

Ms Éilis Fallon  
Committee Secretariat  
Committee of Public Accounts  
Leinster House  
Dublin 2

**Ref: S0454 PAC33**

29 June 2021

Dear Ms Fallon,

Thank you for your letter of 23<sup>rd</sup> June and further to my letter of 29 April 2021, please find attached the interim review of progress on the implementation of the recommendations of the Working Group report on the ‘Developing a Sustainable Plan for the Mayo Campus of Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology’. The review was conducted by Mazars, and the report of the review was presented to the HEA’s Finance and Governance committee on the 18th of May and the Board on the 8th of June 2021.

Further to consideration by the HEA Board, the final report of the review has been provided by the HEA to the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research Innovation and Science with the recommendation that further consideration will be necessary in the need for a specific policy and funding for remote campuses such as GMIT Mayo. A copy of this letter is also attached for your information.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alan Wall', written in a cursive style.

Dr Alan Wall  
Chief Executive



Ms Dervila Flynn  
Principal Officer  
Higher Education Funding and Funding Reform  
Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science  
Marlborough Street  
Dublin, D01 RC96

16 June 2021

Dear Dervila,

Following years of deficits in the Mayo campus of GMIT, in March 2017, the Taoiseach and the Minister for Education and Skills announced the establishment of a Working Group to formulate a plan for a sustainable future and growth options for the campus. The report of the working group, published in late 2017, included a recommendation on time bound ring-fenced funding to allow the plan to be fully implemented and ensure future campus sustainability. The plan also recommended a review after 2 years.

The review was conducted by Mazars, and the report of the review was presented to the HEA's Finance and Governance committee on the 18th May and the Board on the 8th June of this year. I now attach a copy of the report.

The review noted that positive progress has been made on the implementation of the recommendations of the Working Group report. However, the nature, pace and extent of their implementation suggests that the targeted position (Net deficit of €532k before ring fenced funding) envisaged by the Working Group is not likely to be achieved.

The key driver is lower than expected/planned income from student numbers. Whilst the overall student numbers have increased in line with targets detailed in the Working Group Report, the balance of students funded by Lifelong Learning mechanisms and funded through skills-based funding (such as Springboard & HCI) versus students funded by the HEA core funding mechanism (RGAM/fees) has shifted such that the overall income per student has fallen when compared to the targeted income rates assumed by the Working Group Report. This decrease in income per student, when combined with other factors, means that the funding deficit has not fallen in the manner envisaged in the Working Group Report.

Accordingly, the report identifies that GMIT needs to now consider implementing further pay cost reduction mechanisms, such as re-deployment of central services functions to the

Mayo campus (recommendation 5 of the Working Group Report) and voluntary redundancy mechanisms (recommendation 33 of the Working Group Report). The report notes that further reduction in non-pay costs will lead to a position of perceived neglect and underinvestment in the campus and also notes that additional deficit funding beyond the end of the implementation period is likely to be required.

Our recent letter regarding the Killybegs campus at Letterkenny Institute of Technology detailed similar challenges regarding the attraction of full-time undergraduate students and the shift to recruitment of lifelong learners resulting in a reduction in the level of state funding and fee income which is compounding the deficit. Both Letterkenny and Galway Mayo Institutes of Technology are part the Connacht Ulster Alliance who submitted a formal application for designation as a Technological University in late May. It would be regrettable if the sustainability of the regional campuses would lead to a detracting the focus of the leadership teams from the development of the new TU.

2021 is year 4 of the 5 years of ringfenced funding for the Mayo campus. The question of the long-term sustainability of the campus post ring-fenced funding needs to be considered. If it is Government Policy to support regional campuses in the context of social and economic development for the region, additional funding is required so as other parts of the institution are not negatively impacted by the diversion of funding to support these campuses.

We look forward to early engagement on this matter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alan Wall', written in a cursive style.

Dr Alan Wall  
Chief Executive



Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology  
**Review of Implementation of the  
Working Group Report on Developing a  
Sustainable Plan for the Mayo campus  
of GMIT**

Final Report

11 May 2021

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# 1. Executive summary

## 1.1 Introduction

In March 2017, the Taoiseach and the Minister for Education and Skills announced the establishment of a Working Group to formulate a plan for a sustainable future and growth options for the GMIT Mayo campus in Castlebar.

To inform the work of the Group, a base of information was reviewed and extensive stakeholder consultation was undertaken by the Working Group, resulting in the compilation of the final report (the Working Group Report) setting out a vision for a sustainable Mayo campus. The vision was supported by 33 recommendations designed to ensure a sustainable future for the campus.

In December 2020, Mazars was engaged to review the progress of implementation of the 33 recommendations contained in the Working Group Report. As part of this review, Mazars considered whether actions taken to implement these recommendations were in line with the Working Group Report's suggested potential outcomes on the basis of comparison with the targets and milestones contained in that report.

## 1.2 Summary of Review Observations

Our review identified that positive progress has been made on the implementation of the recommendations of the Working Group Report. However, the nature, pace and extent of their implementation suggests that the targeted position (net deficit of €532k before ring-fenced funding) envisaged by the Working Group for the end of the implementation period is not likely to be achieved. This position is driven by a combination of factors detailed in this report. However, the key driver is lower than expected/planned income from student numbers. Whilst the overall student numbers have increased in line with targets detailed in the Working Group Report, the balance of students funded by Lifelong Learning mechanisms and funded through skills based funding (such as Springboard & HCI) versus students funded by the HEA core funding mechanism (RGAM/fees) has shifted such that the overall income per student has fallen<sup>1</sup> when compared to the targeted income rates assumed by the Working Group Report. This decrease in income per student, when combined with other factors, means that the funding deficit has not fallen in the manner envisaged in the Working Group Report. Accordingly, GMIT needs to now consider implementing further pay cost reduction mechanisms, such as re-deployment of central services functions to the Mayo campus (recommendation 5 of the Working Group Report) and voluntary redundancy mechanisms (recommendation 33 of the Working Group Report). In addition, further deficit funding beyond the end of the implementation period is likely to be required.

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<sup>1</sup> Funding for Lifelong Learning, Springboard and HCI students is set at a lower rate per student as the cost base for these courses is lower. This is mainly due to a different programme structure being in place for these courses, including lower required academic contact hours and lower overhead commitments.



## Implementation Outcomes to Date

Implementation timeline and approach (Section 3.1 in report) – A 5-year implementation timeframe was recommended to fully deliver the sustainability plan, and while we noted that some aspects of the Working Group recommendations were progressed since the publication of the report, it is evident that the initial 12 to 15 month period of the implementation timeframe did not fully yield the impact hoped for by the Working Group Report, and therefore places a level of doubt on the overall implementation timeframe envisaged. Improved setting and monitoring of KPI's is also required.

Student growth (Section 3.2 in report) – An increase of at least 25% in the student base was targeted over the lifespan of the plan. While this increase has been achieved, targets were not achieved in respect of Business programmes (which declined over the period to date) and a substantial portion of student growth was achieved as a result of gains in Lifelong Learning and skills based (Springboard and HCI funded) offerings. This has resulted in a significantly lower than targeted income base per WTE student.

Operating budget (Section 3.3 in report) – Operating costs were largely in line with targeted budgets, but the anticipated income growth target was not achieved due to a lower than targeted income per WTE student. This was due to a shift towards an increased proportion of Lifelong Learning and skills based funded students (Springboard and HCI, which is also not guaranteed year on year). A widening gap has emerged between the targeted net deficit and the actual net deficit which is not expected to decrease during 2021. It is difficult to see how GMIT will be able fully reduce this deficit to a break-even position in the short to medium term.

Mayo campus structure and reporting (Section 3.4 in report) – An approved Strategic Framework which is now in place for the Mayo campus, will drive a focus on Health Sciences and related areas, engagement with enterprise and Enterprise-focused programmes, and repositioning programmes in the sustainable built environment into the School of Engineering and ensuring a Mayo dimension is included in offerings. The revised reporting framework (by school) needs to be considered and agreed with the HEA to assess future actions and funding requirements. In addition, the impact of GMIT's trajectory towards a Technological University on the viability of the Working Group Report recommendations needs to be adequately considered.



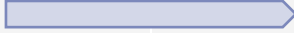
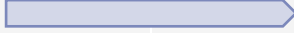






## Working Group Recommendations (Section 4 in report)











A summary of the implementation status is detailed in Table 1. We note that the implementation of a sustainable plan for the Mayo campus was envisaged to be a 5-year project. On this basis, and also based on the data showing that a target sustainable position for the Mayo campus has not been achieved to date, it is not anticipated that a significant number of recommendations are fully completed. The table shows that several recommendations (13 or 39%) are reasonably established or mature, and starting to show consistent impact on sustainability targets and milestones. A further 14 (or 42%) have been progressed and have yielded initial results, but require further work to realise full potential. Finally, 6 recommendations (or 18%) are at initial stages or have not started.





Table 1: The below table provides a summary on the implementation status of each recommendation:

No	Recommendation	Initiated	Progressed	Established	Mature/ Completed
1	A dedicated permanent Head of Campus at Vice-President level should be appointed as soon as possible to lead the practical delivery of this plan				
2	The Sub-Committee of the GMIT Governing Body established to oversee the development of the Mayo campus, involving external regional stakeholders should be operationalised as soon as possible				
3	Greater Mayo representation on the Governing Body should be facilitated as nominations are renewed				
4	An interim independent external facilitator should be appointed to work with the executive board, campus and other stakeholders to oversee the transition to the new structural and operational arrangements				
5	The feasibility of relocating some central corporate services to the Mayo campus should be investigated				
6	The digital media programme should be re-pitched with a new proposition launched in collaboration with industry for 2018/19				
7	A new branded programme building on history and geography capability should be reintroduced to the CAO with a clear marketing strategy and initially relaxed viability criteria to test the market and prove long-term viability				
8	Strict demand viability criteria should continue to be applied by GMIT to establish long-term viability of campus programmes				
9	Independently facilitated discipline based working groups should be established involving relevant staff on the Galway and Mayo campus to consider and develop collaborative approaches to provision				



No	Recommendation	Initiated	Progressed	Established	Mature/ Completed
10	New programme development should be prioritised and aligned with the institute and campus strategies, the regional skills audit and market research including engagement with regional employers and representative groups				
11	The potential for development of new apprenticeship proposals should be investigated				
12	International and Postgraduate offerings should be further developed to diversify the campus income base				
13	A mapping exercise should be undertaken with further education to build and communicate new progression pathways				
14	The Mayo campus should continue its development as a Centre of Excellence for lifelong learning within GMIT				
15	New tailored programmes, based on unique well-articulated value propositions should be developed to meet current and emerging skills needs of major local employers				
16	A distinct marketing plan should be developed & implemented with a full campaign established to target demand for 2018/19				
17	Student ambassadors should be appointed and used within the marketing strategy to promote the unique value of studying on the campus				
18	A dedicated marketing resource should be introduced to coordinate the delivery of the new Mayo campus marketing plan				
19	A major re-launch campaign should be progressed immediately to show the campus is open for business and drive demand for 2018/19				

No	Recommendation	Initiated	Progressed	Established	Mature/ Completed
20	GMIT should develop a joint marketing initiative with Mayo County Council to ensure that the campus is promoted via wider county marketing resources				
21	A means should be found to replace part of the roof				
22	The campus should work with LEO Mayo and other local stakeholders on a campus enterprise development strategy				
23	The campus should contribute to a proposal for a rural entrepreneur development programme that should be made to the regional enterprise development fund				
24	The campus should develop a value proposition to take to industry offering a range of potential collaboration opportunities and associated benefits				
25	A multi-agency proposal to expand iHUB (enterprise development space in Mayo campus) enterprise space should be put together and funding sought to ensure ongoing sustainability				
26	GMIT should investigate whether a collaborative approach with Mayo County Council on the Lough Lannagh project can realise the envisaged outdoor pursuits centre from the campus, town and region				
27	A proposition around work experience and employability across all campus provision should be developed and clearly marketed				
28	Funding will be sought under the national rural development actions plan for a centre for community sustainability				
29	Staff are supported to continue to progress campus activities with its regional stakeholders within a positive culture of community engagement				

No	Recommendation	Initiated	Progressed	Established	Mature/ Completed
30	GMIT should seek designation of the campus as eligible for additional multi-campus funding when the new HEA funding model is fully established				
31	GMIT should seek time bound ring-fenced funding to allow the plan to be fully implemented and ensure future campus sustainability				
32	There should be scope for staff to move between campuses on a voluntary basis to reflect changing patterns of provision and demand across GMIT				
33	GMIT should engage with the Department of Education and Skills on seeking approval to participate in a voluntary redundancy scheme				

### **1.3 Acknowledgements**

We would like to thank GMIT, GMIT Mayo campus and Higher Education Authority (HEA) staff who contributed to this review for their time and support, and for the considerable information provided to Mazars.

## 2. Terms of Reference for this Review

### 2.1 Review Scope

Mazars were asked to complete this review on the basis of the following objectives:

- Assess progress in implementation of a sustainable development plan for the Mayo campus to review:
  - Implementation of the management and governance structures required to underpin the plan;
  - Progress on the reform of the existing programme portfolio and new programme development and examination of whether this has led to an increase in student numbers;
  - Progress on the implementation of a distinct marketing strategy for the Mayo campus;
  - Review of stakeholder engagement and enterprise development opportunities;
  - Identification of progress on funding and financial sustainability and the underpinning campus infrastructure including increases in income and reduction in the cost base.
- Identify actions as necessary to ensure that GMIT continue to deliver the overall vision and objectives of a sustainable campus in Mayo.

### 2.2 Approach

At commencement of our review, the HEA provided GMIT with a self-assessment template which included:

- Analysis of existing data collected through monitoring activities;
- Analysis of progress to date against targets and milestones for the realisation of intermediate and long-term results;
- Update on progress reports presented to the Governing Body;
- Details of consultation with internal and external stakeholders.

GMIT completed the self-assessment which was used by Mazars as the basis for independent verification of the status of recommendations in the Working Group Report.

Our detailed approach for this independent review included the following:

- 1. Planning:** Agreement of detailed project requirements, the names of individuals to be consulted as part of the review and issuance of the information requests.
- 2. Desk based review:** Review of documentation and information for each recommendation in the Working Group Report provided against our work programme.
- 3. Meetings with relevant individuals:** Meet with relevant GMIT staff to gain further understanding and insight into the implementation of the Working Group Report.
- 4. Reporting:** Preparation of a draft and final report.

### **2.3 Limitations of scope**

Our review was limited in nature and was conducted on the basis of a document review and limited substantive validation (where possible) and may not necessarily disclose all significant matters relating to the implementation of the Working Group Report recommendations.

Our work, unless otherwise indicated, consisted principally of the review and analysis of information provided to us and discussions with GMIT/Mayo campus staff. We have relied on explanations given to us without having sought to validate these with independent sources. We have, however, satisfied ourselves that explanations received are consistent with other information furnished to us. The work conducted by Mazars was limited in scope and nature and was based solely on the activities set out within our scope and objectives.

This review is a point in time indication of the progress of implementation of the Working Group Report as at April 2021.

### **2.4 Reporting**

Our draft report will be made available to the President of GMIT and the Deputy CEO of the HEA for initial review, consideration of matters of factual accuracy and providing commentary on our analysis. Our final report will be presented to the Finance and Governance Committee of the HEA.



## 3. Implementation Outcomes to Date

### 3.1 Implementation timeline and approach

The Working Group Report noted a number of factors that would facilitate establishing early progress and initial momentum in respect of the overall sustainability plan for the Mayo campus. The Report acknowledged that it would be key to ensure that clear leadership and governance oversight is established at the outset and that activities such as marketing and programme development should be fast-tracked with a view to maximise the impact of the plan from the 2018/19 academic year.

A Mayo Campus Sub-Committee of the Governing Body was established with an approved term of reference with its first meeting being in March 2018, and regular meetings since then (up to its reconstitution in 2020). The appointment of a permanent VP for the Mayo campus, who was intended to be a key driver of actions to be taken as part of the implementation plan, was however delayed and only commenced in the role in February 2019 (16 months after the Working Group Report was published), with the role being filled on an interim basis from mid-2018 to early-2019. The appointed permanent VP for the Mayo Campus was in-situ for a period of 20 months, departing the role in November 2020. A new Vice-President for the Mayo campus, combined with the role of Head of School of Health Science, Wellbeing and Society was appointed in April 2021. Between November 2020 and April 2021, the role has been filled in a caretaker capacity by the President of GMIT. An independent facilitator, the final element of the initial leadership structure, delivered his report in early 2019.

While we noted that some aspects of the Working Group recommendations were progressed during this initial timeframe (as detailed in Section 4 of this report), including making available marketing resources and focussing on programme development, it is evident that the initial 12 to 15 month period of the implementation timeframe did not fully yield the impact hoped for by the Working Group Report, and therefore places a level of doubt on the overall implementation timeframe envisaged. The Mayo campus experienced a deficit against targeted income for 2018 and 2019, and this deficit has not been recovered in subsequent years.

As part of our review, we also considered the monitoring mechanisms in place to track and report on the progress of the implementation of the sustainability plan within GMIT. We saw evidence of strong reporting and review of activities in support of the Working Group Recommendations, at Executive Board, Mayo campus Sub-Committee and Governing Body level. We note that the Working Group Report set clear targets around student numbers and operational budgets for the Mayo campus, but that detailed KPI's for individual recommendations were not set. We found it challenging to see how the leadership structure charged with progressing the sustainability plan measured success in respect of individual recommendations, other than in terms of student numbers, income and expenditure relating to the Mayo campus. For example, a marketing budget was set in 2018 and several marketing activities were undertaken, but an overall marketing strategy was not developed specific to the Mayo campus and it was not clear what level of marketing activity and reach was targeted, or how marketing impact will be measured against specific programme level outcomes. Similarly, further consideration is required to explore potential apprenticeship and international student opportunities, but it is not clear what level of activity is planned or targeted in relation to these.

Overall, a clear and crisp set of KPI's is required to determine the extent to which each of the Working Group Recommendations are considered, implemented and measured in terms of outcomes. It is acknowledged that the Working Group Report suggested that the range of recommendations are complex and that it is difficult to predict the exact outcome and operational implications for each. We believe this further strengthens the case that, particularly in the context of some of the recommendations requiring initial investment before actual gains can be realised, the expectation around the level of activity and measures of success should be clear.

### 3.2 Student Growth

The Working Group Report placed specific emphasis on the requirement for reversing the decline in student demand for the Mayo campus, as probably the most critical priority in securing a sustainable future. An increase of at least 25% in the student base was targeted over the lifespan of the plan, and this increase was notably dependent on full-time programme (re-)development and expanding Lifelong Learning offerings. The table below demonstrates the actual achievements to date against these targets.

Table 2: Mayo campus student number comparison (WTE's)

<b>Campus Total Students</b>	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2021/22</b>
<i>Targeted by Working Group Report</i>	686	732	759	819	860
<i>Actual to date</i>	670	710	772	825	n/a

The 2017/18 academic year saw a further reduction in the Mayo campus student intake, but subsequent academic years have resulted in consistent increases in WTE student numbers. The overall increase in student numbers to date is in line with the WTE numbers targeted by the Working Group Report but does not attract the targeted levels of income due to a high proportion of the student number gains being in the area of Lifelong Learning and funded through skills based funding such as Springboard and HCI<sup>2</sup>. This can be seen in Section 3.3 where it is clear that income levels are significantly below targeted income from particularly the HEA grant and (more recently) student contributions / fees.

The table below demonstrates the actual student numbers compared to targeted student numbers (as suggested in the Working Group Report) by discipline.

Table 3: Mayo campus student number comparison by discipline (WTE's)

<b>Area</b>	<b>Target vs. Actual</b>					
	<b>2017/2018</b>		<b>2018/2019</b>		<b>2019/2020</b>	
	<b>Target</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Actual</b>
<i>Business</i>	135.0	122.3	151	116.8	163	86.3
<i>Health</i>	344.0	335.7	385	364.5	385	414.8
<i>Environment</i>	104.0	102.1	92	89.7	99	91.8

<sup>2</sup> Funding for Lifelong Learning, Springboard and HCI students is set at a lower rate per student as the cost base for these courses is lower. This is mainly due to a different programme structure being in place for these courses, including lower required academic contact hours and lower overhead commitments.

<i>Lifelong Learning</i>	103.0	110.2	104	138.7	112	179.2
	<b>686.0</b>	<b>670.3</b>	<b>732.0</b>	<b>709.7</b>	<b>759.0</b>	<b>772.1</b>
<b>Variance</b>		-15.7		-22.3		13.1

It is noted that gains in Lifelong Learning students and Health students are significantly offset by deficits in Business students. It is also noted that funding sources such as Springboard and HCI are not guaranteed to be available annually, and is obtained on a competitive basis; therefore, it is not clear that all of the student gains to date will be sustained in the medium to long term.

Whilst activities such as the introduction of new programmes and re-development of existing programmes, as well as marketing and promotional efforts and engagement with local industries and employers have contributed to growth in student numbers in some areas, there have also been reductions in student numbers and some programme terminations. This is particularly the case in respect of Business programmes of the Mayo campus, an area which was targeted by the Working Group as requiring the most significant gains. Business programmes are now significantly behind the targeted student intake and it would appear that it will be challenging to fully recover from this position within the sustainability plan implementation period.

### 3.3 Operating Budget

The Working Group Report projected growth in the income base of the Mayo campus on the basis of targets in student growth across mainstream activities being achieved and maintained. The anticipated income growth target was set at just under 21% over the 5-year period. It was also envisaged that, to realise a sustainable cost base, a series of mechanisms were to be utilised to deliver significant savings, and to counter cost increases such as investment in growth mechanisms for the campus, and the impact of pay restoration. Most importantly, this included the redeployment of some central service functions to the Mayo campus, and the use of voluntary re-deployment and voluntary redundancy mechanisms (with the agreement of the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science), over the last 4 years of the implementation period. These assumptions around income and expenditure still resulted in a predicted annual deficit, targeted to be at €(532)k at the end of the 5-year period. The table below details the actual results achieved to date, and the budgeted position for 2021 when compared to the targets envisaged by the Working Group Report.

Table 4: Operating budget comparison

<b>Income (€000)</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>
<i>Targeted by Working Group Report</i>	6,124	6,500	6,828	7,168	7,390
<i>Actual to date</i>	5,984	6,341	6,413	7,022*	n/a

\*Budgeted, not actual

<b>Expenditure (€000)</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>
<i>Targeted by Working Group Report</i>	7,845	8,084	8,166	8,069	7,922
<i>Actual to date</i>	7,838	7,938	8,092	8,258*	n/a

\*Budgeted, not actual

<b>Deficit (€000)</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>
<i>Targeted by Working Group Report</i>	(1,721)	(1,584)	(1,338)	(901)	(532)
<i>Actual to date**</i>	(1,854)	(1,597)	(1,657)	(1,236)*	n/a

\*Budgeted, not actual

\*\*Before ring-fenced funding of €750,000 per annum

These results indicate that, up to 2020 which represents actual results, a widening gap has emerged between the targeted net deficit and the actual net deficit. This gap is not expected to be decreased during 2021.

The primary reason for achieving a lower than expected result during 2018 appears to be based on significantly lower than targeted HEA grant income being received. A key driver for HEA grant income was achieving increased student numbers, particularly in Business, and this was not realised. For 2019, a significant deficit was again recorded against targeted HEA grant income, but this position was recovered due to an increase in other income areas. During 2020, this trend continued whereby significantly higher income was generated in other areas, but this was exceeded by substantial deficits recorded against student contributions / fees and HEA grant income targets, primarily driven by student numbers. As noted in Sections 3.2 and 3.3, student numbers overall have tracked well with the targeted WTE numbers envisaged by the Working Group Report, but mainly due to gains in Lifelong Learning and Springboard / HCI funded students which lowered the overall income base per WTE student.

It was noted that Springboard and Human Capital Initiative (HCI) calls have proven to be a strong source of additional income for Lifelong Learning and other programmes delivered from the Mayo campus. Furthermore, it was noted that the enterprise activities of iHub have grown and are operating cohesively both within GMIT and within a collaborative Connacht Ulster Alliance (CUA) enterprise space.

Whilst the overall student numbers have increased in line with targets detailed in the Working Group Report, the balance of students funded by Lifelong Learning mechanisms and funded through skills based funding (such as Springboard & HCI) versus students funded by the HEA core funding mechanism (RGAM/fees) has shifted such that the overall income per student has fallen when compared to the targeted income rates assumed by the Working Group Report. This decrease in income per student, when combined with other factors, means that the funding deficit has not fallen in the manner envisaged in the Working Group Report. As previously noted, the income derived from skills-based funding is also not guaranteed to be available annually, and is obtained on a competitive basis; therefore, it is not clear that all of the student gains to date will be sustained in the medium to long term.

The cost base for the Mayo campus has largely tracked close to the targeted position over the 3 years to date. There has been a consistent trend of savings being achieved in respect of pay costs, and higher than targeted spend in respect of non-pay costs. It is noted in this regard that voluntary re-deployment of staff has been facilitated, as detailed in Section 4 of this report. However, substantial further actions in respect of re-deployment of central services functions (as opposed to individual staff) and voluntary redundancy mechanisms have not been fully explored. It is difficult to see how the current position in respect of deficit HEA grant income and student contributions / fees can be recovered in the remaining period of implementation, and therefore these mechanisms require specific consideration now.

We noted in comments provided by GMIT that the Institute's view is that further non-pay budget cuts will lead to a position of perceived neglect and underinvestment in the long-term, which undermines goodwill and questions the commitment to growth. Therefore, GMIT's view is that a revised strategy to keep the institutional focus on the performance of its academic schools will be required. GMIT also noted that a reorganisation of professional, management and support core-funded staff supports and services would be required, so that the cost is incorporated into the broader centralised GMIT costs.

Finally, the time bound ring-fenced funding of €750k p.a. secured from the HEA has assisted in funding part of the annual deficit associated with the Mayo campus and provided much needed time to progress the recommendations of the Working Group Report. As noted above however, on the basis of current analysis, it is difficult to see how GMIT will be able fully reduce this deficit to a break-even position, and it is therefore likely that further funding may be needed beyond the implementation period.

### 3.4 Mayo campus structure and reporting

The GMIT Governing Body at its December 2019 meeting considered and approved a Strategic Framework and a new direction for the Mayo campus. We note that a new Strategic Framework for the Mayo campus is focused on three core areas:

1. Health Sciences and related areas.
2. Engagement with enterprise and Enterprise-focused programmes
3. Repositioning programmes in the sustainable built environment into the School of Engineering and ensuring a Mayo dimension is included in offerings, and restructuring the School of Business.

As part of this framework, it was envisaged that a significant focus would be the development of a Centre of Excellence in Health and Wellbeing as a key identity for the Mayo campus, building on a track record of success in this area. As a result, GMIT has established a new GMIT School of Health Science, Wellbeing & Society (led from the Mayo campus), and staff whose core delivery is in the areas of nursing, social care, early childhood, outdoor education, history and geography will be transferred into this new school before September 2021. Also included in the strategy for the Mayo campus was the realignment of programmes in Business, Humanities and Technology to existing academic departments/schools and emerging faculty structures within GMIT. We understand that the Department of Business, Humanities & Technology is in the process of being reconstituted as the Department of Organisation

Development and will be integrated with the GMIT School of Business. There is still work remaining to transfer staff into the School of Science and the School of Engineering.

We note that, once the structural changes in respect of the Mayo campus have been implemented, GMIT intends to report on student numbers and operational budgeting matters at school level, rather than campus level. The School of Health Science, Wellbeing & Society will be led from the Mayo campus, but may include some students and staff not based on the Mayo campus. Similarly, some students and staff attending at the Mayo campus will be associated with other GMIT schools. Therefore, reporting at GMIT school level will encompass students and staff (and associated income and expenditure) not associated with the school rather than the Mayo campus. The appropriate level of reporting that would enable continuous tracking of the impact of the sustainability plan needs to be considered in context of ensuring adequate transparency is provided to stakeholders (including the HEA) on the level of funding and support needed to achieve a sustainable model for the Mayo campus. We consider however that a clear strategic direction for the Mayo campus and the development of a clear identity which builds on the existing strengths of the campus, are positive developments and creates further opportunities to progress the Working Group Report recommendations.

In addition, GMIT have presented high level details of its current engagements in respect of a process to achieve Technological University (TU) status, in conjunction with other Institutes of Technology in the form of the CUA. We have not examined the detailed potential impacts of such a development, but it is worth noting that such a change would have far reaching implications for the approach to implementing the Working Group Report recommendations, and needs to be an area of focus for the leadership structure charged with advancing the Mayo campus sustainability plan.

It was noted that the trajectory towards Technological University status has led to other initiatives not signalled by the Working Group Report. Such initiatives include the growth in structured Masters programmes and the increased focus on research activities. One of the 8 approved CUA Postgraduate Research Training Centres will be led by staff from the Mayo campus, and there is strong interest in growing research in Social and Health Sciences in the Campus. This will be a major enabler for the new TU in the view of the President.

Collaboration with Letterkenny IT and IT Sligo (e.g. in Remote-working training proposals and other HCI Pillar 3 activities) has also allowed staff based at the GMIT Mayo campus to develop good working relationships with colleagues at the CUA partners.



## 4. Detailed Status of Working Group Recommendations

Our review identified that positive progress has been made in respect of the implementation of a significant number of the recommendations of the Working Group Report. We note that the implementation of a sustainable plan for the Mayo campus was envisaged to be a 5-year project. On this basis, it is not anticipated that a significant number of recommendations are fully completed at this point, but that recommendations are substantially progressed or have reached a level of maturity where measurable results can be seen. Our detailed analysis of each of the recommendations shows that 13 recommendations (or 39%) are reasonably established or mature, and starting to show consistent impact on sustainability targets and milestones. A further 14 (or 42%) has been progressed and has yielded initial results, but require further work to realise full potential. Finally, 6 recommendations (or 18%) are at initial stages or have not started.

We have detailed the evidence-based progress of each of the 33 recommendations from the Working Group Report below.

## A. Governance and Management

### 4.1 A dedicated permanent Head of Campus at Vice-President level should be appointed as soon as possible to lead the practical delivery of this plan

#### Progress of Implementation

The appointment process for a permanent Head of the Mayo campus was somewhat protracted. Since publication of the Working Group Report in October 2017, an interim Head of Campus was appointed during mid-2018, and permanent Vice-President for the Mayo campus (Head of Campus) was appointed in February 2019. He remained in this position until November 2020. During this time, he drove the practical delivery of the Working Group plan and had overseen several initiatives designed to develop a renewed portfolio of courses and a capital development plan. It is clear from evidence presented by GMIT and in discussions with the former VP (and other parties), that he was leading the implementation of the Working Group recommendations at Executive Board and Governing Body level.

A strategic planning exercise was undertaken in 2019 to set a strategic vision and mission aligned to the sustainable development plan. This strategic framework, developed by the Mayo campus Sub-Committee of the Governing Body, was approved by the Governing Body in December 2019 and will be used to inform the Academic Plan 2020-2025, a five-year financial plan and a strategic plan for the campus. As part of its strategic development, GMIT has made the decision to create the new School of Health Science, Wellbeing and Society, which will be led from the Mayo campus, and to combine the role of Head of Campus with the Head of this new school.

The GMIT President acted in a caretaker capacity in the role of VP for the Mayo campus during the recruitment process for this role from November 2020 to March 2021. A new Vice-President for the Mayo campus, combined with the role of Head of School of Health Science, Wellbeing and Society was appointed in April 2021.

We are satisfied that, although a number of recommendations from the Working Group remain in progress or not implemented, the established role of VP for the Mayo campus had a significantly positive contribution in respect of the progress of recommendations currently achieved. The initial delay in establishing the role and the subsequent appointment processes may have resulted in some of the initial progress and fast-tracking of some aspects of the recommendations as envisaged by the Working Group Report, not being achieved.

In respect of the new appointment which combines this role with the Head of School of Health Science, Wellbeing and Society, we understand that a clear and significant emphasis on the Working Group Report recommendations will be retained at both Executive Board and Governing Body level. The new VP for the Mayo campus also needs to consider (in conjunction with the Mayo campus Sub-Committee, Executive Board and Governing Body) whether the outstanding / incomplete Working Group recommendations remain viable in the context of increasing momentum towards Technological University status, and the change in structure and reporting applicable to the Mayo campus. A report should be provided to the HEA in this regard, detailing the further actions to be taken in respect of the incomplete / outstanding recommendations.

## Status of Implementation: Established

### 4.2 The Sub-Committee of the GMIT Governing Body established to oversee the development of the Mayo campus, involving external regional stakeholders should be operationalised as soon as possible

#### Progress of Implementation

The Mayo campus Sub-Committee of the Governing Body was established in 2018 under an approved Terms of Reference as prescribed by the Working Group Report, and has met 16 times between its first meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2018 and its conclusion in 2020 following the end of the previous Governing Body's term. The Sub-Committee was reconstituted in September 2020 and we understand had its first meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> April 2021. The Terms of Reference (TOR) for the Mayo campus Sub-Committee states that its membership includes the following:

- Chairman of the Governing Body (or nominee);
- President;
- Head of Mayo campus;
- Two members to represent external stakeholders;
- Two academic staff members (reduced to one in 2020 draft);
- One non-academic staff member (removed in 2020 draft TOR)
- Two student members (reduced to one in 2020 draft TOR);
- Six members of the GMIT Governing Body (reduced to four in 2020 draft TOR with the requirements for one of the four be drawn from the staff representatives.

The TOR for the Mayo campus Sub-Committee states that the purpose of the Committee is to advise the Governing Body on its reserved governance functions as they apply to the Mayo campus and exercise oversight on the implementation of the Working Group Report. From review of the TOR, we noted that the Sub-Committee has responsibility for:

- Policy formation and foresight;
- Strategic planning;
- Programmes and budgets;
- Monitoring and review of key performance results;
- Accountability to regulators and key stakeholders;

The minutes of all Mayo campus Sub-Committee meetings confirmed that it operated based on this TOR, and the minutes were made available to the full Governing Body membership throughout its lifespan.

It is noted that an independent facilitator, who was appointed based on Working Group recommendations, commented in December 2018 that the Sub-Committee created positivity and a significant form of representation for students, staff and management of the Mayo campus. It was suggested by the facilitator that this Sub-Committee be continued in the future, but to a smaller, more practical scale.

With the reconstitution of the Mayo campus Sub-Committee during 2020, changes to the TOR were approved by the Governing Body (to facilitate alignment with other Sub-Committee TORs) and the membership of the Sub-Committee was reduced, but the key aims of the Sub-Committee remains similar.

We are satisfied that to date, the Mayo campus Sub-Committee operated as intended by the Working Group Report, though we note that the Sub-committee was not functional for an extended period during 2020 and early 2021 on foot of re-constitution of the Governing Body. GMIT should ensure that this Sub-committee provides continuity in oversight going forward. GMIT needs to ensure that the newly re-established Sub-Committee continues to focus on the key aims expressed in the Working Group Report. In addition, as already noted, consideration needs to be given as to whether the outstanding / incomplete Working Group recommendations remain viable in the context of increasing momentum towards Technological University status, and the change in structure and reporting applicable to the Mayo campus.

**Status of Implementation: Established**

### **4.3 Greater Mayo representation on the Governing Body should be facilitated as nominations are renewed**

#### **Progress of Implementation**

The Governing Body was reconstituted in April 2020 and includes greater representation from Mayo. The appointments meant that 4 current Governing Body members currently reside or have previously resided in Mayo. We understand that these appointments were made within the current appointment rules and processes.

**Status of Implementation: Established**

### **4.4 An interim independent external facilitator should be appointed to work with the executive board, campus and other stakeholders to oversee the transition to the new structural and operational arrangements**

#### **Progress of Implementation**

An interim independent external facilitator was appointed to work with the Executive Board, Mayo campus and other stakeholders to oversee the transition to the new structural and operational arrangements. The interim independent external facilitator delivered a report on transitioning to new structural and operational arrangements in December 2018 which provided five key actions:

- i. The Governing Body should commit to the continuation of the Sub-Committee around the Working Group Report with the inclusion of the Thorn report and the Mulvey report in their oversight and reporting role to the Governing Body itself as the statutory entity with responsibility for the GMIT in its totality and for the implementation of the Working Group Report;
- ii. The Academic Council of GMIT needs to establish either a sub-committee or staff forum which facilitates and structures dialogue on the “academic offerings” of GMIT;
- iii. It would be of assistance to GMIT if an inter-location flexibility scheme was available to provide for greater staff mobility where necessary and determine where institutional flexibilities are required e.g. redeployment itself and the subsistence/overnights/mileage allowances/requirements for weekly or daily commutes;

- iv. The Working Group Report should be reviewed, assessed and updated given the changing developments in GMIT and the current reports in regard to the Mayo campus;
- v. Student services need to be reviewed and upgraded in GMIT.

These recommendations primarily form part of the original Working Group recommendations and continue to be implemented.

**Status of Implementation: Mature / Complete**

#### **4.5 The feasibility of relocating some central corporate services to the Mayo campus should be investigated**

##### **Progress of Implementation**

GMIT has facilitated staff on the Mayo campus to take on central Corporate Services posts and has provided evidence that these staff remain based in the Mayo campus while being part of the central GMIT Corporate Services team. We understand that work is also underway to restructure GMIT central services, and that this will include a presence on the Mayo campus across all central services.

We have concluded that, while some activities have been undertaken by GMIT in this area, this recommendation has not been implemented on the basis that no central services were relocated to the Mayo campus and the objectives of deployment of staff on the campus and a contribution toward the overall institutional overhead have not been substantially achieved. While staff costs have tracked below the targeted Working Group Report predictions up to 2020, deficits in targeted income mean that recommendations such as this one require further specific consideration now, with a view to further reduce the cost base of the Mayo campus.

**Status of Implementation: Progressed**

## **B. Existing Programme Portfolio**

#### **4.6 The digital media programme should be re-pitched with a new proposition launched in collaboration with industry for 2018/19**

##### **Progress of Implementation**

GMIT has demonstrated that the digital media programme has been redeveloped with a focus on a number of sustainable Postgraduate offerings, including a Level 9 Masters degree. GMIT hosted Springboard consultations with local industry leaders to obtain their feedback and input into the content and delivery of these offerings, and we have seen evidence of engagement with attendance by a range of local industry leaders and employers. This consultation process discussed the current and future skills needs in industry, proposed new programmes and suggested amendments to existing programmes to meet the specific skills/needs required by industry.

Based on review of the student and WTE numbers for the Mayo campus, collaboration with industry and the subsequent development of new programmes has had a positive effect on

student and WTE numbers. Of the new programmes introduced since the beginning of the 2018/19 academic year, WTE has increased from 30.4 to 226.5 in the 2020/21 academic year, 112.25 of which were for digital-related programmes. However, despite the positive uptake of new, digital-related programmes, Course GA884 - Digital Media and Society (Mayo campus) was removed from the CAO listing for 2019/20 academic year due to the low number of students applying in previous years, decreasing from 32 students in 2015/16 to 5 students in 2018/19. Based on the WTE data the digital media programme appears to have been developed into a sustainable Postgraduate offering through the development of other digital media-focused programmes.

It is further noted that the Mayo campus annually (since 2017) hosts a national 'Digital West' conference to further strengthen relations with industry stakeholders.

**Status of Implementation: Established**

#### **4.7 A new branded programme building on history and geography capability should be reintroduced to the CAO with a clear marketing strategy and initially relaxed viability criteria to test the market and prove long-term viability**

##### **Progress of Implementation**

A new History and Geography programme was introduced in the 2018/19 academic year and a Geography and Outdoor Education programme was introduced for the 2020/21 academic year. It remains to be seen whether these programmes will form sustainable propositions, but initial indicators suggest that student numbers are at a reasonable level. The uptake of the History and Geography programmes has improved at the following rate:

***Student Numbers and WTE for History and Geography Programmes***

<b>Programme</b>	<b>2018/2019</b>		<b>2019/2020</b>		<b>2020/2021</b>	
	<b>Student No.</b>	<b>WTE</b>	<b>Student No.</b>	<b>WTE</b>	<b>Student No.</b>	<b>WTE</b>
<i>BA in History and Geography</i>	18	15.4	15	14.7	24	21.6
<i>Higher Cert. in History and Geography</i>	4	4.0	0	0	8	7.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>19.4</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>14.7</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>28.9</b>

A clear marketing strategy specific to these programmes was not evident, although it is noted that central marketing efforts by GMIT are partly responsible for programme promotion, awareness, and ultimately uptake by students. GMIT's marketing function, within limited resources, implements an approach whereby it focusses on marketing activities for GMIT as a whole and supports individual campuses with the development of programme level marketing materials (for example for open days) and events, which are managed by the Mayo campus staff. As part of school visits, student liaison and open days, individual programmes are marketed by Mayo campus staff.



GMIT should continue to monitor the History and Geography programme and Geography and Outdoor Education programme with a view to test the market and consider sustainability. If required, these programmes should be supported by a more specific marketing approach.

It was noted from information provided by GMIT that, since the Working Group Report was presented, there has been a shift in focus away from combination of history and geography programmes owing to the stabilisation in student numbers on the History and Geography programmes in the Mayo campus and the contraction of student numbers on the Heritage programme in Galway.

GMIT has demonstrated that the viability criteria for programmes on the Mayo campus are more relaxed than other programmes in the Institute, incorporating a lower threshold in terms of viability and student numbers.

GMIT has recently established a new School of Health Science, Wellbeing & Society led from the Mayo campus, and staff whose core delivery is in the areas of nursing, social care, early childhood, outdoor education, history and geography are due to be transferred into this new school before September 2021.

**Status of Implementation: Progressed**

#### **4.8 Strict demand viability criteria should continue to be applied by GMIT to establish long-term viability of campus programmes**

##### **Progress of Implementation**

With the exception of academic year 2017/18 during which student numbers in the Mayo campus declined further from the 2016/17 academic year, the number of WTE students has increased year on year in line with the targeted rate, with actual WTE reported above target for the 2020/21 academic year (See Table 3 for further information). A significant proportion of these gains however are in respect of Lifelong Learning and Health, which are offset by significant declines in Business-related programmes. The trend in student numbers show an increasing success in Lifelong Learning students, further successes in respect of some Postgraduate offerings, but a continued decline in Undergraduate students.

A Programme Chronology for the Mayo campus was presented to the Executive Board outlining three programmes for termination in the 2019/20 academic year with a detailed analysis of various factors informing the decision to terminate these programmes (including student attendance trends). These programmes included:

- Bachelor of Business (Level 7 and 8);
- Accounting & Financial Management (Level 7 and 8);
- Sustainable Building Technology (Level 7 and 8).

In deciding to terminate these three courses noted above, the Executive Board of GMIT noted that the new Strategic Framework for the Mayo campus was approved by the Governing Body which included a focus on Nursing, Outdoor Education and Online programme offerings.

We are satisfied that GMIT have an established system in place whereby strict demand viability criteria and alignment with strategic direction is applied in determining the long-term viability of campus programmes.

**Status of Implementation: Established**

#### **4.9 Independently facilitated discipline based working groups should be established involving relevant staff on the Galway and Mayo campus to consider and develop collaborative approaches to provision**

##### **Progress of Implementation**

GMIT has presented evidence to show there has been greater interaction between Mayo campus and wider GMIT staff since the Working Group Report through initiatives such as the joint campus meeting of the Heritage, History and Geography lecturing teams in November 2019. Further integration has been evidenced in the School of Business, which has seen Mayo campus staff involved in several programme development teams and a GMIT Accountancy team, which includes senior Mayo campus staff, meeting on a weekly basis since January 2021.

GMIT has indicated that collaborative approaches to provision remain a priority and Programmatic Review is a useful means to help drive these initiatives forward. Furthermore, the integration of engineering and computer science offerings into GMIT-wide schools will help develop this area further. It is noted that part of GMIT's strategy is to ensure that efforts to strengthen Mayo campus programme offerings are supported by the weight of GMIT support services and relevant GMIT schools behind it.

Further discipline-based working groups involving relevant staff on the Galway and Mayo campus to consider and develop collaborative approaches to provision should be established to fully implement this recommendation. Independently facilitated working groups, as recommended by the Working Group Report, should also be considered further.

**Status of Implementation: Progressed**

### **C. New Programme Development**

#### **4.10 New programme development should be prioritised and aligned with the institute and campus strategies, the regional skills audit and market research including engagement with regional employers and representative groups**

##### **Progress of Implementation**

We have seen clear evidence that new programme development (including the pipeline of planned programme development) is aligned with the new Strategic Framework for the Mayo campus as approved by the Governing Body. This includes the development of a Centre of Excellence in Health & Wellbeing as a key identity for the Mayo campus, building on a track

record of success in this area; embracing the concept of a centre of education for sustainability as a strategic priority for the Institute as it transitions to a Technological University; the realignment of programmes in Business, Humanities and Technology to existing academic Departments/Schools and emerging faculty structures; the restructuring and repurposing of the Outdoor Education programme as part of the Programmatic Review process, and; the development of a range of Lifelong Learning opportunities to be provided to stakeholders in the region under the leadership of the GMIT Graduate Studies and Professional Development Department.

The Mayo campus has established further linkages with educational institutions, government agencies and private industry since the publication of Working Group Report. In addition to establishing partnerships with the HSE and health care providers such as the Mayo General Hospital and the Bons Secours Hospital Group, the Mayo campus has engaged with the Regional Skills Forum, resulting in two focus groups being held on the Mayo campus consisting of employers within the region to obtain local industry input in order to tailor requirements to the needs of local industry. These engagements led to the development of successful programme offerings, for example Cybersecurity offerings (Level 7/ 8/ 9) as well as enhancements of the Digital Media & Marketing programmes. These examples alone have contributed to reasonable increases in WTE student number, particularly in the most recent two academic years (in 2020/21, 47 and 45 WTE students respectively). Other offerings arising from these interactions include the Green Business Certificate.

Given that the Working Group Report places specific emphasis on the development of new programmes to stimulate demand and meet regional needs to drive the future sustainability of the Mayo campus, we consider that GMIT needs to continue to focus on this area. While we have seen positive trends in respect of student numbers and the Mayo campus operating budget, we noted that a significant deficit against targeted HEA grant and student income remains; therefore, this area requires further specific emphasis and progress.

**Status of Implementation: Progressed / Established**

#### **4.11 The potential for development of new apprenticeship proposals should be investigated**

##### **Progress of Implementation**

There has been limited development of new apprenticeship proposals since the Working Group Report was published. We noted that the Mayo campus has recently engaged with Accountancy Technicians Ireland to develop a Level 8 Apprenticeship programme, but that this engagement is at an early stage. Similarly, conversations in respect of offerings in horticulture have commenced. GMIT noted that, in respect of several areas where apprenticeships were considered, these are industry-led and there has been very limited recent development of apprenticeships nationally in areas such as digital media and sales skills.

Further progress is required to adequately consider the potential for development of new apprenticeship proposals.

**Status of Implementation: Not started / initiated**

#### **4.12 International and postgraduate offerings should be further developed to diversify the campus income base**

##### **Progress of Implementation**

We have seen evidence of new programme approvals in Health Science, Digital Media and Cybersecurity which demonstrates how the Mayo campus is actively diversifying postgraduate offerings. Some of these offerings have had positive uptake since their implementation (as noted in Section 4.10).

At the time of review, no significant international programme offerings have been implemented on the Mayo campus. We noted that initial progress has been made in progressing international offerings in the area of accountancy, in addition to initiating conversations with Mayo County Council regarding a joint US scholarship programme. Virtual open days have also yielded some interest from international students, especially in respect of Outdoor Education. Furthermore, internationalisation is a key feature of GMIT's strategy, and further actions are planned to attract international students such as positioning the Cyber programmes as full-time offerings and promoting the healthcare Postgraduate programmes as an international offering.

It is noted however that the implementation of international offerings is dependent on market interest for such offerings and various other factors, including but not limited to competition, location, social aspects and the cost proposition for students.

Two initiatives were explored by the Mayo campus since the Working Group Report; the Nursing Top-Up and a Memorandum of Understanding with Methodist College in Malaysia. We note that initiatives to implement the nursing top-up were unsuccessful as GMIT were not able to compete with existing providers and GMIT's English requirements were higher than competing universities UL & UCC, the two main providers of top-up programmes in this discipline. The partnership with Methodist College in Malaysia was an articulation agreement with GMIT's Social Care programme, however we understand that an attractive pathway for their students could not be fully scoped.

While international offerings remain an area that should be further explored by GMIT for the benefit of the Mayo campus, particularly with a view to exploring whether the Mayo campus' unique environment and offerings are attractive in the marketplace, it is not immediately clear whether such a proposition will be successful in attracting more students (and income) to the Mayo campus.

On this basis we have concluded that further progress is required to deliver this recommendation.

**Status of Implementation: Progressed**

### 4.13 A mapping exercise should be undertaken with further education to build and communicate new progression pathways

#### Progress of Implementation

GMIT and the Mayo campus have established relationships with Mayo Sligo Leitrim ETB and Galway Roscommon ETB, developing MoU's with each ETB between 2017 and 2019. GMIT has reviewed the various Level 6 programmes offered by these ETBs to establish whether advanced entry may be offered, and a list of these pathways are now included on GMIT's website. GMIT also utilises Recognition of Prior Learning to admit learners to different programmes.

These pathways were included in marketing efforts as part of GMIT-wide school visits and open days, although a specific marketing activity was not undertaken to explicitly market new progression pathways offered by the Mayo campus.

Student data examined shows that, while pathways under this recommendation have been established, initial student uptake has not been significant, and further time and marketing is required to consider whether these are sustainable, long term offerings.

**Status of Implementation: Progressed**

### 4.14 The Mayo campus should continue its development as a centre of excellence for lifelong learning within GMIT

#### Progress of Implementation

This recommendation considered that the Mayo campus already had a significant track record in delivering Lifelong Learning, and the emphasis was to continue growth in this area. It is noted in this regard the development of HRM and Supervisory Development programmes has yielded some success to date, as demonstrated by student numbers over the past three academic years in the below table.

**Student Numbers and WTE for HRM and Supervisory Development Programmes**

<b>Programme</b>	<b>2018/2019</b>		<b>2019/2020</b>		<b>2020/2021</b>	
	<b>Student No.</b>	<b>WTE</b>	<b>Student No.</b>	<b>WTE</b>	<b>Student No.</b>	<b>WTE</b>
<i>Certificate in Human Resource Management</i>	1	0.2	5	0.8	17	3.0
<i>BA in Human Resource Management</i>	40	32.2	34	30.1	38	28.0
<i>Certificate in Supervisory Management</i>	25	24.0	20	19.3	21	20.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>56.4</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>50.2</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>51.2</b>

GMIT has secured Springboard and HCI funding to continue the growth of new provisions and to further the Mayo campus's development as a Centre for Excellence.

It was not evident that GMIT had developed specific collaborations with existing providers of digital education, but we note that online provision and the development of related technologies by GMIT have been accelerated through the onset of the Covid pandemic.

The Mayo campus offers single-subject “taster” modules to students to encourage uptake of Lifelong Learning courses. As evidenced by our review of student numbers, the uptake of these taster modules has been mixed, with a decline in student numbers and WTE since the 2018/19 academic year.

We have concluded that, while substantial progress and success have been achieved in respect of Lifelong Learning, there is further scope for developing a more modular approach to Lifelong Learning, including the provision of ‘tasters’, and that further consideration should be given to developing specific collaborations with existing providers of digital education.

**Status of Implementation: Established**

#### **4.15 New tailored programmes, based on unique well-articulated value propositions should be developed to meet current and emerging skills needs of major local employers**

##### **Progress of Implementation**

We noted that, as part of the academic quality assurance system applied by the GMIT for all course development, there is a requirement for formal consultation with industry as part of the evaluation process for all new programmes.

In addition, GMIT / the Mayo campus have engaged with major local employers to identify skills needs and demand for graduates. The Springboard Consultations in 2019 and 2020 included the input of local industry leaders into new and existing programmes offered by the Mayo campus. This has resulted in a range of new programmes being offered by the Mayo campus, including in history and geography, business, sustainable building technology, digital marketing, supervisory management, HRM, accounting and financial management. Further examples also include the Cybersecurity programmes at Levels 7, 8 and 9 which were developed in conjunction with HP and Lionsbridge.

GMIT and the Mayo campus have made significant advancements in this area, but given the relative importance of programmes being offered meeting the needs of local employers and industry stakeholders, GMIT must continue to focus on creating new programmes to meet the current and emerging skills needs of major local employers.

**Status of Implementation: Established**

## D. Distinct Marketing of the Mayo Campus

### 4.16 A distinct marketing plan should be developed & implemented with a full campaign established to target demand for 2018/19

#### Progress of Implementation

We have not identified the existence of a comprehensive marketing plan or strategy specifically focussed on the Mayo campus, however a number of marketing activities focussing on the Mayo campus identity and its programmes have taken place. It is noted that in general, the GMIT marketing resources are utilised for the institution as a whole, and do not focus on campus specific marketing. The GMIT marketing function did however provide support to the Mayo campus for a range of marketing campaigns, including focussing on Mayo as a location through the preparation of marketing materials at programme level and development of website content.

At the time of review, the Mayo campus had rolled out digital campaigns to market the unique characteristics of the Mayo campus focusing on specific disciplines. These campaigns included:

- Digital Campaign for CAO 2019 Market (Jan-May 2019)
- Digital Campaign for CAO 2020 market (end Nov 2019 to end June 2020)
- Instagram Competition for Outdoor Education (December 2019)

Additional GMIT wide digital campaigns included reference to Mayo campus Springboard and Jobs Stimulus offerings.

A Virtual Open Day was held for the Mayo campus on 15th November 2020, which was supported in person by the GMIT President and the Graduate Mentor for the Mayo campus. In 2020 there were visits to 24 schools online to promote all of GMIT, including the Mayo campus, with a local onsite visit also facilitated. We noted that programmes in the Mayo campus were promoted along with all GMIT offerings at international fairs in Malaysia, Vietnam and India.

A budget of €50k was allocated to the Mayo campus for marketing purposes during 2018. A brochure was developed for the campus, and specific social media handles were utilised to point prospective students to Mayo campus offerings. A video promoting the Mayo campus was also filmed and produced in 2019.

It was noted during review that GMIT employs a small marketing team (two people) to facilitate all marketing activities across the 5 campuses. Overall GMIT considers that its marketing impact can be strengthened through consideration of resourcing. Additional resourcing would also facilitate more in-depth analysis of marketing impacts, and the effectiveness of different marketing campaigns.

While these initiatives generated positive marketing and profile for the Mayo campus (metrics in terms of reach and clicks are captured for each campaign), there is no evidence of a detailed plan/strategy in existence from which marketing initiatives are actioned on. GMIT will need to create a tailored marketing strategy and action plan in respect of the Mayo campus, and



measure the impact of these activities once delivered, to fully implement this recommendation. It is also noted that the establishment of the new school from 2021 and potential new CAO offerings for Business might present a unique opportunity for additional and focussed marketing activity for the Mayo campus.

**Status of Implementation: Progressed**

#### **4.17 Student ambassadors should be appointed and used within the marketing strategy to promote the unique value of studying on the campus**

##### **Progress of Implementation**

We confirmed that some student contributions have been integrated into the overall marketing approach in respect of the Mayo campus, which included the use of Graduate / Postgraduate students to assist with the development of marketing materials, and participation in the virtual open day held for the Mayo campus during November 2020. Under the GMIT graduate mentor scheme, introduced in 2020, 1.5 graduate mentors were also assigned to support students on the Mayo campus, and the role of graduate mentor can include marketing activities.

Formal student ambassadors have however not yet been put in place in the Mayo campus. This role needs to be formalised and a structured approach implemented in respect of such students' roles in respect of marketing and promoting the unique value of studying on the Mayo campus.

**Status of Implementation: Progressed**

#### **4.18 A dedicated marketing resource should be introduced to coordinate the delivery of the new Mayo campus marketing plan**

##### **Progress of Implementation**

We have confirmed that a dedicated marketing resource was not put in place to implement and drive forward a marketing strategy for the Mayo campus. As previously mentioned, a budget of €50k was put in place in 2018 to support Mayo campus marketing activities, and we note that a Mayo campus academic is supporting the Student Liaison Officer (SLO) who has responsibility for the promotion of all GMIT programmes, including programmes offered on the Mayo campus.

The absence of a clear marketing plan or strategy focussed on the Mayo campus and the limited evidence of a data/metric driven approach to targeted marketing activities (other than digital media views / clicks) are possible indicators that a dedicated marketing resource remains a necessity to realise the full benefit of a marketing approach aligned to the strategy for the Mayo campus. This is noted however in the context of limited marketing resources being in place for GMIT as a whole.

**Status of Implementation: Initiated**



#### **4.19 A major re-launch campaign should be progressed immediately to show the campus is open for business and drive demand for 2018/19**

##### **Progress of Implementation**

GMIT noted that a re-launch is planned to mark the 25th Anniversary of the Mayo campus and create a new “identity” / strategic framework for the campus to include the establishment of a new School within the Campus. It was noted that GMIT aims to have this relaunch of the Mayo campus in 2021, to coincide with potential new CAO offerings for Business.

The re-launch activity planned for the Mayo campus should be delivered as a priority.

**Status of Implementation: Not started / Initiated**

#### **4.20 GMIT should develop a joint marketing initiative with Mayo County Council to ensure that the campus is promoted via wider county marketing resources**

##### **Progress of Implementation**

We understand that GMIT are in the early stages of engagement with Mayo County Council regarding development and promotion of the Mayo campus and its programmes. In the interim, GMIT had a number of joint engagements with Mayo County Council which assisted in promoting its programmes and activities, including supporting Mayo County Council in its Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF) bid, interaction through the GMIT Research & Innovation function, via the Mayo iHub, inclusion of senior GMIT personnel on the Mayo Economic Taskforce and participation in a public webinar which was publicised by both GMIT and Mayo County Council.

This engagement with Mayo County Council is at an early stage and further progress is required to tap into the Council's marketing reach and expertise, as well as to input into the Council's marketing strategy on an ongoing basis.

**Status of Implementation: Initiated**

## **E. Campus Infrastructure**

#### **4.21 A means should be found to replace part of the roof**

##### **Progress of Implementation**

We have confirmed that work on the €2M Mayo campus roofing project was completed in October 2020, along with other minor refurbishment works to the building.

GMIT signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Mayo County Council on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2021 to commit to GMIT co-funding towards a regional sports grant for Lough Lannagh. We note that the Council has also included funding for the Castlebar campus in its budget of 2021 which is expected to be scoped out further in Q2 of 2021.

While the substantial element of this recommendation (to replace part of the roof) has been completed, other elements such as the deficit in sporting facilities, exploring the establishment of creche facilities and potential co-location options remain to be explored.

**Status of Implementation: Established**

## F. Enterprise Development

### 4.22 The campus should work with LEO Mayo and other local stakeholders on a campus enterprise development strategy

#### Progress of Implementation

It is noted that engagement with LEO Mayo and other local stakeholders has taken place, including with Mayo County Council, local industry, and through the Atlantic Economic Corridor Enterprise Hubs Initiative and Regional Skills Forum. Examples of the benefits of these initial activities include the development of the Empower programme and the EI Enterprise Centre funding awarded to iHub in 2020.

A campus enterprise development strategy is in development but has not been finalised at the time of review, with the development cycle currently in consultation phase. Further progress is required in this area with the specific emphasis on demonstrating working collaboratively with the LEO, positioning the iHub as a gateway for knowledge transfer between the education and enterprise sectors in the region, providing technology and business graduates with essential technical and soft skills required by industry in the region, and student entrepreneurship.

**Status of Implementation: Progressed**

### 4.23 The campus should contribute to a proposal for a rural entrepreneur development programme that should be made to the regional enterprise development fund

#### Progress of Implementation

We confirmed that GMIT submitted a successful bid to the Enterprise Ireland Regional Enterprise Development Fund (REDF). The Mayo campus had limited involvement in this proposal and will be involved as a spoke location for delivery of the project. The REDF project established Comhoibriú CLG (trading as Creative Enterprise West / CREW). This project is in commencement phase, with the CEO of CREW recently appointed. CREW will focus on the Digital Creative Sector through the development of a Centre of Excellence providing co-working space, incubation and accelerator programmes, training and outreach services to increase enterprise development and job growth in the West of Ireland contributing to sustainable regional economic and social development. Some of the funding is specifically earmarked for the Mayo iHub.

The Empower Programme is a Female Entrepreneur Programme targeted at female entrepreneurs from Galway, Mayo, Roscommon, Sligo, Leitrim and Donegal. This programme addresses specific challenges faced by females and will help to fast track female-led

businesses. Initially targeting potential female entrepreneurs from Galway and Mayo, the programme commenced in October 2017 with 34 females being selected onto cycle one and 30 being selected onto cycle two in October 2018. We note that the programme has recently expanded to include Roscommon, Leitrim, Sligo and Donegal, and is delivered by the GMIT Innovation Hub on the Mayo campus. Applications for Empower Growth 2021 will reopen in Spring 2021 and Empower Start will reopen in Summer 2021. This initiative is funded by the Department of Justice.

GMIT needs to advance these positive initiatives further, to demonstrate the impact on the training and development needs of rural-facing businesses in the Mayo region.

**Status of Implementation: Established**

#### **4.24 The campus should develop a value proposition to take to industry offering a range of potential collaboration opportunities and associated benefits**

##### **Progress of Implementation**

We understand from GMIT that the new Strategic Framework and implementation of its direction for the Mayo campus have enabled substantial progress. GMIT's approach to this strategic direction has been to deliver industry-targeted offerings on a GMIT wide basis, which includes offerings from the Mayo campus.

As previously mentioned, GMIT hosted Springboard consultations and quality assurance driven consultations with local industry leaders and employers to obtain their feedback and input into the content and delivery of programmes within the Mayo campus.

Examples of programmes that were developed on foot of industry consultations are the Cybersecurity programmes and Leadership and Management programmes which were developed based on industry consultation, as well as programmes developed in partnership with Bon Secours and Galway Clinic.

The "Data2Sustain" EDIH consortium has successfully progressed through a highly competitive national designation process to the European Commission's restricted call for European Digital Innovation Hub funding. The consortium involves GMIT, IT Sligo, Letterkenny IT, NUIG, WestBIC, Ernact, the WDC, the NWRA, Údarás na Gaeltachta, the Local Authority Local Enterprise Offices, and the Atlantic Economic Corridor. Successful consortia will be jointly funded by the European Commission and Enterprise Ireland to establish their EDIH. Foreseeable funding includes 3-4 years of grant aid at €1-2 million per year in each hub, i.e.: €3-8 million in total funding. EDIHs will support businesses and organisations in their digital transformation and to disseminate the latest advances in cybersecurity, Artificial Intelligence and High-Performance Computing. The EDIHs will be one-stop-shops, with a research and technology organisation or higher education institution based lab at its core, that help companies (notably SMEs) and public sector organisations become more competitive in their business/production processes, products or services by providing access to research infrastructure, technical expertise and experimentation, so that these organisations can test digitalisation technologies before they invest in them.

Whilst a number of value propositions have been developed to take to industry (through consultation), there is scope to further develop value propositions and collaboration opportunities with local industry and employers. Further progress is needed to demonstrate that mechanisms such as placements, bespoke training offerings, graduate employment schemes, innovation partnerships, digital marketing supports and project working, have been fully explored and are yielding benefits to both the Mayo campus and local industry.

**Status of Implementation: Progressed / Established**

#### **4.25 A multi-agency proposal to expand iHub enterprise space should be put together and funding sought to ensure ongoing sustainability**

##### **Progress of Implementation**

During 2020, GMIT engaged with Mayo County Council and the Western Development Commission (WDC) in a successful application to the URDF. This project proposes refurbishment and extension of Daly's Hotel on the Mall in Castlebar to repurpose the building as a new Business Innovation Hub. The collaboration will extend GMIT's delivery of entrepreneurship programmes (for example Enterprise Ireland's New Frontiers, and the Empower Programme for women) into the Business Innovation Hub, and via other County Council and AEC-affiliated facilities. The URDF proposal led by Mayo County Council in collaboration with GMIT and the WDC has been awarded and Mayo County Council are currently awaiting contracts.

In September 2020 GMIT applied to Enterprise Ireland's "Powering the Regions – Enterprise Centres Fund" for funding to refurbish facilities and extend programmes of the iHub. GMIT's iHub secured €177k in funding, including €76k for the Mayo iHub.

These developments demonstrate positive progress in expanding the available enterprise space attached to the Mayo campus, and further progress will determine if enterprise space can move to a sustainable position.

**Status of Implementation: Progressed**

## **G. Wider Engagement**

#### **4.26 GMIT should investigate whether a collaborative approach with Mayo County Council on the Lough Lannagh project can realise the envisaged outdoor pursuits centre from the campus, town and region**

##### **Progress of Implementation**

We understand that a recent opportunity has arisen for a collaborative application between the Mayo campus and Mayo County Council, for regional sports grant funding to finish the climbing wall facility at Lough Lannagh through a joint application.

While there has been further engagement with Mayo County Council and Galway County Council during 2020 to progress the outdoor agenda and to discuss GMIT's role in supporting Mayo County Council in delivering on the Mayo Economic Recovery Plan, further progress is needed on plans to develop Outdoor Education as part of GMIT's Strategic Framework, and to fully realise the outdoor pursuits opportunity for the campus, town and region.

**Status of Implementation: Progressed**

#### **4.27 A proposition around work experience and employability across all campus provision should be developed and clearly marketed**

##### **Progress of Implementation**

The mission-based Performance Compact 2018-2021, developed in conjunction with the HEA sets out a number of Key System Objectives designed to improve overall performance in accordance with GMIT's own strategies and in the context of CUA partner Institutes. One of the targets under Key System Objective 1 is the introduction of Employability Statements for all disciplines by 2020.

Whilst a general employability statement has been approved and implemented, discipline-specific employability statements have not yet been developed. Under 'Experience - work experience and placements', this statement notes *"The CUA Institutes have a well-established track record of developing successful working relationships with industry, supporting student work placements, insight and projects. It also gives students an opportunity to reflect on their experience. We aim to enhance this further through the development of strategic partnerships and deeper collaborations with industry, employers and other stakeholders."*

We acknowledge that, in addition to professional practice, work placement and employability being consistent themes across campus, formal work placement arrangements were observed in areas such as Nursing, Social Care and Early Childhood programmes while placement in the other programmes (Outdoor Education, History and Geography) is normally undertaken in the summer. We have also seen evidence of work experience and employability being included in marketing materials and content for open days.

GMIT needs to further explore opportunities around work placements with local employers. This should be supported by discipline-specific employability statements and a clear strategy for engaging with employers and marketing this proposition clearly.

**Status of Implementation: Progressed**

#### **4.28 Funding will be sought under the national rural development actions plan for a centre for community sustainability**

##### **Progress of Implementation**

Through the draft Senior Academic Leadership Initiative (SALI) proposal from Q2 2020, it is noted that the proposed establishment of a SALI post based in the Mayo campus would help realise the full potential of a GMIT-led "Centre of Education for Sustainability" for the CUA, building on the established strengths of the Mayo campus, which has been a national leader

in the Green Campus initiative. GMIT did eventually bid for a SALI post (Chair of Design for Sustainability) but this post was signalled as being an institute-wide post, encompassing activities across all five campuses. It was noted during review that the outcome of the SALI proposal will not be determined until May/June 2021.

Plans for a Centre of Education for Sustainability based at the GMIT Mayo campus, were announced prior to the Working Group Report and this momentum has created synergies to equip rural enterprises and communities with tools for a more sustainable future. Activities being undertaken include teaching & learning, community engagement, operations, programme development and research for a range of initiatives and organisations including the Community Native Woodland, St Vincent de Paul, Swift Conservation Mayo and other organisations.

In January 2021, given the strong interest in sustainability across all five campuses of GMIT, the President of GMIT announced the establishment of a GMIT-wide Centre for Sustainability, with input from Mayo staff among others. There is an initial plan of work breaking down activities for the Centre of Excellence over the short (6-12 months), medium (12-18 months) and long term (3 years).

To achieve this recommendation for the establishment of a centre for community sustainability, further funding is required to be obtained, and progress is required in respect of the planned activities under this heading.

**Status of Implementation: Progressed**

#### **4.29 Staff are supported to continue to progress campus activities with its regional stakeholders within a positive culture of community engagement**

##### **Progress of Implementation**

It is clear that Mayo campus staff have a significant role to play in ensuring effective engagement and progress on the majority of Working Group recommendations, and to assist in driving the Mayo campus strategy forward. This can only be achieved through adequate support from GMIT as a whole, including its leadership.

We have seen many examples of significant efforts from Mayo campus and GMIT staff, collaborative cross campus engagement, and cross campus support in respect of marketing, stakeholder engagement, programme development and enterprise development.

Springboard consultations with local industry leaders to obtain feedback and input into the content and delivery of programmes within the Mayo campus included attendees as follows: Mayo County Council, Ireland West Airport Knock, Gordon Accountants, IFAC Accountants, Mayo-Sligo-Leitrim ETB, Westport Woods Hotel/President of Irish Hotel Federation, Local Enterprise Office, HSE, New Paradigms Consulting

Given the Health programmes managed by the Mayo campus, the HSE has been identified as a major stakeholder and more specifically, the Mayo University Hospital. Two



Memorandums of Understanding were provided to demonstrate engagement and collaboration between the two bodies. Several programmes were developed on foot of engagement with HSE corporate, Galway Clinic, and Bon Secours Hospital Group and Western Care Association.

GMIT has also engaged with Mayo County Council and the Western Development Commission to partner with these organisations in the refurbishment and extension of Daly's Hotel on the Mall in Castlebar and repurposing the building as a new Business Innovation Hub through the URDF. Funding has been awarded for this collaborative initiative and implementation will proceed following the conclusion of contractual negotiations.

Through these initiatives, a positive culture of community engagement has been developed and maintained by Mayo campus staff.

**Status of Implementation: Established**

## H. Funding and Financial Sustainability

### **4.30 GMIT should seek designation of the campus as eligible for additional multi-campus funding when the new HEA funding model is fully established**

#### **Progress of Implementation**

The introduction of ring-fenced funding from the HEA has allowed GMIT to fund part of the operational budgeting shortfall associated with the Mayo campus while pursuing Working Group recommendations. GMIT noted that multi-campus funding has not been pursued and will be a future consideration for the period after the commitment to ring-fenced funding.

It is difficult to see how the position in respect of deficit HEA grant income and student contributions / fees (against targets set in the Working Group Report) can be recovered in the remaining period of implementation of the sustainability plan. On the basis of current analysis, it is difficult to see how GMIT will be able fully reduce this deficit to a break-even position, and it is therefore likely that further funding may be needed beyond the implementation period.

**Status of Implementation: Not started / Initiated**

### **4.31 GMIT should seek time bound ring-fenced funding to allow the plan to be fully implemented and ensure future campus sustainability**

#### **Progress of Implementation**

GMIT has established ringfenced funding to allow for the Working Group plan to be fully implemented and to support campus sustainability on an interim basis. Annual ring-fenced funding of €750,000 has been allocated in 2018, 2019 and 2020. For 2020, the Mayo campus recorded an overall deficit of €(1.657)m; we note that ring-fenced funding reduces this deficit for the year to €0.907m.

As noted in Section 3.3 of this report, the Mayo campus operating results have tracked behind the targets set by the Working Group in recent years, and it is difficult to see how this deficit will be recovered over the remaining implementation period of the sustainability plan. This may be indicative of a number of the recommendations not being fully realised at this point. The majority of individuals we spoke to during our review are however of the view that the operational budget of the Mayo campus is unlikely to achieve near break even position. This is also not predicted by the Working Group Report, but at this point it is difficult to see that even an annual drawdown of €250k as suggested by the Working Group under multi-campus funding would be sufficient to put the Mayo campus on sustainable level. This observation is also made on the context of a significant level of overheads applicable to the Mayo campus being absorbed at central level, and not attributed to the campus.

Ring-fenced funding has however provided some time to focus in the implementation of the Working Group recommendations and positive progress has been made in many areas. GMIT should seek to continue the current arrangement for receipt of ring-fenced funding for the duration of the implementation period, but should also plan for a likely requirement of further funding which may arise thereafter.

**Status of Implementation: Established**

#### **4.32 There should be scope for staff to move between campuses on a voluntary basis to reflect changing patterns of provision and demand across GMIT**

##### **Progress of Implementation**

The integration of central services to facilitate a GMIT wide service across all campuses has progressed involving 19 staff, all of whom remain based on the Mayo campus, while a further 4 academic staff have relocated to the Galway campus. It was noted that COVID-19 has forced GMIT to move to an online delivery model which has directly impacted further implementation since 2021. However, online delivery has enabled greater contribution towards GMIT-wide programmes, and the new school structure also presents opportunities for courses to be offered from the Mayo campus and the provision of blended learning.

Our review has confirmed that staff costs have been below the targets set by the Working Group Report. As noted in Section 3.3 of this report however, the lower than expected income levels achieved during 2018 to 2020 by the Mayo campus may require GMIT to revisit its pay cost base.

**Status of Implementation: Established**

#### **4.33 GMIT should engage with the Department of Education and Skills on seeking approval to participate in a voluntary redundancy scheme**

##### **Progress of Implementation**

It was noted that whilst GMIT has had initial engagement with the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, the Mayo campus has not participated



in a voluntary redundancy scheme. As noted in Section 3.3 of this report however, the lower than expected income levels achieved during 2018 to 2020 by the Mayo campus may require GMIT to revisit its pay cost base.

**Status of Implementation: Not started**

## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Actions Noted in This Report

<i>Number</i>	<i>Report Ref</i>	<i>Actions Noted</i>
1	4.1 / 4.2	The new VP for the Mayo campus also needs to consider (in conjunction with the Mayo campus Sub-Committee, Executive Board and Governing Body) whether the outstanding / incomplete Working Group recommendations remain viable in the context of increasing momentum towards Technological University status, and the change in structure and reporting applicable to the Mayo campus. A report should be provided to the HEA in this regard, detailing the further actions to be taken in respect of the incomplete / outstanding recommendations.
2	4.2	GMIT should ensure that the Mayo Sub-committee of the Governing Body provide continuity in oversight going forward.
3	4.5 / 3.3	While staff costs have tracked below the targeted Working Group Report predictions up to 2020, deficits in targeted income mean that the feasibility of relocating some central services to the Mayo campus require further specific consideration now, with a view to further reduce the cost base of the Mayo campus.
4	4.7	GMIT should continue to monitor the History and Geography programme and Geography and Outdoor Education programme with a view to test the market and consider sustainability. If required, these programmes should be supported by a more specific marketing approach.
5	4.9	Further discipline-based working groups involving relevant staff on the Galway and Mayo campus to consider and develop collaborative approaches to provision should be established to fully implement this recommendation. Independently facilitated working groups, as recommended by the Working Group Report, should also be considered further.
6	4.10	Given that the Working Group Report places specific emphasis on the new programme development to stimulate demand and meet regional needs as the key to the future sustainability of the Mayo campus, we consider that GMIT needs to continue to focus on this area.
7	4.11	Further progress is required to adequately consider the potential for development of new apprenticeship proposals.
8	4.12	While international offerings remain an area that should be further explored by GMIT for the benefit of the Mayo campus, particularly with a view to explore whether the unique environment and offerings of the Mayo campus is attractive in the marketplace, it is not immediately clear whether such a proposition will be successful in attracting more students (and income) to the Mayo campus.
9	4.13	Student data examined shows that, while pathways under this recommendation have been established, initial student uptake has not been significant, and further time and

<i>Number</i>	<i>Report Ref</i>	<i>Actions Noted</i>
		marketing is required to consider whether these are sustainable, long term offerings (progression pathways with further education).
10	4.14	There is further scope for developing a more modular approach to Lifelong Learning, including the provision of 'tasters', and that further consideration should be given to developing specific collaborations with existing providers of digital education.
11	4.16	GMIT will need to create a tailored marketing strategy and action plan in respect of the Mayo campus, and measure the impact of these activities once delivered.
12	4.17	The role of formal student ambassadors needs to be formalised and a structured approach implemented in respect of such students' roles in respect of marketing and promoting the unique value of studying on the Mayo campus.
13	4.18	The absence of a clear marketing plan or strategy focussed on the Mayo campus and the limited evidence of a data/metric driven approach to targeted marketing activities (other than digital media views / clicks) are possible indicators that a dedicated marketing resource remains a necessity to realise the full benefit of a marketing approach aligned to the strategy for the Mayo campus. This is noted however in the context of limited marketing resources being in place for GMIT as a whole.
14	4.19	The re-launch activity planned for the Mayo campus should be delivered as a priority.
15	4.20	The engagement with Mayo County Council regarding joint marketing initiatives is at an early stage and further progress is required to tap into the Council's marketing reach and expertise, as well as to input into the Council's marketing strategy on an ongoing basis.
16	4.21	GMIT should continue to progress other infrastructure related elements such as the deficit in sporting facilities, exploring the establishment of creche facilities and potential co-location options.
17	4.22	Further progress is required in the development of a campus enterprise development strategy, with the specific emphasis on demonstrating working collaboratively with the LEO, positioning the iHub as a gateway for knowledge transfer between the education and emprise sectors in the region, providing technology and business graduates with essential technical and soft skills required by industry in the region, and student entrepreneurship.
18	4.23	GMIT needs to advance the initiatives around CREW and the Empower Programme further, to demonstrate the impact on the training and development needs of rural-facing businesses in the Mayo region.
19	4.24	There is scope to further develop value propositions and collaboration opportunities with local industry and employers. Further progress is needed to demonstrate that mechanisms such as placements, bespoke training offerings, graduate employment schemes, innovation partnerships, digital marketing supports and project working,

<i>Number</i>	<i>Report Ref</i>	<i>Actions Noted</i>
20	4.25	have been fully explored and are yielding benefits to both the Mayo campus and local industry. These developments in respect of expansion of campus enterprise space need to progress further with the funding secured, to determine if enterprise space can move to a sustainable position.
21	4.26	Further progress is needed on plans to develop Outdoor Education as part of GMIT's Strategic Framework, and to fully realise the outdoor pursuits opportunity for the campus, town and region.
22	4.27	GMIT needs to further explore opportunities around work placements with local employers. This should be supported by discipline-specific employability statements and a clear strategy for engaging with employers and marketing this proposition clearly.
23	4.28	To achieve this recommendation for the establishment of a centre for community sustainability, further funding is required to be obtained, and progress is required in respect of the planned activities under this heading.
24	4.30	Multi-campus funding has not been pursued and will be a future consideration for the period after the commitment to ring-fenced funding.
25	4.31 / 3.3	GMIT should seek to continue the current arrangement for receipt of ring-fenced funding for the duration of the implementation period, but should also plan for a likely requirement of further funding which may arise thereafter.
26	4.32 / 4.33 / 3.3	The lower than expected income levels achieved during 2018 to 2020 by the Mayo campus may require GMIT to revisit its pay cost base.
27	3.1	A clear and crisp set of KPI's is required to determine the extent to which each of the Working Group Recommendations are considered, implemented and measured in terms of outcomes.
28	3.4	The appropriate level of reporting that would enable continuous tracking of the impact of the sustainability plan needs to be considered in context of ensuring adequate transparency is provided to stakeholders (including the HEA) on the level of funding and support needed to achieve a sustainable model for the Mayo campus.
29	3.4	The pursuit and/or achievement of TU status would have far reaching implications for the approach to implementing the Working Group Report recommendations, and needs to be an area of focus for the leadership structure charged with advancing the Mayo campus sustainability plan.

## Contacts

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