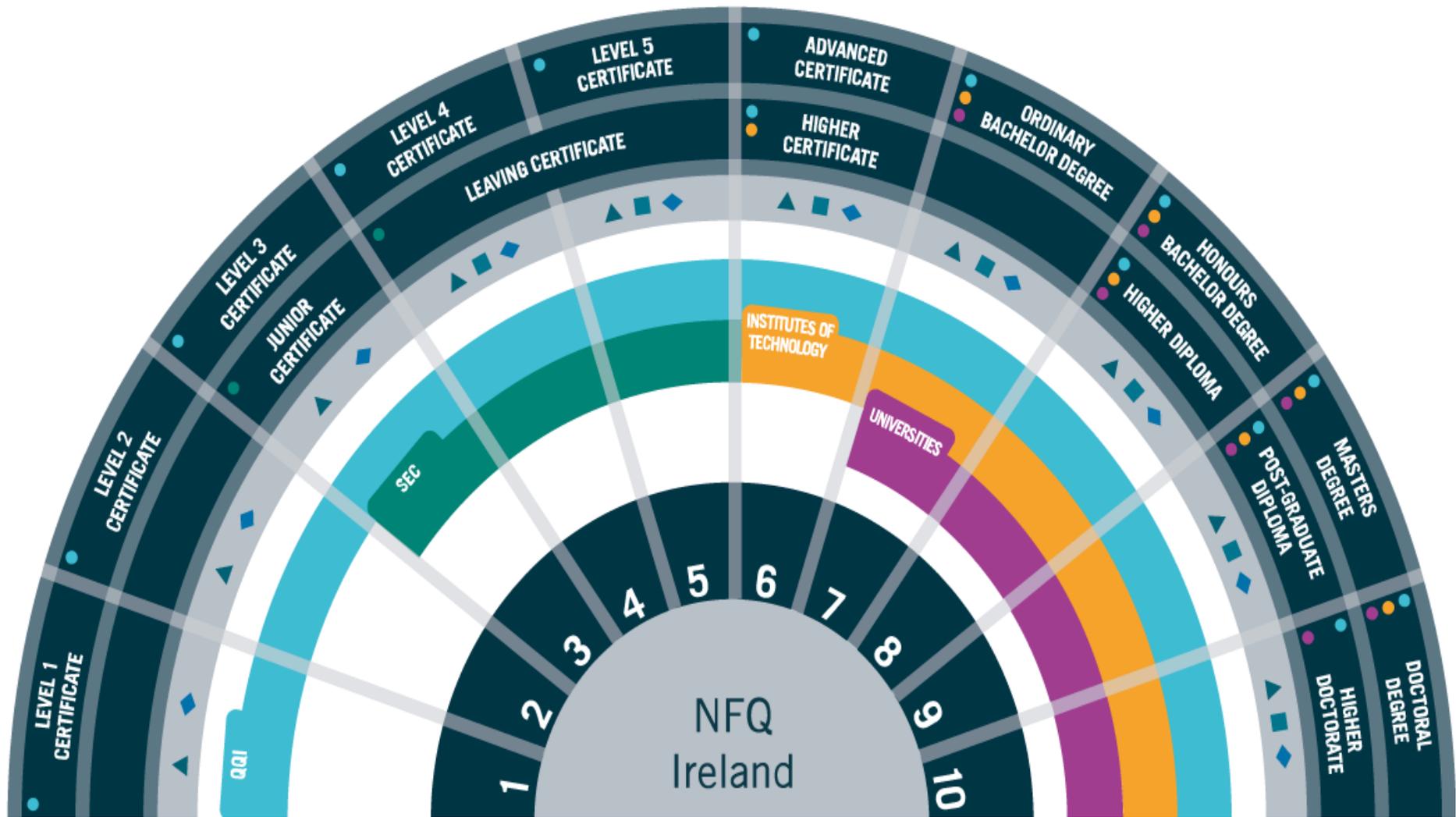
This chapter summarised this research study. First, the research question and objectives for the study were outlined. Next, the conclusions arising from the research were presented. The chapter then described the contributions of this study and the implications and recommendations for policy and the case HEI. Finally, the limitations of the study and recommendations for future research were presented.

Appendix A: Case HEI Organisation structure





Appendix B: National Framework of Qualifications (Source: Quality and Qualifications Ireland (2014))



Appendix C: Summary of engagement measures found in the literature (Source: Researcher)

Category	Measure	Used in Literature by:	Title	Type of publication	Types of research	Sample Size
Graduate Formation	Number of external industry/community representatives involved in curricular development/course review/advisory boards etc.	(Hart and Northmore, 2011)	Auditing and evaluating university-community engagement: Lessons from a UK case study	Journal	Case Study	52 interviews, 28 questionnaires
		(Mora et al., 2010)	Good Practices in University-Enterprise Partnerships	Report for EU agency	Participant observation	6 European countries, 18 universities
		(Charles et al., 2009)	Benchmarking the regional contribution of universities	Report for Government Agency	Case Studies (Charles et al 2003)	5 universities in Northern Ireland, PURE project Scotland
		(Padfield et al., 2008)	Conceptual framework for third mission indicator definition	Report for EU agency	Participant observation	8 HEIs (including 1 Irish)
Graduate Formation	Number of staff participating and presenting at external conferences, fairs or workshops that have non-academic participants (i.e. not all participants are HEI staff)	(Zangoueinezhad and Moshabaki, 2011)	Measuring university performance using a knowledge-based balanced scorecard	Journal	Literature review	84 evaluation indexes related to university performance
		(Abreu et al., 2009)	Knowledge exchange between academics and the business, public and third sectors	Report for Government Agency	Web based survey	22,170 (17%) of 125,900 academics in UK

Category	Measure	Used in Literature by:	Title	Type of publication	Types of research	Sample Size
		(Bruneel et al., 2009)	The Search for Talent and Technology: Examining the attitudes of EPSRC industrial collaborators towards universities	Report for Government Agency	Survey	All firms that have collaborated on Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) research grants 1999-2008
		(Kitson, 2009)	University-Industry Knowledge Exchange: Demand Pull, Supply Push and the Public Space Role of Higher Education Institution	Report for Government Agency	Case Study and Survey	22,170 (17%) of 125,900 academics in UK
		(Bekkers and Bodas Freitas, 2008)	Analysing knowledge transfer channels between universities and industry: To what degree do sectors also matter?	Journal	Questionnaires - university & industry researchers	574 university researchers, 454 industry researchers
		(Padfield et al., 2008)	Conceptual framework for third mission indicator definition	Report for EU agency	Participant observation	8 HEIs (including 1 Irish)
		(D'Este and Patel, 2007)	University-industry linkages in the UK: What are the factors underlying the variety of interactions with industry?	Journal	Survey	1528 academic researchers

Category	Measure	Used in Literature by:	Title	Type of publication	Types of research	Sample Size
Graduate Formation	Number of staff participating in professional networks/social networking/professional bodies etc.	(Hart and Northmore, 2011)	Auditing and evaluating university-community engagement: Lessons from a UK case study	Journal	Case Study	52 interviews, 28 questionnaires
		(Martin and Sauvageot, 2011)	Constructing an indicator system or scorecard for higher education: A practical guide	Report for United Nations		
		(Abreu et al., 2009)	Knowledge exchange between academics and the business, public and third sectors	Report for Government Agency	Web based survey	22,170 (17%) of 125,900 academics in UK
		(Bruneel et al., 2009)	The Search for Talent and Technology: Examining the attitudes of EPSRC industrial collaborators towards universities	Report for Government Agency	Survey	All firms that have collaborated on Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) research grants 1999-2008
		(Kitson, 2009)	University-Industry Knowledge Exchange: Demand Pull, Supply Push and the Public Space Role of Higher Education Institution	Report for Government Agency	Case Study and Survey	22,170 (17%) of 125,900 academics in UK

Category	Measure	Used in Literature by:	Title	Type of publication	Types of research	Sample Size
		(Bekkers and Bodas Freitas, 2008)	Analysing knowledge transfer channels between universities and industry: To what degree do sectors also matter?	Journal	Questionnaires - university & industry researchers	574 university researchers, 454 industry researchers
		(Padfield et al., 2008)	Conceptual framework for third mission indicator definition	Report for EU agency	Participant observation	8 HEIs (including 1 Irish)
		(Charles et al., 2003)	The Regional Mission of Higher Education in Northern Ireland	Report for Government Agency	Case Studies	5 universities in Northern Ireland, PURE project Scotland
Graduate Formation	Number of staff on external training courses/funding available for external course participation	(Mora et al., 2010)	Good Practices in University-Enterprise Partnerships	Report for Government Agency	Case studies	6 European countries, 18 universities
		(Abreu et al., 2009)	Knowledge exchange between academics and the business, public and third sectors	Report for Government Agency	Web based survey	22,170 (17%) of 125,900 academics in UK
Graduate Formation	Number of HEI staff with positions outside HEI/double posts/external secondments/part funded by industry	(Mora et al., 2010)	Good Practices in University-Enterprise Partnerships	Report for Government Agency	Case studies	6 European countries, 18 universities
		(Abreu et al., 2009)	Knowledge exchange between academics and the business, public and third sectors	Report for Government Agency	Web based survey	22,170 (17%) of 125,900 academics in UK

Category	Measure	Used in Literature by:	Title	Type of publication	Types of research	Sample Size
		(Kitson, 2009)	University-Industry Knowledge Exchange: Demand Pull, Supply Push and the Public Space Role of Higher Education Institution	Report for Government Agency	Case Study and Survey	22,170 (17%) of 125,900 academics in UK
		(Bekkers and Bodas Freitas, 2008)	Analysing knowledge transfer channels between universities and industry: To what degree do sectors also matter?	Journal	Questionnaires - university & industry researchers	574 university researchers, 454 industry researchers
		(Padfield et al., 2008)	Conceptual framework for third mission indicator definition	Report for EU agency	Participant observation	8 HEIs (including 1 Irish)
		(Charles et al., 2003)	The Regional Mission of Higher Education in Northern Ireland	Report for Government Agency	Case Studies	5 universities in Northern Ireland, PURE project Scotland
Graduate Formation	Number of postgraduate/post-doctoral researchers sponsored by business/with an industry supervisor/based in companies	(Pollard et al., 2013b)	How should we measure higher education? A fundamental review of the Performance Indicators. Part One & Two	Report for Government Agency	Interviews & group discussions	50-60 stakeholders

Category	Measure	Used in Literature by:	Title	Type of publication	Types of research	Sample Size
		(Bruneel et al., 2009)	The Search for Talent and Technology: Examining the attitudes of EPSRC industrial collaborators towards universities	Report for Government Agency	Survey	All firms that have collaborated on Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) research grants 1999-2008
		(Bekkers and Bodas Freitas, 2008)	Analysing knowledge transfer channels between universities and industry: To what degree do sectors also matter?	Journal	Questionnaires - university & industry researchers	574 university researchers, 454 industry researchers
		(Padfield et al., 2008)	Conceptual framework for third mission indicator definition	Report for EU agency	Participant observation	8 HEIs (including 1 Irish)
		(Charles et al., 2003)	The Regional Mission of Higher Education in Northern Ireland	Report for Government Agency	Case Studies	5 universities in Northern Ireland, PURE project Scotland
Graduate formation	Number of courses with work placement /number of students who participate in work placement	(Pollard et al., 2013b)	How should we measure higher education? A fundamental review of the Performance Indicators. Part One & Two	Report for Government Agency	Interviews & group discussions	50-60 stakeholders

Category	Measure	Used in Literature by:	Title	Type of publication	Types of research	Sample Size
		(Hanover, 2011)	Best Practices in Measuring University-Community Engagement	Report for Government Agency	Literature review	US, EU and Australian systems
		(Hart and Northmore, 2011)	Auditing and evaluating university-community engagement: Lessons from a UK case study	Journal	Case Study	52 interviews, 28 questionnaires
		(Mora et al., 2010)	Good Practices in University-Enterprise Partnerships	Report for Government Agency	Case studies	6 European countries, 18 universities
		(Abreu et al., 2009)	Knowledge exchange between academics and the business, public and third sectors	Report for Government Agency	Web based survey	22,170 (17%) of 125,900 academics in UK
		(Bruneel et al., 2009)	The Search for Talent and Technology: Examining the attitudes of EPSRC industrial collaborators towards universities	Report for Government Agency	Survey	All firms that have collaborated on Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) research grants 1999-2008
		(Charles et al., 2009)	Benchmarking the regional contribution of universities	Report for Government Agency	Case Studies (completed in previous research by	5 universities in Northern Ireland, PURE project Scotland

Category	Measure	Used in Literature by:	Title	Type of publication	Types of research	Sample Size
					Charles et al (2003)	
		(Kitson, 2009)	University-Industry Knowledge Exchange: Demand Pull, Supply Push and the Public Space Role of Higher Education Institution	Report for Government Agency	Case Study and Survey	22,170 (17%) of 125,900 academics in UK
		(Bekkers and Bodas Freitas, 2008)	Analysing knowledge transfer channels between universities and industry: To what degree do sectors also matter?	Journal	Questionnaires - university & industry researchers	574 university researchers, 454 industry researchers
		(Charles et al., 2003)	The Regional Mission of Higher Education in Northern Ireland	Report for Government Agency	Case Studies	5 universities in Northern Ireland, PURE project Scotland
Graduate formation	Number of companies/students involved in live cases	(Hart and Northmore, 2011)	Auditing and evaluating university-community engagement: Lessons from a UK case study	Journal	Case Study	52 interviews, 28 questionnaires

Category	Measure	Used in Literature by:	Title	Type of publication	Types of research	Sample Size
Graduate formation	Number of programmes with innovation/entrepreneurship modules	(Martin and Sauvageot, 2011)	Constructing an indicator system or scorecard for higher education: A practical guide	Report for United Nations		
		(Chen and Chen, 2010)	A Pro-performance appraisal system for the university	Journal	Interviews	Undisclosed
		(Charles et al., 2009)	Benchmarking the regional contribution of universities	Report for Government Agency	Case Studies (completed in previous research by Charles et al 2003)	5 universities in Northern Ireland, PURE project Scotland
		(Kitson, 2009)	University-Industry Knowledge Exchange: Demand Pull, Supply Push and the Public Space Role of Higher Education Institution	Report for Government Agency	Case Study and Survey	22,170 (17%) of 125,900 academics in UK
		(Charles et al., 2003)	The Regional Mission of Higher Education in Northern Ireland	Report for Government Agency	Case Studies	5 universities in Northern Ireland, PURE project Scotland

Category	Measure	Used in Literature by:	Title	Type of publication	Types of research	Sample Size
Graduate formation	Number of students volunteering	(Pollard et al., 2013b)	How should we measure higher education? A fundamental review of the Performance Indicators. Part One & Two	Report for Government Agency	Interviews & group discussions	50-60 stakeholders
		(Hanover, 2011)	Best Practices in Measuring University-Community Engagement	Report for Government Agency	Literature review	US, EU and Australian systems
		(Hart and Northmore, 2011)	Auditing and evaluating university-community engagement: Lessons from a UK case study	Journal	Case Study	52 interviews, 28 questionnaires
		(Charles et al., 2009)	Benchmarking the regional contribution of universities	Report for Government Agency	Case Studies (completed in previous research by Charles et al 2003)	5 universities in Northern Ireland, PURE project Scotland
		(Kitson, 2009)	University-Industry Knowledge Exchange: Demand Pull, Supply Push and the Public Space Role of Higher Education Institution	Report for Government Agency	Case Study and Survey	22,170 (17%) of 125,900 academics in UK

Category	Measure	Used in Literature by:	Title	Type of publication	Types of research	Sample Size
		(Padfield et al., 2008)	Conceptual framework for third mission indicator definition	Report for EU agency	Participant observation	8 HEIs (including 1 Irish)
		(Charles et al., 2003)	The Regional Mission of Higher Education in Northern Ireland	Report for Government Agency	Case Studies	5 universities in Northern Ireland, PURE project Scotland
Workforce Development	Existence of continuing education in the mission/strategy/plan of HEI	(Hart and Northmore, 2011)	Auditing and evaluating university-community engagement: Lessons from a UK case study	Journal	Case Study	52 interviews, 28 questionnaires
		(Charles et al., 2009)	Benchmarking the regional contribution of universities	Report for Government Agency	Case Studies (completed in previous research by Charles et al 2003)	5 universities in Northern Ireland, PURE project Scotland
		(Padfield et al., 2008)	Conceptual framework for third mission indicator definition	Report for EU agency	Participant observation	8 HEIs (including 1 Irish)
Workforce Development	Number of active continuing education (CE) programmes/number of CE programmes	(Hart and Northmore, 2011)	Auditing and evaluating university-community engagement: Lessons from a UK case study	Journal	Case Study	52 interviews, 28 questionnaires

Category	Measure	Used in Literature by:	Title	Type of publication	Types of research	Sample Size
	delivered/number of new CE programmes/number of students on CE programmes/number of CE qualifications issued	(Chen and Chen, 2010)	A Pro-performance appraisal system for the university	Journal	Interviews	Undisclosed
		(Charles et al., 2009)	Benchmarking the regional contribution of universities	Report for Government Agency	Case Studies (completed in previous research by Charles et al 2003)	5 universities in Northern Ireland, PURE project Scotland
		(Padfield et al., 2008)	Conceptual framework for third mission indicator definition	Report for EU agency	Participant observation	8 HEIs (including 1 Irish)
		(Charles et al., 2003)	The Regional Mission of Higher Education in Northern Ireland	Report for Government Agency	Case Studies	5 universities in Northern Ireland, PURE project Scotland
Workforce Development	Number of training courses for enterprise employees/executive development /number of companies (or company employees) participating	(Martin and Sauvageot, 2011)	Constructing an indicator system or scorecard for higher education: A practical guide	Report for United Nations		
		(Mora et al., 2010)	Good Practices in University-Enterprise Partnerships	Report for Government Agency	Case studies	6 European countries, 18 universities

Category	Measure	Used in Literature by:	Title	Type of publication	Types of research	Sample Size
		(Bruneel et al., 2009)	The Search for Talent and Technology: Examining the attitudes of EPSRC industrial collaborators towards universities	Report for Government Agency	Survey	All firms that have collaborated on Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) research grants 1999-2008
		(Bekkers and Bodas Freitas, 2008)	Analysing knowledge transfer channels between universities and industry: To what degree do sectors also matter?	Journal	Questionnaires - university & industry researchers	574 university researchers, 454 industry researchers
		(Padfield et al., 2008)	Conceptual framework for third mission indicator definition	Report for EU agency	Participant observation	8 HEIs (including 1 Irish)
		(D'Este and Patel, 2007)	University–industry linkages in the UK: What are the factors underlying the variety of interactions with industry?	Journal	Survey	1528 academic researchers
Graduate Formation	Promotion policies that reward engagement	(Hart and Northmore, 2011)	Auditing and evaluating university-community engagement: Lessons from a UK case study	Journal	Case Study	52 interviews, 28 questionnaires

Category	Measure	Used in Literature by:	Title	Type of publication	Types of research	Sample Size
		(Charles et al., 2003)	The Regional Mission of Higher Education in Northern Ireland	Report for Government Agency	Case Studies	5 universities in Northern Ireland, PURE project Scotland
Workforce Development	Academic level of CE courses/rate of practical training courses	(Hanover, 2011)	Best Practices in Measuring University-Community Engagement	Report for Government Agency	Literature review	US, EU and Australian systems
		(Chen and Chen, 2010)	A Pro-performance appraisal system for the university	Journal	Interviews	Undisclosed
		(Kitson, 2009)	University-Industry Knowledge Exchange: Demand Pull, Supply Push and the Public Space Role of Higher Education Institution	Report for Government Agency	Case Study and Survey	22,170 (17%) of 125,900 academics in UK
		(Padfield et al., 2008)	Conceptual framework for third mission indicator definition	Report for EU agency	Participant observation	8 HEIs (including 1 Irish)
Workforce Development	Number of staff teaching on enterprise education courses	(Abreu et al., 2009)	Knowledge exchange between academics and the business, public and third sectors	Report for Government Agency	Web based survey	22,170 (17%) of 125,900 academics in UK
Workforce Development	Number of external staff teaching on courses/external staff with temporary positions at HEI	(Martin and Sauvageot 2011)	Constructing an indicator system or scorecard for higher education: A practical guide	Report for United Nations		

Category	Measure	Used in Literature by:	Title	Type of publication	Types of research	Sample Size
		(Kitson 2009)	University-Industry Knowledge Exchange: Demand Pull, Supply Push and the Public Space Role of Higher Education Institution	Report for Government Agency	Case Study and Survey	22,170 (17%) of 125,900 academics in UK
		(Padfield et al. 2008a)	Conceptual framework for third mission indicator definition	Report for EU agency	Participant observation	8 HEIs (including 1 Irish)
		(Charles et al. 2003)	The Regional Mission of Higher Education in Northern Ireland	Report for Government Agency	Case Studies	5 universities in Northern Ireland, PURE project Scotland
Workforce Development	Student & Stakeholder satisfaction levels for external courses	(Padfield et al., 2008)	Conceptual framework for third mission indicator definition	Report for EU agency	Participant observation	8 HEIs (including 1 Irish)
Workforce Development	Number of external programmes with external accreditation	(Martin and Sauvageot, 2011)	Constructing an indicator system or scorecard for higher education: A practical guide	Report for United Nations		
		(Padfield et al., 2008)	Conceptual framework for third mission indicator definition	Report for EU agency	Participant observation	8 HEIs (including 1 Irish)
Research & Innovation	Number of/income generated from start-ups/spin offs/licences/assignments	(Charles et al., 2003)	The Regional Mission of Higher Education in Northern Ireland	Report for Government Agency	Case Studies	5 universities in Northern Ireland, PURE project Scotland

Category	Measure	Used in Literature by:	Title	Type of publication	Types of research	Sample Size
	with or without HEI staff member as founder					
Research & Innovation	Number of staff involved in prototyping/testing for external organisations	(Hart and Northmore, 2011)	Auditing and evaluating university-community engagement: Lessons from a UK case study	Journal	Case Study	52 interviews, 28 questionnaires
		(Abreu et al., 2009)	Knowledge exchange between academics and the business, public and third sectors	Report for Government Agency	Web based survey	22,170 (17%) of 125,900 academics in UK
		(Kitson, 2009)	University-Industry Knowledge Exchange: Demand Pull, Supply Push and the Public Space Role of Higher Education Institution	Report for Government Agency	Case Study and Survey	22,170 (17%) of 125,900 academics in UK
Research & Innovation	Number of creative commons or social innovation projects that staff are involved in/number of community groups involved	(Hanover, 2011)	Best Practices in Measuring University-Community Engagement	Report for Government Agency	Literature review	US, EU and Australian systems
		(Padfield et al., 2008)	Conceptual framework for third mission indicator definition	Report for EU agency	Participant observation	8 HEIs (including 1 Irish)
		(Charles et al., 2003)	The Regional Mission of Higher Education in Northern Ireland	Report for Government Agency	Case Studies	5 universities in Northern Ireland, PURE project Scotland

Category	Measure	Used in Literature by:	Title	Type of publication	Types of research	Sample Size
Research & Innovation	Number/value of patents	(Pollard et al., 2013b, Pollard et al., 2013a)	How should we measure higher education? A fundamental review of the Performance Indicators. Part One & Two	Report for Government Agency	Interviews & group discussions	50-60 stakeholders
		(Martin and Sauvageot, 2011)	Constructing an indicator system or scorecard for higher education: A practical guide	Report for United Nations		
		(Chen and Chen, 2010)	A Pro-performance appraisal system for the university	Journal	Interviews	Undisclosed
		(Kitson, 2009)	University-Industry Knowledge Exchange: Demand Pull, Supply Push and the Public Space Role of Higher Education Institution	Report for Government Agency	Case Study and Survey	22,170 (17%) of 125,900 academics in UK
		(Bekkers and Bodas Freitas, 2008)	Analysing knowledge transfer channels between universities and industry: To what degree do sectors also matter?	Journal	Questionnaires - university & industry researchers	574 university researchers, 454 industry researchers

Category	Measure	Used in Literature by:	Title	Type of publication	Types of research	Sample Size
Research & Innovation	Number of staff involved/ Number of joint research projects/sponsored research agreements/collaborative projects with non-academic partners	(Hart and Northmore, 2011)	Auditing and evaluating university-community engagement: Lessons from a UK case study	Journal	Case Study	52 interviews, 28 questionnaires
		(Martin and Sauvageot, 2011)	Constructing an indicator system or scorecard for higher education: A practical guide	Report for United Nations		
		(Zangouinezhad and Moshabaki, 2011)	Measuring university performance using a knowledge-based balanced scorecard	Journal	Evaluation indexes extracted from the university performance literature	84 evaluation indexes related to university performance
		(Caldera and Debande, 2010)	Performance of Spanish universities in technology transfer: An empirical analysis	Journal	Survey	52 universities
		(Mora et al., 2010)	Good Practices in University-Enterprise Partnerships	Report for Government Agency	Case studies	6 European countries, 18 universities
		(Abreu et al., 2009)	Knowledge exchange between academics and the business, public and third sectors	Report for Government Agency	Web based survey	22,170 (17%) of 125,900 academics in UK

Category	Measure	Used in Literature by:	Title	Type of publication	Types of research	Sample Size
		(Bruneel et al., 2009)	The Search for Talent and Technology: Examining the attitudes of EPSRC industrial collaborators towards universities	Report for Government Agency	Survey	All firms that have collaborated on Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) research grants 1999-2008
		(Charles et al., 2009)	Benchmarking the regional contribution of universities	Report for Government Agency	Case Studies (completed in previous research by Charles et al 2003)	5 universities in Northern Ireland, PURE project Scotland
		(Kitson, 2009)	University-Industry Knowledge Exchange: Demand Pull, Supply Push and the Public Space Role of Higher Education Institution	Report for Government Agency	Case Study and Survey	22,170 (17%) of 125,900 academics in UK
		(Bekkers and Bodas Freitas, 2008)	Analysing knowledge transfer channels between universities and industry: To what degree do sectors also matter?	Journal	Questionnaires - university & industry researchers	574 university researchers, 454 industry researchers

Category	Measure	Used in Literature by:	Title	Type of publication	Types of research	Sample Size
		(Padfield et al., 2008)	Conceptual framework for third mission indicator definition	Report for EU Agency	Participant observation	8 HEIs (including 1 Irish)
		(Charles et al., 2003)	The Regional Mission of Higher Education in Northern Ireland	Report for Government Agency	Case Studies	5 universities in Northern Ireland, PURE project Scotland
Research & Innovation	Number of joint publications with industry	(Pollard et al., 2013a)	How should we measure higher education? A fundamental review of the Performance Indicators. Part One & Two	Report for Government Agency	Interviews & group discussions	50-60 stakeholders
		(Abreu et al., 2009)	Knowledge exchange between academics and the business, public and third sectors	Report for Government Agency	Web based survey	22,170 (17%) of 125,900 academics in UK
		(Kitson, 2009)	University-Industry Knowledge Exchange: Demand Pull, Supply Push and the Public Space Role of Higher Education Institution	Report for Government Agency	Case Study and Survey	22,170 (17%) of 125,900 academics in UK
		(Bekkers and Bodas Freitas, 2008)	Analysing knowledge transfer channels between universities and industry: To what degree do sectors also matter?	Journal	Questionnaires - university & industry researchers	574 university researchers, 454 industry researchers

Category	Measure	Used in Literature by:	Title	Type of publication	Types of research	Sample Size
		(Padfield et al., 2008)	Conceptual framework for third mission indicator definition	Report for EU Agency	Participant observation	8 HEIs (including 1 Irish)
Research & Innovation	Funds received for sponsored research	(Pollard et al., 2013a)	How should we measure higher education? A fundamental review of the Performance Indicators. Part One & Two	Report for Government Agency	Interviews & group discussions	50-60 stakeholders
		(Martin and Sauvageot, 2011)	Constructing an indicator system or scorecard for higher education: A practical guide	Report for United Nations		
		(Zangoueinezhad and Moshabaki, 2011)	Measuring university performance using a knowledge-based balanced scorecard	Journal	Evaluation indexes extracted from the university performance literature	84 evaluation indexes related to university performance
		(Chen and Chen, 2010)	A Pro-performance appraisal system for the university	Journal	Interviews	Undisclosed
		(Padfield et al., 2008)	Conceptual framework for third mission indicator definition	Report for EU Agency	Participant observation	8 HEIs (including 1 Irish)

Category	Measure	Used in Literature by:	Title	Type of publication	Types of research	Sample Size
Research & Innovation	Number of consultancy projects/income generated from consultancy	(Hart and Northmore, 2011)	Auditing and evaluating university-community engagement: Lessons from a UK case study	Journal	Case Study	52 interviews, 28 questionnaires
		(Martin and Sauvageot, 2011)	Constructing an indicator system or scorecard for higher education: A practical guide	Report for United Nations		
		(Abreu et al., 2009)	Knowledge exchange between academics and the business, public and third sectors	Report for Government Agency	Web based survey	22,170 (17%) of 125,900 academics in UK
		(Bruneel et al., 2009)	The Search for Talent and Technology: Examining the attitudes of EPSRC industrial collaborators towards universities	Report for Government Agency	Survey	All firms that have collaborated on Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) research grants 1999-2008
		(Kitson, 2009)	University-Industry Knowledge Exchange: Demand Pull, Supply Push and the Public Space Role of Higher Education Institution	Report for Government Agency	Case Study and Survey	22,170 (17%) of 125,900 academics in UK

Category	Measure	Used in Literature by:	Title	Type of publication	Types of research	Sample Size
		(Bekkers and Bodas Freitas, 2008)	Analysing knowledge transfer channels between universities and industry: To what degree do sectors also matter?	Journal	Questionnaires - university & industry researchers	574 university researchers, 454 industry researchers
		(Padfield et al., 2008)	Conceptual framework for third mission indicator definition	Report for EU Agency	Participant observation	8 HEIs (including 1 Irish)
		(D'Este and Patel, 2007)	University–industry linkages in the UK: What are the factors underlying the variety of interactions with industry?	Journal	Survey	1528 academic researchers
		(Charles et al., 2003)	The Regional Mission of Higher Education in Northern Ireland	Report for Government Agency	Case Studies	5 universities in Northern Ireland, PURE project Scotland
Research & Innovation	Number of specialist staff in technology transfer/community liaison/R&D contracts	(Hanover, 2011)	Best Practices in Measuring University-Community Engagement	Report for Government Agency	Literature review	US, EU and Australian systems
		(Caldera and Debande, 2010)	Performance of Spanish universities in technology transfer: An empirical analysis	Journal	Survey	52 universities

Category	Measure	Used in Literature by:	Title	Type of publication	Types of research	Sample Size
		(Padfield et al., 2008)	Conceptual framework for third mission indicator definition	Report for EU Agency	Participant observation	8 HEIs (including 1 Irish)
Research & Innovation	Number of industry shared research labs and other shared facilities & spaces/number of staff with access to external facilities	(Hanover, 2011)	Best Practices in Measuring University-Community Engagement	Report for Government Agency	Literature review	US, EU and Australian systems
		(Mora et al., 2010)	Good Practices in University-Enterprise Partnerships	Report for Government Agency	Case studies	6 European countries, 18 universities
		(Abreu et al., 2009)	Knowledge exchange between academics and the business, public and third sectors	Report for Government Agency	Web based survey	22,170 (17%) of 125,900 academics in UK
		(Bruneel et al., 2009)	The Search for Talent and Technology: Examining the attitudes of EPSRC industrial collaborators towards universities	Report for Government Agency	Survey	All firms that have collaborated on Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) research grants 1999-2008
		(Kitson, 2009)	University-Industry Knowledge Exchange: Demand Pull, Supply Push and the Public Space Role of Higher Education Institution	Report for Government Agency	Case Study and Survey	22,170 (17%) of 125,900 academics in UK

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		(Bekkers and Bodas Freitas, 2008)	Analysing knowledge transfer channels between universities and industry: To what degree do sectors also matter?	Journal	Questionnaires - university & industry researchers	574 university researchers, 454 industry researchers
		(Padfield et al., 2008)	Conceptual framework for third mission indicator definition	Report for EU Agency	Participant observation	8 HEIs (including 1 Irish)
		(D'Este and Patel, 2007)	University–industry linkages in the UK: What are the factors underlying the variety of interactions with industry?	Journal	Survey	1528 academic researchers
		(Charles et al., 2003)	The Regional Mission of Higher Education in Northern Ireland	Report for Government Agency	Case Studies	5 universities in Northern Ireland, PURE project Scotland
Research & Innovation	Number of business incubators/research centres/technology transfer offices etc.	(Mora et al., 2010)	Good Practices in University-Enterprise Partnerships	Report for Government Agency	Case studies	6 European countries, 18 universities
		(Caldera and Debande, 2010)	Performance of Spanish universities in technology transfer: An empirical analysis	Journal	Survey	52 universities

Category	Measure	Used in Literature by:	Title	Type of publication	Types of research	Sample Size
		(Bekkers and Bodas Freitas, 2008)	Analysing knowledge transfer channels between universities and industry: To what degree do sectors also matter?	Journal	Questionnaires - university & industry researchers	574 university researchers, 454 industry researchers
		(Charles et al., 2003)	The Regional Mission of Higher Education in Northern Ireland	Report for Government Agency	Case Studies	5 universities in Northern Ireland, PURE project Scotland
Social Enhancement	Existence of social engagement in the mission/strategy/plan of HEI	(Pollard et al., 2013b)	How should we measure higher education? A fundamental review of the Performance Indicators. Part One & Two	Report for Government Agency	Interviews & group discussions	50-60 stakeholders
		(Charles et al., 2009)	Benchmarking the regional contribution of universities	Report for Government Agency	Case Studies (completed in previous research by Charles et al 2003)	5 universities in Northern Ireland, PURE project Scotland
		(Padfield et al., 2008)	Conceptual framework for third mission indicator definition	Report for EU Agency	Participant observation	8 HEIs (including 1 Irish)

Category	Measure	Used in Literature by:	Title	Type of publication	Types of research	Sample Size
Social Enhancement	Number of external industry/community representatives on governing body etc.	(Mora et al., 2010)	Good Practices in University-Enterprise Partnerships	Report for Government Agency	Case studies	6 European countries, 18 universities
		(Charles et al., 2003)	The Regional Mission of Higher Education in Northern Ireland	Report for Government Agency	Case Studies	5 universities in Northern Ireland, PURE project Scotland
Social Enhancement	Policies on equity, procurement of goods/environmental responsibility	(Hart and Northmore, 2011)	Auditing and evaluating university-community engagement: Lessons from a UK case study	Journal	Case Study	52 interviews, 28 questionnaires
Social Enhancement	Public lectures/ Number of staff giving lectures for community	(Hart and Northmore, 2011)	Auditing and evaluating university-community engagement: Lessons from a UK case study	Journal	Case Study	52 interviews, 28 questionnaires
		(Abreu et al., 2009)	Knowledge exchange between academics and the business, public and third sectors	Report for Government Agency	Web based survey	22,170 (17%) of 125,900 academics in UK
		(Kitson, 2009)	University-Industry Knowledge Exchange: Demand Pull, Supply Push and the Public Space Role of Higher Education Institution	Report for Government Agency	Case Study and Survey	22,170 (17%) of 125,900 academics in UK

Category	Measure	Used in Literature by:	Title	Type of publication	Types of research	Sample Size
		(Padfield et al., 2008)	Conceptual framework for third mission indicator definition	Report for EU Agency	Participant observation	8 HEIs (including 1 Irish)
Social Enhancement	Number of staff volunteering/time spent on volunteering/estimation of value of volunteering/amount of volunteering advisory/policy submissions/university social responsibility/outreach projects/schools projects/numbers of hours of expertise	(Hart and Northmore, 2011)	Auditing and evaluating university-community engagement: Lessons from a UK case study	Journal	Case Study	52 interviews, 28 questionnaires
		(Martin and Sauvageot, 2011)	Constructing an indicator system or scorecard for higher education: A practical guide	Report for United Nations		
		(Mora et al., 2010)	Good Practices in University-Enterprise Partnerships	Report for Government Agency	Case studies	6 European countries, 18 universities
		(Charles et al., 2009)	Benchmarking the regional contribution of universities	Report for Government Agency	Case Studies (completed in previous research by Charles et al 2003)	5 universities in Northern Ireland, PURE project Scotland
		(Kitson, 2009)	University-Industry Knowledge Exchange: Demand Pull, Supply Push and the Public Space Role of Higher Education Institution	Report for Government Agency	Case Study and Survey	22,170 (17%) of 125,900 academics in UK

Category	Measure	Used in Literature by:	Title	Type of publication	Types of research	Sample Size
		(Padfield et al., 2008)	Conceptual framework for third mission indicator definition	Report for EU Agency	Participant observation	8 HEIs (including 1 Irish)
		(Charles et al., 2003)	The Regional Mission of Higher Education in Northern Ireland	Report for Government Agency	Case Studies	5 universities in Northern Ireland, PURE project Scotland
Social Enhancement	Number of community groups benefiting from advice/estimation of value received by groups	(Padfield et al., 2008)	Conceptual framework for third mission indicator definition	Report for EU Agency	Participant observation	8 HEIs (including 1 Irish)
		(Charles et al., 2003)	The Regional Mission of Higher Education in Northern Ireland	Report for Government Agency	Case Studies	5 universities in Northern Ireland, PURE project Scotland
Social Enhancement	Number of groups using facilities e.g. sports facilities/staff involved in community based sport/number of hours facilities open to public	(Hanover, 2011)	Best Practices in Measuring University-Community Engagement	Report for Government Agency	Literature review	US, EU and Australian systems
		(Hart and Northmore, 2011)	Auditing and evaluating university-community engagement: Lessons from a UK case study	Journal	Case Study	52 interviews, 28 questionnaires
		(Mora et al., 2010)	Good Practices in University-Enterprise Partnerships	Report for Government Agency	Case studies	6 European countries, 18 universities
		(Abreu et al., 2009)	Knowledge exchange between academics and	Report for Government Agency	Web based survey	22,170 (17%) of 125,900 academics in UK

Category	Measure	Used in Literature by:	Title	Type of publication	Types of research	Sample Size
			the business, public and third sectors			
		(Charles et al., 2009)	Benchmarking the regional contribution of universities	Report for Government Agency	Case Studies (completed in previous research by Charles et al 2003)	5 universities in Northern Ireland, PURE project Scotland
		(Kitson, 2009)	University-Industry Knowledge Exchange: Demand Pull, Supply Push and the Public Space Role of Higher Education Institution	Report for Government Agency	Case Study and Survey	22,170 (17%) of 125,900 academics in UK
		(Charles et al., 2003)	The Regional Mission of Higher Education in Northern Ireland	Report for Government Agency	Case Studies	5 universities in Northern Ireland, PURE project Scotland
Social Enhancement	Number of community based modules/programmes or service learning modules	(Martin and Sauvageot, 2011)	Constructing an indicator system or scorecard for higher education: A practical guide	Report for United Nations		
		(Padfield et al., 2008)	Conceptual framework for third mission indicator definition	Report for EU Agency	Participant observation	8 HEIs (including 1 Irish)

Category	Measure	Used in Literature by:	Title	Type of publication	Types of research	Sample Size
Social Enhancement	Number of external workshops, conferences, congresses, cultural activities, employer fairs organised by HEI	(Hart and Northmore, 2011)	Auditing and evaluating university-community engagement: Lessons from a UK case study	Journal	Case Study	52 interviews, 28 questionnaires
		(Chen and Chen, 2010)	A Pro-performance appraisal system for the university	Journal	Interviews	Undisclosed
		(Padfield et al., 2008)	Conceptual framework for third mission indicator definition	Report for EU Agency	Participant observation	8 HEIs (including 1 Irish)
		(Charles et al., 2003)	The Regional Mission of Higher Education in Northern Ireland	Report for Government Agency	Case Studies	5 universities in Northern Ireland, PURE project Scotland
Market Advancement	Number of entry routes/non-standard students	(Pollard et al., 2013b, Pollard et al., 2013a)	How should we measure higher education? A fundamental review of the Performance Indicators. Part One & Two	Report for Government Agency	Interviews & group discussions	50-60 stakeholders
		(Hart and Northmore, 2011)	Auditing and evaluating university-community engagement: Lessons from a UK case study	Journal	Case Study	52 interviews, 28 questionnaires
		(Hanover, 2011)	Best Practices in Measuring University-Community Engagement	Report for Government Agency	Literature review	US, EU and Australian systems

Category	Measure	Used in Literature by:	Title	Type of publication	Types of research	Sample Size
		(Martin and Sauvageot, 2011)	Constructing an indicator system or scorecard for higher education: A practical guide	Report for United Nations		
		(Caldera and Debande, 2010)	Performance of Spanish universities in technology transfer: An empirical analysis	Journal	Survey	52 universities
		(Mora et al., 2010)	Good Practices in University-Enterprise Partnerships	Report for Government Agency	Case studies	6 European countries, 18 universities
		(Kitson, 2009)	University-Industry Knowledge Exchange: Demand Pull, Supply Push and the Public Space Role of Higher Education Institution	Report for Government Agency	Case Study and Survey	22,170 (17%) of 125,900 academics in UK
		(Bekkers and Bodas Freitas, 2008)	Analysing knowledge transfer channels between universities and industry: To what degree do sectors also matter?	Journal	Questionnaires - university & industry researchers	574 university researchers, 454 industry researchers
		(Padfield et al., 2008)	Conceptual framework for third mission indicator definition	Report for EU Agency	Participant observation	8 HEIs (including 1 Irish)

Category	Measure	Used in Literature by:	Title	Type of publication	Types of research	Sample Size
		(D'Este and Patel, 2007)	University–industry linkages in the UK: What are the factors underlying the variety of interactions with industry?	Journal	Survey	1528 academic researchers
Market Advancement	Number school projects/projects with disadvantaged groups/number of events involving school students/number of persons from disadvantaged groups involved/number of academics involved with schools	(Abreu et al., 2009)	Knowledge exchange between academics and the business, public and third sectors	Report for Government Agency	Web based survey	22,170 (17%) of 125,900 academics in UK
		(Charles et al., 2009)	Benchmarking the regional contribution of universities	Report for Government Agency	Case Studies (completed in previous research by Charles et al 2003)	5 universities in Northern Ireland, PURE project Scotland
		(Padfield et al., 2008)	Conceptual framework for third mission indicator definition	Report for EU Agency	Participant observation	8 HEIs (including 1 Irish)
		(Charles et al., 2003)	The Regional Mission of Higher Education in Northern Ireland	Report for Government Agency	Case Studies	5 universities in Northern Ireland, PURE project Scotland

Category	Measure	Used in Literature by:	Title	Type of publication	Types of research	Sample Size
Market Advancement	Funding for engagement/staff development in networking training	(Zangoueinezhad and Moshabaki, 2011)	Measuring university performance using a knowledge-based balanced scorecard	Journal	Evaluation indexes extracted from the university performance literature	84 evaluation indexes related to university performance
		(Chen and Chen, 2010)	A Pro-performance appraisal system for the university	Journal	Interviews	Undisclosed
		(Mora et al., 2010)	Good Practices in University-Enterprise Partnerships	Report for Government Agency	Case studies	6 European countries, 18 universities
		(Charles et al., 2009)	Benchmarking the regional contribution of universities	Report for Government Agency	Case Studies (completed in previous research by Charles et al 2003)	5 universities in Northern Ireland, PURE project Scotland
Market Advancement	Amount of grants/donations arising from engagement partnerships	(Mora et al., 2010)	Good Practices in University-Enterprise Partnerships	Report for Government Agency	Case studies	6 European countries, 18 universities

Appendix D: Engagement measures found in first performance compacts of IoTs

Types of engagement	Measure proposed by HEI	AIT	ITB	CIT	IT Carlow	DIT	IADT	DKIT	GMIT	LIT	LYIT	IT Sligo	IT Tallaght	IT Tralee	WIT
Graduate formation	Students engaged in industry research					x									v
Graduate formation	Sponsorship for Masters/PhD students by industry					x									v
Graduate formation	Industry panel inputs to course design		v	v			v			x	v		x	v	
Graduate formation	Stakeholder group involvement			x	v	x	x			x	x	x		x	
Graduate formation	Student projects			v		x				x		x			
Graduate formation	Placements			v		v	v	v	v		v	v		v	
Graduate formation	Guest lectures			v						x				v	
Graduate formation	Seminars			v											
Graduate formation	Professional body links							v	v		v				v
Graduate Formation	Networking opportunities		x		x	x			x						
Graduate Formation	Volunteering			x	v	v	x		v		x		v	x	
Graduate Formation	Recruitment opportunities/internships			v		x	x	v	x						

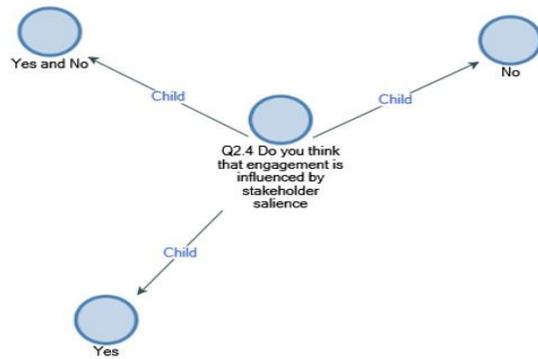
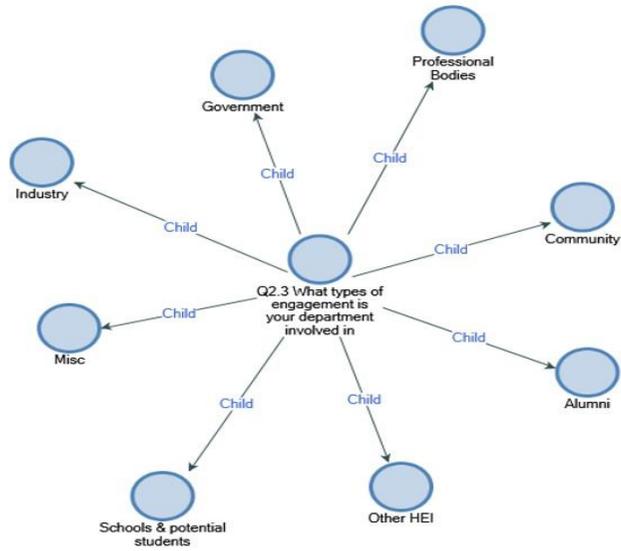
Types of engagement	Measure proposed by HEI	AIT	ITB	CIT	IT Carlow	DIT	IADT	DKIT	GMIT	LIT	LYIT	IT Sligo	IT Tallaght	IT Tralee	WIT
Graduate Formation	Work readiness/employer feedback			x		x	v			v	v	x	v		
Graduate Formation	Participation in entrepreneurial programmes	v				v		v			x		x	x	
Graduate Formation	Student societies with civic element						v		x						
Graduate Formation	Student led enterprise activities e.g. business/enterprise society						x	v						v	
Graduate Formation	Active alumni on database					x								v	
Graduate Formation	Mentoring programme	x											x	v	
Market Advancement	% 1st destination graduates working in the region								v						
Market Advancement	Link with US e.g. Diaspora, Silicon Valley Irish Technology Leadership group									x	v				
Market Advancement	Stakeholder services	x						x							
Research & Innovation	Spin outs	v		v	v	v		v		v	x		v	v	v
Research & Innovation	Licences/options/assignments/IP	v		v	v	v		v		v	x				v
Research & Innovation	Patents	v		v	v	v		v		v	x				v

Types of engagement	Measure proposed by HEI	AIT	ITB	CIT	IT Carlow	DIT	IADT	DKIT	GMIT	LIT	LYIT	IT Sligo	IT Tallaght	IT Tralee	WIT
Research & Innovation	Invention disclosures	√	√	√	√	√		√		√	×				√
Research & Innovation	Research income from industry	√		√		√		√	√		√	√		√	√
Research & Innovation	Research contracts			√	√	√		√		√					
Research & Innovation	Projects with industry partner	×		√	√	×	×	√		×	×			√	
Research & Innovation	Applied research	×		√		×		×				×	×	√	×
Research & Innovation	Innovation vouchers	√	√	√			√			√		√	√	√	
Research & Innovation	Number of industry partners	√			×	×	√	√	√	√	√		√	×	
Research & Innovation	Number of joint publications with industry							√					×		
Research & Innovation	Research with impact statements			×		×			×		×			×	√
Graduate Formation	Number of staff engaged in industry research	×			×				√						
Research & Innovation/Social Enhancement	Community based research initiatives		√	×											
Social Enhancement	Programmes and community modules/ credit for volunteering		√		√	√	√	√	√			√	√	√	×
Social Enhancement	Regional body involvement e.g. chamber of commerce			×	√	√	√	√	√	×	√		×	×	×

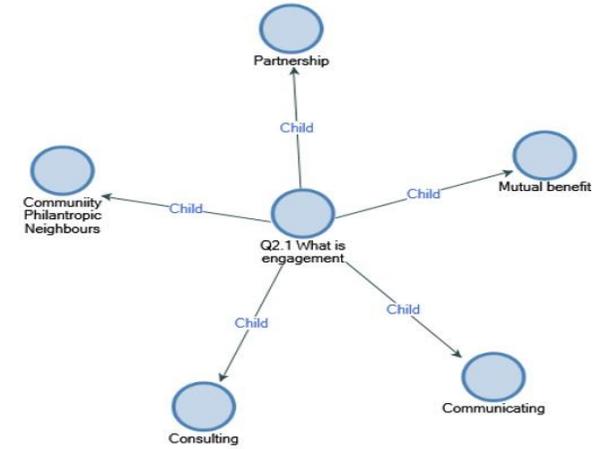
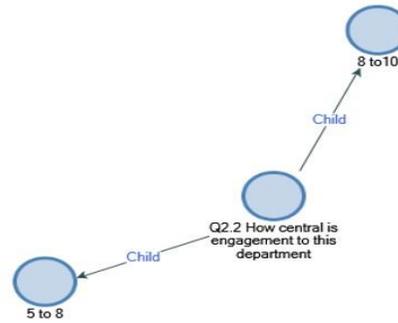
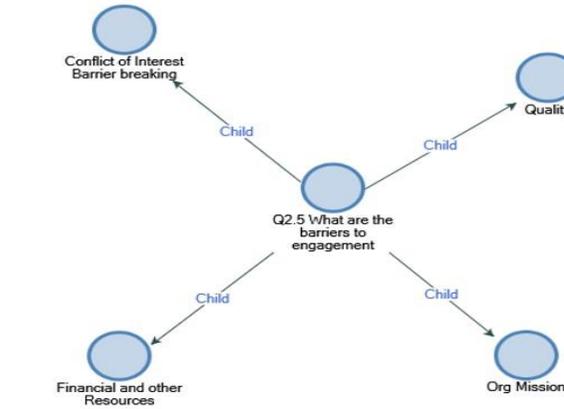
Types of engagement	Measure proposed by HEI	AIT	ITB	CIT	IT Carlow	DIT	IADT	DKIT	GMIT	LIT	LYIT	IT Sligo	IT Tallaght	IT Tralee	WIT
Research & Innovation	Volunteering/ participation in regional/civic networks e.g. school boards, penny dinners etc.		√			√			x		√		x	x	
Social Enhancement	Institute volunteering programme in 3rd world						x								
Research & Innovation	Event/workshops/conferences/clinics/ colloquium	x						√	x			√			√
Social Enhancement	Supported projects	√		x	√	x		x	x	√	√	x	√	√	x
Social Enhancement	Existing & new companies supported (Entrepreneurship)	√	√	x		√		√	x	x	√	x	x	√	x
Social Enhancement	Incubator occupancy levels	x		x		√	x	√		x	√	x	x	x	
Social Enhancement	Campus companies							√							
Social Enhancement	Number of jobs supported by incubation unit					x		x		x	x				
Social Enhancement	Extended Campus contacts			x											
Social Enhancement	Number of community group partners		√	x	x	x	x	√	x	x	x		x	x	x
Social Enhancement	Resources supplied - pitches to labs	x	x		x				x	x		x			
Workforce Development	Industry/company specific training numbers			x				x	x	x	√	√	x	√	

Types of engagement	Measure proposed by HEI	AIT	ITB	CIT	IT Carlow	DIT	IADT	DKIT	GMIT	LIT	LYIT	IT Sligo	IT Tallaght	IT Tralee	WIT
Workforce Development	Springboard & access course numbers	x		x	√	x	√	√			√				

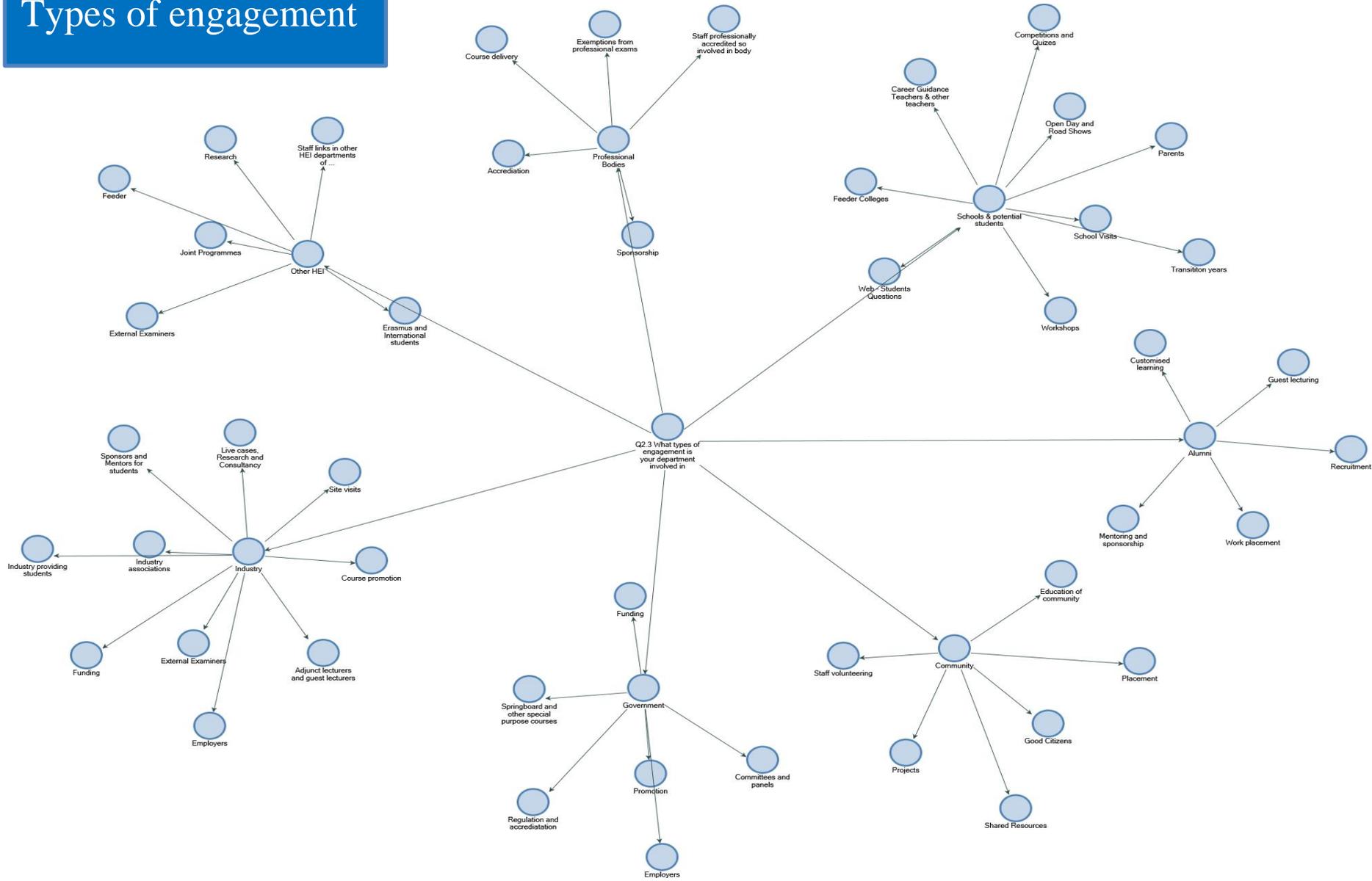
Appendix E: Sample of NVivo coding



ENGAGEMENT



Types of engagement



Appendix F: Comparison of measures reported by interviewees and in performance compact, sorted by stakeholder group and types of engagement

Types of engagement by stakeholder group					
Stakeholder	Category of engagement	Type of engagement interaction	Engagement measured/ reported within case HEI	Engagement measured in the compact	
Business and Industry	Graduate formation	Curriculum design	Yes	Yes	
		Panels & advisory board	Yes	Yes	
		Guest lectures	Yes	Yes	
		Work placement	Yes	Yes	
		Work based projects and live cases	Yes	Yes	
		Customised learning	Yes	Yes	
		Mentors and sponsors	No	No	
		External examiners	No	No	
	Workforce development	Recruitment	No	No	
		Customised courses	Yes	Yes	
		Continual professional development	No	No	
		Research and innovation	Funding	Yes	Yes
			Consultancy	Yes	Yes
	Social enhancement	Public access to knowledge	No	No	
		Meeting regional skill needs	No	No	
	Market advancement	Course promotion	No	No	
		Industry associations	No	No	
Prospective Students	Social enhancement	Meeting regional skill needs	No	No	
	Market advancement	School visits	Yes	No	
		Teacher interactions	No	No	
		Workshops	No	No	

Types of engagement by stakeholder group				
Stakeholder	Category of engagement	Type of engagement interaction	Engagement measured/ reported within case HEI	Engagement measured in the compact
		Transition year programmes	No	No
		Feeder college interactions	No	No
		Competitions and quizzes	No	No
		Open days	No	No
		Career fairs	No	No
		Roadshows	No	No
		Parent/sponsor interaction	No	No
		Web based interactions	No	No
Government and their agencies	Graduate formation	Work placement	No	No
	Research and innovation	Funding for research	Yes	Yes
		Research contracts	Yes	Yes
		Collaborations	No	No
	Social enhancement	Meeting regional skill needs	No	Yes
		Promotion of region and HEI	No	No
	Market advancement	Research agencies & funding for research	Yes	Yes
Networking on government committees		No	No	
Other HEIs	Graduate formation	Panels in case HEI/ in other HEIs with case staff	No	Yes
		External examiners in case HEI	No	No
		External examiner with HEI staff on other campuses	No	No
	Research and innovation	Collaborations	Yes	Yes
	Market advancement	Other networks	No	No
		Guest lectures	No	No

Types of engagement by stakeholder group				
Stakeholder	Category of engagement	Type of engagement interaction	Engagement measured/ reported within case HEI	Engagement measured in the compact
Professional Bodies	Graduate formation	Course delivery	No	No
	Workforce development	Accreditation	No	No
		Exemptions	No	No
	Market advancement	Other networks	No	No
Communities	Graduate formation	Work placement	No	No
		Live cases	No	No
	Social enhancement	Public access to knowledge and sharing of resources	No	No
		Community education	No	No
		Meet regional skill needs	No	Yes
		Staff volunteering	No	No
Alumni	Graduate formation	Work placement	No	No
		Guest lectures	No	No
		Mentoring and sponsorship	No	No
	Workforce development	Customised learning	No	Yes
		Continual professional development	No	No
		Recruitment	No	No

Appendix G: Interview guide and interviewee consent letter

Introduction

What is the full name of the department?

How long has this department been in existence -> less than or more than 5 years

Which school and faculty does it belong to?

Have you worked in [case HEI] for long and in what role?

Did you work in any other HEI before [case HEI]?

Have you been in this position for long?

Stakeholders

In your opinion who are the department's main external stakeholders?

What is their geographical spread? What proportion are in [case HEI county]/Ireland/International

Of these stakeholders who are the most important to the department? (This question was probed further by asking interviewees if they thought any of the stakeholders mentioned has salience or urgency, power and legitimacy if they did not understand the salience concept).

Engagement

What do you understand by the term engagement?

How central is engagement to this department?

What types of engagement is your department involved in with the following stakeholders:

Community/ region

Other HEI

Government & agencies

Business & industry associations

Professional Bodies

Schools/feeder parents & sponsors

Do you think that engagement is influenced by stakeholder salience?

What are the barriers to engagement?

Measurement

What engagement is measured presently in your department?

Can you explain a little how it is measured and reported?

What do you believe are the benefits of measuring engagement?

How were those measures decided upon?

What are the measures used for, for example they reported up along the ladder/ Any explicit/understood reward for engagement?

Strategic Compact (Heads of Department)

Can you outline your understanding of the HEAs the strategic compact (Performance-based compact) (Are there any engagement measures in the compacts?)

Does the compact influence department activity, aims & priorities?

Strategic Compact (Top level managers)

Can you outline your understanding of the HEAs the strategic compact (Performance-based compact)

Are there any engagement measures in the compacts?

How were the measures decided upon?

Was there any coercive pressure from HEA/Government to adopt particular measures?

Was there any formal/informal consultation with other HEI in deciding on the measures?

What department/role within [case HEI] prepared the engagement measures?

Did professional networks have any role?

Does the compact influence college engagement activity, aims & priorities?

Ruth Vance
Department of Accounting and Information Systems
Cork Institute of Technology
ruth.vance@cit.ie

4/4/2016

Re: Standard Ethics Protocol

Dear xxx,

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this research project on External Engagement.

I would like to reassure you that as a participant in this project you have a number of options:

- Your participation in this interview is entirely voluntary;
- You are free to refuse to answer any question at any time;
- You are free to withdraw from the interview at any stage.

The contents of the interview will be kept **strictly confidential and anonymous**. Extracts from this interview may be included as part of the final research report, but under no circumstances will your name or any identifying characteristics be included. Any references to your name will be deleted from the interview transcript. Any tape recording of this interview will be destroyed on transcription.

I would be grateful if you would sign this form to indicate that I have read you its contents.

(Signed) _____

(Printed) _____

(Date) _____

Appendix H: Papers and conferences for this research

Published papers

Vance Lee, Ruth, Kelly, Rosemarie, (2017), “Stakeholder engagement in Irish higher education institutions”, INTED2017 Proceedings Valencia, March, ISBN: 978-84-617-8491-2, Edited by: Chova, LG; Martinez, AL; Torres, IC, pp. 26-36

Vance Lee, Ruth, Kelly, Rosemarie, (2017), “Stakeholder engagement in Irish higher education institutions”, ICERI2017 Proceedings Seville, November, ISBN: 978-84-697-6957-7, Edited by: Chova, LG; Martinez, AL; Torres, IC, pp. 1977-1987

Vance, R. and Kelly, R. (2018), “HEI engagement with external stakeholders: The influence of stakeholder salience and institutional isomorphism”, INTED2018 Proceedings, ISBN: 978-84-697-9480-7: Edited by: Chova, LG; Martinez, AL; Torres, pp. 5635-5644

Vance, R. and Kelly, R (2018) “Influences on external stakeholder engagement and its measurement in Irish Higher Education Institutions”, ICERI2018 Seville, November 2018, ISBN: 978-84-09-05948-5, p.2589

Conferences

Dempsey, S., Vance, R. and Sheehan, L (2012), “Justification of an upgrade of an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system: the accountant’s role”, Irish Accounting and Finance Association’s 25th Annual Conference, UCG

Vance, R (2016), “Engagement measurement in higher education”, British Accounting and Finance Association, Annual Conference, Belfast

Vance, R (2016), “Engagement measurement in Irish HEI”, Irish Accounting and Finance Association, Annual Conference, Waterford

Vance Lee, Ruth, Kelly, Rosemarie, (2017), “Stakeholder engagement in Irish higher education institutions”, International Conference of Education, Research and Innovation, Seville, 2017

Vance Lee, Ruth, Kelly, Rosemarie, (2017), “Stakeholder engagement in Irish higher education institutions”, International Technology, Education and Development Conference, Valencia, 2017

Vance Lee, Ruth, Kelly, Rosemarie, (2017), “Exploring Stakeholder Engagement in Irish Higher Education Institutions”, British Accounting & Finance Association Proceedings Cardiff, May 2017

Vance Lee, Ruth, Kelly, Rosemarie, (2017), “Exploring Stakeholder Engagement in Irish Higher Education Institutions”, Irish Accounting & Finance Association Belfast, May 2017

Vance, R. and Kelly, R. (2018), “HEI engagement with external stakeholders: The influence of stakeholder salience and institutional isomorphism”, International Technology, Education and Development Conference, Valencia, 2018.

Vance, R. and Kelly, R (2018) “Influences on external stakeholder engagement and its measurement in Irish Higher Education Institutions”, International Conference of Education, Research and Innovation, Seville, November 2018, Poster presentation.

Vance, R. and Kelly, R (2019) “Influences on external engagement and its measurement in Irish Higher Education Institutions”, International Technology, Education and Development Conference, Valencia, 2019

Appendix I: Case HEIs performance compact

Mission-based Performance Compact

between

[case HEI] Institute of Technology

and

The Higher Education Authority

Date: February 2014

Context

This Compact is an agreement between the Higher Education Authority and [case HEI] ([case HEI]) and is the outcome of a process of strategic dialogue between the two bodies.

The purpose of strategic dialogue is to align the missions, strategies and profiles of individual higher education institutions with national priorities, and to agree strategic objective indicators of success against which institutional performance will be measured and funding allocated.

This Compact demonstrates a shared sense of the balance that is required between institutional autonomy and public accountability and a recognition that a diverse range of strong, autonomous institutions is essential for the overall higher education system to respond effectively to evolving and unpredictable societal needs.

The Compact recognises that [case HEI] is an autonomous institution with a distinctive mission, operating within a regional, national and international higher education environment.

The Compact recognises that there is a tension between providing a transparent framework of public accountability for performance in relation to funding, and risks of unintended behaviours related to measurements. It addresses this tension by requiring higher education institutions themselves to propose the qualitative and quantitative indicators against which their performance should be assessed by the Higher Education Authority.

The purpose of this Compact is to provide a strategic framework for the relationship between the Higher Education Authority and [case HEI]. It sets out how [case HEI's] mission and goals align with national goals for higher education.

By detailing HEA funding commitments and reciprocal [case HEI] commitments, this Compact also contributes to creating a transparent and accountable system of

administration of State funding. To support this purpose, the Higher Education Authority and [case HEI] agree that this Compact will be published.

The principles of State funding support

The principles under which State funding for higher education is provided are:

-  Institutional autonomy balanced with public accountability for high quality outcomes; and
-  Core funding allocations that are predictable, fair and transparent, and that provide reasonable stability from year to year and in which funding follows the student.

Contents

	Page
1. Establishment of the Compact	4
Provides for the establishment of the Compact and its term, and for the Higher Education Authority to inform [case HEI] of any actual or prospective changes to policy.	
2. Performance Funding Framework	5
Sets out the Performance Funding Framework within which the HEA will allocate performance funding to [case HEI].	
3. Mission and Strategy Statement	6
Includes a statement of [case HEI's] mission and strategy. [case HEI] also agrees to inform the Higher Education Authority of changes to its mission and profile.	
4. Current and Planned Profile	10
Contains the current profile 2010/11 (as supplied by the HEA) and the planned profile 2016/17 completed by the [case HEI].	
5. Development Plans and Objectives	12
Sets out [case HEI's] development plans and objectives using standardised templates. These development plans / objectives <i>must</i> be taken from the institution's own properly formulated strategic plan. The quality of the institution's strategic planning process will be evaluated.	
6. Annual Compliance Statement	38
As the strategic dialogue process develops, the HEA will take into account ongoing compliance of institutions. Where significant or urgent compliance issues arise, they will be discussed as part of the strategic dialogue in 2013.	

7. Performance Funding	39
Performance funding allocated in first cycle	
8. Agreement	40
Contains confirmation of the agreement between the HEA and [case HEI] to be signed upon conclusion of the strategic dialogue process.	
Appendices	41
Includes additional material supplied [case HEI] including details of how objectives might be objectively verified.	

1. Establishment of the Compact

The Higher Education Authority and [case HEI] ([case HEI]) agree that:

-  This Compact consists of this document and the accompanying current and planned profiles
-  The term of this Compact is from 1 January 2014 to 31 December 2016 unless terminated earlier by agreement

[case HEI] acknowledges that policy underlying some or all of this Compact is subject to review by the Minister for Education and Skills or by the Higher Education Authority from time to time. The Higher Education Authority and [case HEI] agree that if changes need to be made to the Compact because of such a review, the Higher Education Authority will notify [case HEI] of this in writing and will consult with [case HEI] accordingly.

Some or all of the funding arrangements may be updated from time to time. Either party may propose changes to this Compact at any time.

2. Performance Funding Framework

Higher education Performance Funding will provide incentives for higher education institutions to improve overall performance in accordance with their own strategies and with their place in the overall system.

Performance Funding will be allocated based on performance against agreed targets and indicators of success proposed by the institution across a range of outcome domains. The targets and indicators of success must be agreed in strategic dialogue with the HEA. The intention is both to improve the performance of the institution in key areas and to steer the institution closer to its agreed mission and profile and to its position in the overall higher education system. The degree of challenge and of realism inherent in the targets proposed will be evaluated and discussed in strategic dialogue.

The Higher Education Authority and [case HEI] agree to review annually the effectiveness of implementation of the strategies and goals for achieving the agreed national and institution outcomes.

As a condition of Performance Funding, in accordance with this agreement, [case HEI]

must:

-  Agree performance targets as outlined in section 5 below
-  Supply performance data to the Higher Education Authority for the  indicators
-  Achieve the relevant targets agreed

The assessment of progress against the agreed indicators of success and the allocation of Performance Funding against them will be notified annually to [case HEI].

3 Mission and Strategy Statement

[case HEI's] mission and strategy sets out its values and aspirations, what it does and how it can best serve the interests of its students, staff and key stakeholders. The Higher Education Authority and [case HEI] acknowledge that [case HEI's] mission and strategy may evolve.

[case HEI] and the Higher Education Authority recognise that [case HEI] is an autonomous institution that is responsible for determining its mission, its aspirations and its strategies for their achievement.

However, the Higher Education Authority must ensure that together the missions and profiles of the different institutions will lead to overall coherence of the higher education system as a whole and to completeness, ensuring that national needs are being met and without unnecessary duplication.

[case HEI] Mission

We are proud of our distinct mission and role in the provision of higher education for the region and beyond. Our mission is:

To provide student-centred, career-focused education and research for the personal, professional and intellectual development of the student and for the benefit of the broader society in the region and beyond.

[case HEI] Commitments

The Institute is committed to its role within the region and nationally. As we pursue our mission across our full range of activities we are focused on fulfilling the following

commitments which encapsulate the Institute's priorities, ethos and values.

[case HEI] is a student-centred institution:

- [case HEI] develops and fosters the talents of its students in a supportive environment which challenges them to succeed and prepares them to make a positive contribution in their chosen careers and as members of society regionally, nationally and internationally.
- [case HEI] is committed to respecting and protecting the dignity and rights of individuals through practices which promote fairness and equal treatment for all.

[case HEI] delivers career-focused education and research:

- Through the delivery of career-focused education, training and professional development, [case HEI] produces graduates who are professionals and practitioners, distinguished in their chosen career by their ability to effectively create and apply knowledge, engage in ongoing learning and act in entrepreneurial and innovative ways.
- Engagement with enterprise and the extension of the campus into the workplace (and the wider community) is a key defining characteristic of [case HEI].
- [case HEI] engages in research in a manner that supports and enhances its core mission. Research is an essential core activity and it informs all the activities of the Institute including teaching and enterprise engagement.

[case HEI] provides inclusive access to higher education:

- [case HEI] provides education opportunities which empower all motivated individuals to pursue personal, intellectual and professional enhancement.

[case HEI] plays a regional, national and international role:

- [case HEI] provides education, research, innovation and other services which are aligned to regional, national and international needs and priorities.
- [case HEI] makes a positive contribution to the academic, economic, industrial, social and cultural life of the region and beyond. Furthermore, its staff, students and graduates are aware of the importance of ethical behaviour and social responsibility across all economic, social and cultural domains.

[case HEI] Vision

As we look towards the future we have an ambitious and challenging vision for the strategic development of [case HEI] which is that:

[case HEI] will be an internationally recognised centre of excellence in the provision of career-focused education which produces effective, ethical professionals capable of entrepreneurship, innovation and creativity.

Achieving this vision requires the development of learners who are flexible thinkers capable of creativity and innovation, who by the time they graduate from [case HEI] will already possess the attributes and aptitude required to be effective professionals and practitioners in their chosen field. We seek to educate professionals throughout our broad range of undergraduate, postgraduate and research programmes across science, engineering, business, the humanities, craft studies, visual arts, maritime studies and music. It is our goal to ensure that every [case HEI] graduate will be recognised as possessing and practising the following strengths and competencies:

- A [case HEI] graduate will have a broad range of relevant discipline-specific knowledge, skills and competencies.
- A [case HEI] graduate will exhibit personal and professional efficacy and integrity, enabled by the development of a broad range of competencies including interpersonal and communication skills, teamwork, ethics and social responsibility.
- A [case HEI] graduate will be motivated and empowered to be a lifelong learner with a passion for learning which is underpinned by the essential skills of inquiry and scholarship.
- A [case HEI] graduate will have the ability to create and apply knowledge in a variety of professional contexts, having participated in an educational programme which fosters problem solving, knowledge discovery, research and the use of knowledge in real-world situations.

This vision sees [case HEI] becoming an international exemplar of good practice in professional education. [case HEI] will pursue this goal through the ongoing adoption of best practice in teaching, learning and research as follows:

- Active and collaborative student-centred learning which engages the student's desire to learn and challenges them to take ownership of their learning experience.
- A relevant and flexible career-focused curriculum, developed in close partnership with enterprise.
- Research education which delivers a range of skills including creativity, inquiry, problem solving and innovation, and develops professional researchers capable of pursuing research, innovation and development careers in both enterprise and academic settings.

[case HEI] will continue to be a national and international leader in enterprise engagement and the practice of extending the education campus into the workplace and the wider community. The [case HEI] approach to campus extension and engagement will be characterised by:

- The development of engagement as an Institute-wide commitment, embracing education, research, innovation and enterprise support.

- The fostering of two-way engagement and knowledge exchange between [case HEI] and external partners.
- The creation of agile and flexible learning pathways in partnership with enterprises and communities, incorporating the recognition of prior learning and work-based learning.
- Enhanced practice and policy frameworks that recognise and support the valuable contribution of enterprises and communities to the curriculum to ensure relevance and currency.

Responsiveness is at the core of our mission and therefore effective campus extension and engagement is an essential activity for [case HEI]. We are seeking to develop a professional outward-facing interface through which external communities, organisations and enterprises can interact with [case HEI]. Through these interactions and partnerships we will ensure that we continue to meet the needs of our stakeholders.

In summary, as we seek to make this strategic vision a reality, [case HEI] will strive for excellence in student-centred teaching and learning; excellence in research, creation of knowledge and use of knowledge; and excellence in engagement with enterprise and the broader society.

Changes to the mission and strategy statement

The Higher Education Authority acknowledges that [case HEI] may adjust its mission and strategy from time to time. [case HEI] agrees that the following will be the subject of strategic dialogue with the Higher Education Authority and may result in a change to the Compact:

- ✿ Any significant change that it proposes to make to its mission during the term of the Compact
- ✿ Any significant change that it intends to make to its activities that could affect either the content or the practical application of its mission.

4. Current and Planned Profile

The following pages contain:

- ✿ [case HEI's] current profile 2010/11 (as supplied by the HEA); and
- ✿ [case HEI's] planned profile 2016/17 (completed).

For hard copy submissions, please bind the current and planned profile after this page.

For electronic submissions, please submit the current and planned profiles as PDF and Excel attachments respectively.

Development Plans and Objectives

Regional clusters

Strategy summary

A brief summary of [case HEI's] strategy and chosen objectives in relation to its regional cluster is provided below.

Regional clusters: strategy summary

Governance Arrangements

The following provides a summary of the current agreed position for governance of the Southern Cluster:

- Parity of esteem for all stakeholders is essential to the successful operation of cluster
- Clear terms of reference and an MOU for the operation of the cluster is to be prepared as soon as possible
- The use of a rotating rather than an independent chair has been agreed. The rotation period will be for one year
- Presidents and at least one other member of senior management to be nominated by each institute to the cluster board
- Agreement that industry, further education and other stakeholder participation is required in cluster specific projects
- Compact objectives on clusters will be harmonised across all members of the cluster
- A strategic work-plan including governance structures is to be developed for delivering on cluster objectives by the end 2014
- Arbitration mechanisms will be established as part of the governance structure
- Recommendations which impact on the operation of higher education institutions will require approval by all governing authorities

Primary Objectives of the South Region Cluster

- Increase the capacity and responsiveness of the Irish Higher Education system
- Deepen partnerships and collaborations among the cluster of Higher Education Institutes
- Provide improved progression pathways between institutions
- Enhance cooperation across the institutions in support of regional economic, social and cultural development
- Build on existing successes in the areas of course development, collaborative research, entrepreneurship and innovation

External Factors

- Availability of funding and resources to deliver on cluster objectives

- The potential for lack of agreement among cluster institutions on expected objectives
- Insufficiently robust or poorly designed processes at a national level that may inhibit the successful creation of regional clusters

Regional clusters:

Institution objectives and performance indicator

1.	Cluster objective	Create a formal regional cluster between the named member institutions.
	Performance indicator	Agree and implement a framework for cluster operation and commence implementation of agreed collaborative projects.
	Baseline	Many inter-institutional relationships exist but no formalised cluster structure is in place.
	Interim target, end 2014	Agree and implement a governance framework for joint activities including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The establishment of a cluster board • Creation of an MOU for operation of the cluster • Development of arbitration procedures • Development of a coordinated work-plan for the implementation of agreed projects.
	Interim target, end 2015	Complete a progress review in terms of delivery of the work plan and implementation of agreed projects.
	Final target, end 2016	Evaluate the effectiveness of the governance framework in place for the cluster and explore further collaborative opportunities.
2.	Cluster objective	Improve student pathways.
	Performance indicator	Produce a mapping profile which outlines learner opportunities and pathways for all disciplines and levels across the cluster region which will assist in future academic planning and delivery
	Baseline	Many inter-institutional pathways exist but no complete mapping profile is available.

Interim target, end 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial focus of the cluster is anticipated to be on improving student pathways given priority attached to the transitions initiative Perform baseline mapping process in terms of student pathways from secondary through to tertiary education and graduate destination (this will require engagement of secondary and FE providers as well student representative bodies) Final output - mapping profile.
Interim target, end 2015	Develop uniform access/progression scheme for the cluster.
Final target, end 2016	Review pathways profile based on new academic developments.

3.	Cluster objective	Shared academic planning
	Performance indicator	Develop a cluster-wide academic planning structure focused on the delivery of national priority objectives such as the transitions initiative Horizon 2020 and other objectives focused on improving the economic, social and cultural profile of the cluster region
	Baseline	<p>No cluster-wide academic planning structure exists. However there is an understanding that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual institutes will continue to provide a broad base of undergraduate course opportunities up to level 8 to satisfy needs of individual hinterlands given the geographical scale of region External stakeholders such as regulatory and professional bodies will also influence the planning and delivery process The number of CAO entry paths is expected to reduce with the collective implementation of the transitions initiative Agreement that there are benefits to shared academic planning in specialist areas, most notably at Level 9 and above Acceptance this will lead to the creation of strong thematic areas in individual and cooperating institutes in the cluster. <p>This activity is particularly relevant to the delivery of Horizon 2020, Government objectives, targets for R&D activity and enterprise and industry development. It is also relevant to the delivery of industry and employer needs, hence engagement with employers in the region is significant to academic planning agenda.</p>

Interim target, end 2014	<p>Baseline mapping of academic programme provision across the cluster completed</p> <p>Research mapping completed to identify potential research synergies.</p> <p>(Programme and research mapping will provide a profile across the cluster and will inform next steps – complete during academic year 2014/15).</p>
Interim target, end 2015	<p>Implementation of joint academic developments which are informed by the baseline mapping process across the cluster and targeted at delivering on regional economic and social needs</p>
Final target, end 2016	<p>Review operation of academic planning process with a view to identifying new areas for collaboration in the next round of institutional compacts</p>

5.2 Participation, equal access and lifelong learning

Strategy summary

A brief summary of [case HEI's] strategy and chosen objectives in relation to participation, equal access and lifelong learning is provided below.

Participation, equal access and lifelong learning:

[case HEI] is committed to the principle of inclusive access to higher education. [case HEI] aims to provide opportunities for all motivated individuals to pursue personal, intellectual and professional development.

[case HEI] is working, alongside regional and national partners to ensure that under- represented groups (including mature learners, non-nationals and those from specific socio- economic groups) are afforded the opportunity to pursue higher education in accordance with their interests and aptitudes. There are a number of programmes and articulation agreements in place to facilitate access to higher education for job seekers and to provide transfer and progression pathways for those who have completed education and training programmes at other institutions.

[case HEI's] Disability Support Service team works hard to maintain and establish links with external organisations and agencies as well as engaging actively in outreach work through Assistive Technology demonstrations, training sessions, events and festivals throughout the year. [case HEI] operates DARE (Disability Access Route to Education) admissions routes for students with disabilities.

As the profile of entrants to higher education changes to reflect national trends, more entrants will continue to come from the non-traditional routes. New

progression routes from programmes (e.g. FE and PLC programmes) into programmes within [case HEI] will continue to be developed and mapped.

A significant part of [case HEI's] strategy is the provision of workplace and employability programmes. This provision will take the form of programmes, both mainstream and bespoke, to facilitate continuing professional development (CPD). Alongside this CPD provision will be programmes aimed specifically at individuals who may wish to change career or those who are seeking employment. The commitment of [case HEI] to programmes that are already in place (such as Springboard and ICT skills), as well the successful outcome achieved by graduates, illustrates that there are solid foundations in this area, which will be built upon and enhanced.

With increased personal access to technology, the provision of programmes based fully on an e-learning format can now satisfy the demand for accessible courses of study, and can provide flexibility for learners in how they access and participate. [case HEI] will make extensive use of ICT and emerging technologies to provide higher education opportunities to the broadest possible cohort of learners.

[case HEI] acknowledges that the recognition of prior learning (RPL) can support the socially inclusive purposes of higher education– in the ways that it facilitates entry to programmes, gives credit to or exemptions from **elements of a** programme of study, or leads to a full award. The practice of recognising all types of learning is well established in [case HEI], where applications for recognition of prior learning have grown to over 600 a year. As a leader of the Education in Employment and REAP (SIF) projects, [case HEI] has contributed to the development of RPL policy and practice guidelines for the broader education system in Ireland and beyond and continues to consult with higher education and workplace partners on policy **and practice** development for RPL. The inclusion of RPL in learning pathways is of particular importance for the experienced worker returning to learning with extensive non- formal and informal learning. RPL also tends to be a significant building block in the development of work-based and customised learning in partnership with enterprise to meet specific business or regional development needs. Currently [case HEI] represents Ireland on behalf of QQI on the European RPL Network reporting to the Structural Reform group of the Bologna Follow-up group, with particular emphasis on the EU recommendation 2012 on the validation of informal and non formal learning.

Participation, equal access and lifelong learning: Institution objectives and performance indicators

1.	Institution objective	Increase numbers of mature (full-time) entrants
	Performance indicator	Mature (full-time undergraduate entrants) students as % of new entrants

	Baseline	12%
	Interim target, end 2014	13%
	Interim target, end 2015	14%
	Final target, end 2016	15%
2.	Institution objective	Increase numbers of flexible learners
	Performance indicator	Flexible learners as % of total enrolments
	Baseline	21%
	Interim target, end 2014	23%
	Interim target, end 2015	24%
	Final target, end 2016	25%
3.	Institution objective	Admit increased numbers of students with disabilities
	Performance indicator	Students with disabilities as % of new entrants
	Baseline	7%
	Interim target, end 2014	8%
	Interim target, end 2015	9%
	Final target, end 2016	10%
3.	Institution objective	Increase numbers of students from under-represented (non-manual, semi-skilled and non-skilled) socio-economic backgrounds
	Performance indicator	Entrants from under-represented socio-economic backgrounds as % of new entrants.
	Baseline	24%
	Interim target, end 2014	25%
	Interim target, end 2015	26%
	Final target, end 2016	27%
4.	Institution objective	Increase RPL activity.
	Performance indicator	Number of RPL applications processed and activity in support of RPL in enterprise and other HEIs.

Baseline	We offer 3 ‘Learning Clinics’ – in company RPL/WBL facilitation sessions to grow awareness and stimulate demand. We support and consult on RPL for 3-4 other HEI providers per annum.
Interim target, end 2014	Increase our offering to 4 Learning Clinics per annum. Aim to process 650 PRL applications and continue to support RPL within other HEIs as appropriate. Work with QQI on the development of an RPL network within Ireland.
Interim target, end 2015	Increase our offering to 5 Learning Clinics per annum. Aim to process 675 PRL applications and continue to support RPL within other HEIs as appropriate. Work with QQI on the development of an RPL network within Ireland.
Final target, end 2016	Increase our offering to 6 Learning Clinics per annum and our throughput to over 700 applications continuing to support national and international policy and practice development.

5. Institution objective [case HEI] will continue to increase the numbers of students admitted via non-standard access pathways.

Performance indicator a) Number of students admitted to 1st year
b) Number of students admitted to 2nd year

Baseline	a) 34 b) 33
Interim target, end 2014	a) 45 b) 40
Interim target, end 2015	a) 55 b) 48
Final target, end 2016	a) 67 b) 58

5.3 Excellent teaching and learning and quality of the student experience

Strategy summary

A brief summary of [case HEI’s] strategy and chosen objectives in relation to excellent teaching and learning and quality of the student experience is provided below.

This sets out:

- 1 Vision underpinning the portfolio of undergraduate programmes
- 2 Approaches being taken to improve overall performance
- 3 How planned provision is aligned to institutional mission

Excellent teaching and learning and quality of the student experience:

Our mission is to provide student-centred, career-focused education and research for the personal, professional and intellectual development of the student and for the benefit of the broader society in the region and beyond.

Our vision in relation to teaching and learning is that [case HEI] will be an internationally recognised centre of excellence in the provision of career-focused education which produces effective, ethical professionals capable of entrepreneurship, innovation and creativity. We seek to educate professionals throughout our broad range of undergraduate, postgraduate and research programmes across science, engineering, business, the humanities, craft studies, visual arts, maritime studies and music.

[case HEI] has identified within the following areas specific objectives

1. Developing and Improving the Student Experience

- i. [case HEI] will improve student retention, achievement and completion rates to above international norms
- ii. Arising out of a process of meaningful student consultation followed by appropriate action, [case HEI] will achieve consistently high student satisfaction ratings

2. Engaging and Empowering Staff

- i. To enhance staff knowledge and skills, [case HEI] will develop systems to identify and provide training and development opportunities for all its staff
- ii. [case HEI] will enhance the qualifications profiles of academic and non-academic staff

3. Offering High Quality, Relevant and Flexible Programmes

- i. Through developing and implementing best practice in the area of curriculum design, [case HEI] will continue to enhance the quality of its programmes of study
- ii. The relevance of [case HEI] programmes will be ensured through professional accreditation and ongoing feedback from employer and sectoral stakeholders
- iii. [case HEI] will continue to develop, encourage and enable the employability of its graduates through the incorporation of employability development activities, such as professional practice and enterprise-linked projects, in programmes of learning

[case HEI] will offer increased flexible learning opportunities by significantly expanding its existing open/distance learning capabilities and programmes across all disciplines and levels

Approaches being taken to improve performance

1. 1st Year experience and improving student progression rates

The Institute has identified the 1st year student experience and its effect of student progression rate as a key area to address. The Institute has appointed a senior academic to coordinate a series of initiatives in this area, including, inter alia:

- i) A seven-week Good Start programme aimed at all incoming 1st years assisting them to transition to higher education
- ii) The pilot of Peer Assisted Student Support initiative in a number of academic departments
- iii) A redevelopment of the 1st year Creativity, Innovation and Teamwork module taught in the first semester of all undergraduate programmes

2. Staff Development Programme

The achievement of our strategic goals will depend largely on the committed and talented people who work at [case HEI]. The Institute continues to prioritise the professional development of all its staff. Initiatives in this area include:

- i) The development of an overarching staff development framework
- ii) The establishment of specialist training and development units in the areas of Academic Practice and Technology Enhanced Learning

3. High Quality, Relevant and Flexible Programmes

The Institute continues to ensure that the programmes it offers remain of high quality, are relevant to employers and the needs of the region and beyond and are delivered so as to meet the needs of our diverse student population. Initiatives in this area include:

The establishment of a Quality Enhancement Unit, to oversee and enhance the design and delivery of curricula within the Institute. The appointment of a Head of Online Delivery to coordinate and facilitate the delivery of programmes via online and blended learning methodologies

Excellent teaching and learning and quality of student experience: Institution objectives and performance indicators

1.	Institution objective	To improve the 1 st year student experience
	Performance indicator	First year student progression rates (combined level 6, 7 and 8) into the second year of his/her programme.
	Baseline	22% non-progression rate 2011/2012 (combined average for levels 6, 7 and 8)
	Interim target, end 2014	19% (combined average for levels 6, 7 and 8)
	Interim target, end 2015	17% (combined average for levels 6, 7 and 8)
	Final target, end 2016	15% (combined average for levels 6, 7 and 8)
2.	Institution objective	To increase the number of staff with a pedagogical qualification
	Performance indicator	Number of staff with a pedagogical qualification
	Baseline	n/a
	Interim target, end 2014	Establish baseline via staff survey
	Interim target, end 2015	Initiatives including the integration of requirement for pedagogical qualification with staff progression review

	Final target, end 2016	5% increase in staff holding pedagogical qualification
3.	Institution objective	To increase the number of programmes delivered to off-campus students
	Performance indicator	Number of programmes delivered using online technology Number of students enrolled on fully online programmes
	Baseline	4 Programmes / 155 students (2012/2013)
	Interim target, end 2014	8 Programmes / 250 students
	Interim target, end 2015	12 Programmes/ 350 students
	Final target, end 2016	16 programmes / 500 students

High quality, internationally competitive research and innovation

Strategy summary

A brief summary of [case HEI's] strategy and chosen objectives in relation to high quality, internationally competitive research and innovation is provided below.

High quality, internationally competitive research and innovation:

[case HEI's] Research and Innovation Strategy (2013-2016) is aligned with the Institute's Strategic Plan and takes account of ongoing changes to the landscape of higher education in Ireland, including the criteria for [Technological university] designation.

It is critically important for all of its stakeholders that [case HEI's] research and innovation activities are competitive internationally while serving the needs of its region. Also, as noted in the

Institute's Strategic Plan, this research informs and supports teaching and learning as well as innovation, technology transfer and the extensive enterprise support initiatives of the Institute.

The Institute has identified four thematic research areas (TRAs) as areas of research strength and has focussed resources on these.

These thematic areas were chosen based on [case HEI's] traditional strengths in Engineering and Science and their importance to and potential impact for the region. The Institute is currently examining the feasibility of establishing a TRA in the faculty of Business and Humanities.

The four TRAs are:

- 1. Information and Communications Technologies (ICT)**
- 2. Life Sciences and Wellbeing**

3. Photonics

4. Maritime, Energy and Sustainable Environment (MSE)

Fundamental to this research strategy is the requirement that each of the TRAs is viable and sustainable both from a funding and capacity perspective.

All four are also focused on delivering research, innovation and solutions for enterprises that drive economic output and growth.

[case HEI] will continue to build on its established research and innovation ecosystem consisting of the underpinning research outputs (including human capital and know-how) of its TRAs, the applications-driven activities of their associated industry-engaged Technology Centres and the formal industry engagements through the Technology Transfer Office and the Rubicon Business Incubator.

An increasing feature of the TRAs is a growing cross-collaboration between them. Examples are the extent of the involvement of ICT researchers in maritime-related research and likewise the contribution of bioinformatics specialists to the Life Sciences.

Embedded in each of the four TRAs is a Research Centre that has achieved critical mass and has a senior researcher as its Head of Centre. Each TRA also facilitates links with research groups that are not part of the embedded Centre (and which have a more focused research activity). A Research Centre typically has been awarded significant external funding by a number of funding agencies (including industry) and forms the major part of each TRA. The Research Centres associated with each of the four TRAs are shown in the following table:

Thematic Research Area (TRA)	Embedded Centre
Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)	NIMBUS Centre for Research in Embedded Networked Systems
Life Sciences & Wellbeing	BioExplore Research Centre
Photonics	CAPPA – Centre for Advanced Photonics and Process Analysis
Maritime, Energy and Sustainable Environment (MSE)	Halpin Research Centre

Research at [case HEI] is increasingly multidisciplinary and translational in nature, and as such, involves external stakeholders that include not only enterprises and academia but also local government, health services, state agencies and representative bodies.

The Institute's Research and Innovation Strategy recognises that collaboration is central to achieving its goals. [case HEI] will build on its already well-developed strategic research partnerships with University College Cork's research centres of excellence.

Formal agreements are in place linking the Tyndall National Institute (with NIMBUS and CAPP), the SFI-funded Alimentary Pharmabiotic Centre (with BioExplore) and in the maritime and ocean energy area linking UCC’s new Beaufort Research Centre (with the Halpin Research Centre at the NMCI) – and through the IMERC initiative which also includes the Irish Naval Service. [case HEI] is also partnered with UCC in the PRTL-5 funded Ed-4-Life and INSPIRE structured PhD programmes.

It is the intention that this platform of existing research collaborations will be further developed as a priority objective for the southern regional cluster as identified in the HEA’s landscape document.

These and other initiatives will ensure that the Institute reaches the researcher and innovation targets required for [Technological university] designation while retaining and developing its distinct mission and role in the region.

As part of an ongoing review of researcher employment and deployment at the Institute, and mindful of the necessity to retain excellent staff, the Institute is in the process of establishing a transparent Researcher Career Framework which will draw on experience nationally. This initiative is regarded as essential to the long-term sustainability of [case HEI’s] significant research activity.

High quality, internationally competitive research and innovation: Institution objectives and performance indicators

1.	Institution objective	Research and Innovation Strategy focusing on excellence with impact
	Performance indicator	<p>Aligns with [case HEI] Strategic Plan</p> <p>Supports sustainable and focused research built on institutional strengths and National Research Priorities</p> <p>Is outward facing and supports strong engagement with industry</p> <p>Supports multidisciplinary and opportunities for commercialisation of knowledge generated through research</p>
	Baseline	<p>Current Research Strategy which identifies the areas of strategic focus, the thematic research areas – TRAs) and the integration of research and innovation with both the teaching and learning activities of [case HEI] and our strong track record of research and innovation with industry</p> <p>Focus on multidisciplinary, translational research, collaboration, commercialisation, the student experience, researcher careers, real-life test beds</p> <p>The wider research and innovation ecosystem</p>

Interim target, end 2014	Update and consolidate Research and Innovation Strategy Clear targets set for each of the TRAs
Interim target, end 2015	Implementation of Research and Innovation Strategy Assessment of performance of Research and Innovation Strategy
Final target, end 2016	Major assessment of research performance feeding into development of follow-on research and innovation strategy beyond 2016 which takes account of the wider educational landscape and the development of [province]

2.	Institution objective	Align researcher and postgraduate student metrics to <u>[Technological university] criteria</u>
	Performance indicator	Researcher enrolment at Level 9/10 not less than 4% of FTE of enrolments at Levels 8-10 <u>% of staff with Level 10 qualifications to be in excess of 80% in thematic research areas (TRAs)</u>
	Baseline	Researcher enrolment at level 9/10 is 3.5% of FTE enrolments at levels 8-10 <u>Within TRAs the % of staff with doctorates averages approximately 60%</u>
	Interim target, end 2014	Researcher enrolment at level 9/10 will be 4% of FTE enrolments at levels 8-10 <u>In TRAs the % of staff with doctorates to reach 65%</u>
	Interim target, end 2015	Researcher enrolment at level 9/10 will be 4.5% of FTE enrolments at levels 8-10 <u>In TRAs the % of staff with doctorates to reach 72%</u>
	Final target, end 2016	Researcher enrolment at level 9/10 will be 5% of FTE enrolments at levels 8-10 In TRAs the % of staff with doctorates to reach 80%

3.	Institution objective	Enhance the researcher environment
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Performance indicator	<p>Formal training for all staff, academic and contract, engaged in supervision of postgraduate students and/or research</p> <p>Structured PhD fully integrated into postgraduate regulations and operational across [case HEI]</p>
Baseline	<p>Initial availability of (i) postgraduate-supervisor and (ii) researcher training modules</p> <p>Postgraduate regulations incorporate all the key elements of the Structured PhD</p>
Interim target, end 2014	<p>Agreed suite of comprehensive training modules for all postgraduate supervisors and researchers</p> <p>Mandatory participation in “Approved Learning” (min of 30 credits) for all new PhD applicants across the Institute</p>
Interim target, end 2015	<p>Continued implementation, feedback and improvement cycle of training</p> <p>60-credit programme in generic skills to lead to special purpose award diploma for PhDs</p>
Final target, end 2016	<p>Continued implementation, feedback and improvement cycle of training</p> <p>Structured PhD programmes mandatory across [case HEI]</p> <p>major review of operation of Structured PhD programmes</p>
4. Institution objective	Grow number of research projects delivered with industry
Performance indicator	<p>Number of research projects involving an industry partner (including collaborative research agreement and research contracts)</p> <p>% of research income attributable to industry projects</p>
Baseline (2012)	<p>95 collaborative research agreements and research contracts</p> <p>20% of research income for industry projects</p>
Interim target, end 2014	<p>105 collaborative research agreements and research contracts</p> <p>22% of research income for industry projects</p>

Interim target, end 2015	110 collaborative research agreements and research contracts 25% of research income for industry projects
Final target, end 2016	115 collaborative research agreements and res contrac 25% of research income for industry projects
5. Institution objective	[case HEI] will maintain its significant technology transfer/exchange activity. This objective reflects the existing high level of performance, targets agreed with Enterprise Ireland, and current resourcing levels
Performance indicator	a) Patents b) Spinouts c) invention disclosures d) collaborative research agreements with companies
Baseline (2012)	a) 3 b) 0 c) 19 d) 29
Interim target, end 2014	a) 5 b) 1 c) 20 d) 30
Interim target, end 2015	a) 5 b) 1 c) 20 d) 30
Final target, end 2016	a) 5 b) 1 c) 20 d) 30

5.5 Enhanced engagement with enterprise and the community and embedded knowledge exchange

Strategy summary

A brief summary of [case HEI's] strategy and chosen objectives in relation to enhanced engagement with enterprise and the community and embedded knowledge exchange is provided below.

Enhanced engagement with enterprise and the community and embedded knowledge exchange:

[case HEI's] long-standing commitment to higher-education/enterprise engagement is evident throughout the institution's history and has resulted in our involvement in a number of

international projects and our leadership of a number of national projects in this space. [case HEI's] Strategic Plan views our engagement with enterprise and the extension of the campus into the wider community as a key defining characteristic. This is embedded in many of our goals ensuring that the development of high quality, relevant and flexible programmes and the growth of research, innovation and entrepreneurship activities are informed by our partnerships with regional enterprises, public bodies and community groups in the context of regional social and economic development. In making a positive contribution to the academic, economic, social and cultural life of the region and beyond, [case HEI] is committed to a partnership approach which recognises and values learning and knowledge creation wherever it occurs and which views the workplace as a valid and valuable centre for learning. Our strategy drives this partnership mode of activity through supporting mechanisms providing the framework conditions within which operational interactions with enterprises and community groups are stimulated and valued.

Through the establishment of the [case HEI] Extended Campus, [case HEI] has provided a dedicated agency to coordinate efforts internally and to facilitate external organisations (public, private or not-for-profit) in their interactions with [case HEI] and to collate business intelligence on engagement to further inform local and national strategy. The [case HEI] Extended Campus acts to develop and support engagement as an institute-wide commitment, embracing education, research, innovation and enterprise support.

This acts to support partnership approaches to graduate formation through curriculum co-development, in the building of good practice guides to work-placement and internship and in supporting the development of entrepreneurial skills and employability.

Another important aspect of our engagement is our work to anticipate and meet the training and development needs of employees and to support the unemployed in reskilling and upskilling to re-enter the labour force. In developing these flexible pathways to learning we work closely with organisations in the development of content and in making use of the recognition of prior learning and work based learning.

Working to support incubation activities of new enterprises as well as supporting technology and knowledge exchange through mobility, applied and contract research, licensing and other interactions remain a strong pillar of our engagement strategy and are central to our contribution to regional economic development activities. The

Rubicon centre is a recognised leader in new business development and support activities as well as business incubation. Working with our Higher Education partners in the region ([Neighbouring and case HEI]) has developed a proposal on aligned engagement for regional economic development under the Strategic Innovation and Development Fund which provides the framework for a comprehensive and operational approach.

Enhanced engagement with enterprise and the community and embedded knowledge exchange:

Institution objectives and performance indicators

1.	Institution objective	Continue as practice leader in engagement with external organisations at a local, national and international level
	Performance indicator	Consolidation of [case HEI's] role as leader of an aligned regional approach to engagement for economic development informed by national and international best practice
	Baseline	Leading the REAP project – contributing to the development of National forum for engagement Collaborator in the university-business collaboration ecosystem model of the UIIN and on the Ireland Country report developed from the study undertaken for DG Education and Culture at the European Commission [case HEI] extended campus established and model for CRM for engagement piloted
	Interim target, end 2014	Map the institute-wide range and extent of engagement with a number of key partners in the region Build on feedback mechanisms and forums for external organisations engaging with [case HEI] Continue to contribute to the development of regional and national approaches to engagement Develop an institute-wide, integrated engagement strategy informed by current national and international practice
	Interim target, end 2015	Feedback and mapping exercise used to inform practice and structures Institute-wide commitment to collating and sharing of knowledge on engagement channels and processes
	Final target, end 2016	[case HEI's] engagement strategy informed by practice contributing to regional and national

economic development and international scholarship

2.	Institution objective	Enhance the opportunities for enterprise and community groups to engage with [case HEI] in graduate formation
	Performance indicator	Improvement in practice and extent of external organisational involvement in guest lectures, seminars, placements, student projects, entrepreneurship and employability skills development and recruitment opportunities
	Baseline	Significant levels of interaction in all stages of course proposal, development and delivery No clearly aligned view of interactions and little sharing of information to contribute to organisational learning
	Interim target, end 2014	Collate information on current level of interactions with enterprise and community groups and develop an institutional and regional perspective Increase participation in initiatives aimed at building employability and entrepreneurial skills in undergraduates
	Interim target, end 2015	Increase the opportunities for interactions and review structures to support engagement in curriculum development Increase participation in initiatives aimed at building employability and entrepreneurial skills in undergraduates
	Final target, end 2016	Institute-wide view of engagement in graduate formation contributing to practice and strategy locally and regionally Improved structures and experience for the external partner in engagement
3.	Institution objective	Enhance the opportunities for enterprise and community groups to engage with [case HEI] in employee development and lifelong learning
	Performance indicator	Enhanced channels to cooperate with higher education and enterprise partners in the region to forecast and anticipate skills and development needs and the development of customised and flexible learning opportunities including recognition of experiential and work-based learning

Baseline	<p>Significant levels of engagement and pathways to learning developed in responsive and flexible modes</p> <p>No clearly aligned view of interactions and little sharing of information to contribute to organisational learning and strategy</p> <p>Varying experiences for the external partner in engagement</p>
Interim target, end 2014	<p>Collate information on current interactions and identify sectors or areas for improvement</p> <p>Complete mapping process</p> <p>Implement structured guidelines for course development and aligned service level agreements</p>
Interim target, end 2015	<p>Mapping process used to inform structures and strategy</p> <p>Greater alignment with higher education partners in the region</p>
Final target, end 2016	<p>[case HEI] seen as strategic partner for emerging learning needs for key sectors within the region</p> <p>Institute-wide view of engagement in employee development contributing to practice and strategy locally and regionally</p> <p>Improved structures and experience for the external partner in engagement</p>
4. Institution objective	<p>Promote technology transfer activities and work to consolidate support mechanisms for enterprise start and development</p>
Performance indicator	<p>Enhanced opportunities to collaborate with organisations to support entrepreneurship training, knowledge exchange, research and development needs, contract research and licensing</p>
Baseline	<p>Significant interaction with enterprise in entrepreneur development, applied research activities, technology transfer, innovation vouchers</p> <p>Rubicon is nationally recognised successful business incubation centre</p>
Interim target, end 2014	<p>Increased participation in initiatives aimed at entrepreneurs and new enterprise development</p> <p>Increase level of applied and industry focused research engagement</p>
Interim target, end 2015	<p>Work to consolidate support mechanisms for new enterprise developments within an informed regional context</p>

Final target, end 2016

Growth in applied research income and increase in participant numbers in enterprise development activities

Enhanced collaboration within the region on support mechanisms

Enhanced internationalisation

Strategy summary

A brief summary of [case HEI's] strategy and chosen objectives in relation to enhanced internationalisation is provided below.

Enhanced internationalisation:

[case HEI] has been long been engaged in the development of international relationships for the benefit of its students and other stakeholders. Over many years, [case HEI] has developed strong relationships with international institutions (primarily European) which have provided student exchange opportunities, staff development avenues and research outlets that would otherwise not have been available locally. In more recent years, [case HEI] has developed a number of highly promising strategic relationships with institutions in non-EU countries (e.g., India, Canada, Brazil) and is actively exploring new opportunities. Based on experience accumulated to date, analysis of whole-of-Institute strengths from an international perspective, consideration of internationalisation positioning of other HEIs in its regional cluster and review of the Higher Education System Performance Framework 2014-2016 (with a particular focus on Key System Objective 5), [case HEI] has decided that its internationalisation enhancement strategy will align with its niche positioning and prioritise the achievement of a number of highly targeted outcomes in this context, details of which are provided below:

1. [case HEI] will continue to establish significant strategic partnerships with selected overseas higher education institutions
 - Rationale: The establishment of such partnerships provides opportunities for high quality student recruitment, collaborative research and staff exchange
2. Equip staff, students and graduates of [case HEI] to participate in the international professional environment and global society
 - Rationale: While [case HEI] has been extremely successful in developing a model of operation which caters well for the needs of a diverse range of regional and national stakeholders, it will be increasingly important for [case HEI] to ensure that all aspects of its programmes, processes and development plans enhance its ability to produce international graduates
3. Increase international student intake by 60%
 - Rationale: The recruitment of international students helps [case HEI] to truly internationalise its model of operation and generate non-exchequer revenue to support the operation and development of the Institute

Enhanced internationalisation:

Institution objectives and performance indicators

1.	Institution objective	[case HEI] will continue to establish significant strategic partnerships with selected overseas higher education institutions
	Performance indicator	Number of high quality partnerships with overseas higher education institutions
	Baseline	A detailed survey across all areas of [case HEI] (academic departments, research centres, innovation/incubation centres, commercial services, constituent colleges) is to be performed to determine the baseline for this performance indicator
	Interim target, end 2014	Increase above baseline by 10%
	Interim target, end 2015	Increase above baseline by 20%
	Final target, end 2016	Increase above baseline by 30%

2. Institution objective Equip staff, students and graduates of [case HEI] to participate in the international professional environment and global society.
- Performance indicator Percentage of [case HEI] programmes (taught and research) which feature a significant international dimension (e.g., international language taught, international work placement, international student exchange option, collaborative international programme development)
- Baseline A detailed survey across all areas of [case HEI] (academic departments, research centres, innovation/incubation centres, commercial services, constituent colleges) is to be performed to determine the baseline for this performance indicator

3.	Institution objective	Increase international student intake by 60%
	Performance indicator	Number of non-EU students enrolled Number of EU international students enrolled
	Baseline	246
	Interim target, end 2014	297
	Interim target, end 2015	348
	Final target, end 2016	400

Interim target, end 2014 Increase above baseline by 10%

Interim target, end 2015 Increase above baseline by 20% Final

target, end 2016 Increase above baseline by 30%

7 Institutional consolidation

Strategy summary

A brief summary of [case HEI's] strategy and chosen objectives in relation to institutional consolidation is provided below.

Institutional consolidation:

The institutes of technology in [Neighbouring Counties] share a common vision for the establishment of a strong regional [Technological university]. This is evidenced in the fact that we have been in discussions and working together towards the creation of a [Technological university] since 2009.

The creation of a [Technological university] sector in Ireland is, we believe, a necessary and natural progression in the development of Irish higher education. The establishment of the institutes of technology (then the regional technical colleges) in the 1970s was a response to an identified lack of skilled manpower at technician and technologist level to meet the economic expansion of that time. As Irish economic and social development continued apace over the following decades, the institutes of technology remained responsive to the needs of the broader society and expanded the breadth and level of their course provision. This enhanced mission was recognised and facilitated by enabling legislation, in 1992 and again in 2006, which among other things provided for the development of the Institutes' research activities. The *National Strategy on Higher Education* acknowledges that "the high calibre graduates produced by the higher education system have been critical to the development of high technology, indigenous industry and to the attraction of very substantial FDI into the country." The report goes on to state "however, what has served us well in the past will not serve us well in the future without significant change". The acceptance by the

Government of the *National Strategy* points the way towards a [Technological university] sector. The institutes of technology in [Neighbouring Counties] are fully committed to, and very proud of, their history and mission and we believe that the creation of the [Technological university] will allow enhanced delivery of that mission as envisaged in the *National Strategy*.

The [Technological university], born out of a merger of strong partners with shared philosophies, will make a vital and positive contribution to the society and economy of the region through:

- its enhanced critical mass facilitating the high quality distributed provision of focused and relevant research and taught programmes
- improved effectiveness and efficiency, through the accompanying economies of scale
- a reinforced spirit of enterprise and entrepreneurship across all parts of the institution, including:
 - the capacity to generate funds from non-traditional sources
 - incubation centres in partnership with relevant agencies supporting spin-in and spin-out start-up companies
 - closeness to the world of work and the professional readiness of graduates
 - a staff base which will be as engaged with the business, industrial and professional community as it is with academia
- a focused research mission that stresses application and enterprise collaboration
- a renewed national and international perception of capability in research, innovation and entrepreneurialism
- enhanced international collaborations including fee-paying incoming students, student and staff exchanges, research projects and combined courses of study
- full awarding powers at NFQ Levels 6–10 supported by demonstrably robust quality assurance processes underpinning taught and research degrees, and appropriate administrative services
- its explicit channels of access, transfer and progression through and from all levels
- the enhanced portability and recognition of graduates' qualifications nationally and internationally

The merged institution will be well positioned to reach the necessary criteria for the establishment of a TU. Furthermore, it is expected (based on the experience of newly designated universities at home and abroad) that redesignation will result in a significantly enhanced capacity that will allow the new university to surpass quickly the level required by the relevant criteria.

Institutional consolidation:

Institution objectives and performance indicators

1.	Institution objective	Achieve designation as a [Technological university] through merger with [Neighbouring IT]
	Performance indicator	The establishment of the [Technological university]
	Baseline	n/a
	Interim target, end 2014	Stage 3 of the process towards [Technological university] designation successfully completed
	Interim target, end 2015	Merger of [case HEI] and [Neighbouring IT] substantially completed (70%)
	Final target, end 2016	Merger of [case HEI] and [Neighbouring IT] completed

6. Annual Compliance Statement

As the strategic dialogue process develops, the HEA will take into account ongoing compliance with important foundational requirements such as:

- ✿ Statutory quality assurance processes
- ✿ Providing an annual statement required under their Code of Governance and with all other requirements of that Code
- ✿ Providing details of satisfactory financial outturn, budget and financial plan
- ✿ Employment control framework
- ✿ Data returns to the HEA

Where significant or urgent compliance issues arise (such as unacceptable financial deficit, weakness in financial plans or major omissions or delays in returns, they will be discussed as part of the strategic dialogue).

7. Performance Funding

Having regard to the performance of [case HEI] in the strategic dialogue process leading to this compact, performance funding of € 257,000 has been allocated to the Institute.

8. Agreement

To be completed following the conclusion of the strategic dialogue process.

Having regard to the agreed minute of the strategic dialogue meeting attached, the HEA and [case HEI] agree that the mission, planned profile and targets, as set out in the foregoing sections of this Compact, are consistent with the objectives set for the higher education system and are appropriate to Institute.

Signed:

Chief Executive, Higher Education Authority

Date:

Signed:

Chief Officer, [case HEI]

Date:

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