

Todhchaí don Ghaeilge san Ardoideachas mar Theanga Fheidhmiúil

Authors:

Pádraig Mac Brádaigh, AMLCT/TCDSU

Abstract ID: 444

Event: USI/AMLÉ Comhdháil 2025

Topic: Academic Affairs & Quality Assurance

Keywords: Academic Affairs, Gaeilge, mandate

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Standardisation of University of Sanctuary across Higher Education Institutions. Proposed by DCU Students' Union

Authors:

Alishaer Ahmed, DCUSU

Abstract ID: 440

Event: USI/AMLÉ Comhdháil 2025

Topic: Academic Affairs & Quality Assurance

Keywords: .

Standardisation of University of Sanctuary across Higher Education Institutions.

Proposed by DCU Students' Union

Comhdháil acknowledges:

Universities of Sanctuary Ireland (UoSI) is an initiative to encourage and celebrate the good practice of universities, colleges and institutes welcoming displaced persons into their university communities and fostering a culture of welcome and inclusion for all those seeking sanctuary.

Comhdháil notes:

In its current state, there is no standardised application criteria for University of Sanctuary leading to some universities having a very robust UoS scholarship such as University of Galway in comparison to other Higher Education Institutions (HEI) such as DCU who only reserve UoS for Postgraduate Students.

Comhdháil further notes:

If a student seeking the UoS scholarship is currently in Direct Provision they won't be able to travel up and to university outside of the county they're currently residing in, leading to an unfair situation for many who wish to seek education while having sought asylum.

Comhdháil believes:

That lobbying on an individual MO basis to improve the quality of UoS scholarships offered by HEIs would be slow and ineffective.

Comhdháil mandates:

Vice President for Academic Affairs & Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to lobby & liaise with the Irish Universities Association, as well as UoSI in regard to making a standardised application criteria for students who wish to apply for the UoS scholarship.

Teaching Contracts for Postgraduate Researchers

Authors:

Matthew James Quill, Southern Region Working Group

Kamal Shah, UCCSU

Abstract ID: 432

Event: USI/AMLÉ Comhdháil 2025

Topic: Academic Affairs & Quality Assurance

Keywords: IFUT, labour protections, minimum wage, postgraduate, teaching contracts, workers rights

Teaching Contracts for Postgraduate Researchers

Proposed by the Southern Region Working Group

Comhdháil notes

Postgraduate researchers (PGRs) often take on teaching responsibilities, including tutorials, marking, and lecturing, without clear contracts or adequate remuneration. This work is usually completed in an hourly-paid occasional/casual staff capacity, which lacks the benefits that would normally be associated with being an employee of the university, in addition to severe time pressures and unfair workloads.

Comhdháil further notes

That some PGRs are not contracted individually by the university to provide work, but instead have teaching commitments they must complete in order to be eligible to receive their full scholarship/stipend. This is an exploitative practice, as PGRs are primarily researching at the HEI to obtain a research degree, not to provide casual work for the HEI.

Comhdháil recognises

That while some academic departments within HEIs have standardised teaching contracts that designate work on a per-module basis, this varies hugely from department to department, and HEI to HEI, creating inconsistencies in pay, working conditions and recognition of part-time teaching work across the HEI sector, and creating a precedent for precarious teaching contracts for postgraduate researchers.

In addition to the above, many university teaching staff also face similar issues in their roles within HEIs, as has been highlighted by the Irish Federation of University Teachers (IFUT).

Comhdháil believes

PGRs who teach should be provided with formal, standardised contracts outlining pay, hours, and responsibilities. PGRs should additionally be recognised as employees while performing these duties for their HEI, and thus be subject to fair pay, job security, and access to employment rights (such as sick leave and pensions). HEIs should finally establish clear policies on maximum teaching hours to prevent excessive workloads from negatively impacting research progress.

Comhdháil mandates

- The Vice President for Postgraduate Affairs to lobby the Department for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science to standardise teaching contracts across HEIs, incorporating fair pay, benefits, and protections for PGRs engaged in teaching activities.
- The Vice President for Postgraduate Affairs to assist Member Organisations in lobbying efforts with their HEIs for the above, and for “decoupling” of teaching requirements from PhD scholarships.
- The Vice President for Postgraduate Affairs, in conjunction with the Vice President for Campaigns to investigate the feasibility of running a joint campaign with IFUT on abolishing precarious teaching contracts and setting minimum standards for working conditions, including transparent pay structures, workload limits, and access to employment rights for PGRs and academic staff, factoring in existing asks under the USI/AMLÉ Postgraduate Rights Charter.

Protection of Postgraduate Students from Fee Increases

Authors:

Sarah Fitzpatrick, USI/ÁMLE

Abstract ID: 426

Event: USI/ÁMLÉ Comhdháil 2025

Topic: Academic Affairs & Quality Assurance

Keywords: postgraduate, tuition fees

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Protection of Postgraduate Students from Fee Increases

Proposed by Postgraduate Working Group

Comhdháil Notes

Postgraduate fees, both for taught and research programs, are subject to annual increases at the discretion of individual higher education institutions. This practice, particularly with respect to non-EU fees, is often utilised as a strategy for boosting institutional income. USI/ÁMLE believes that such practices can lead to the exploitation of postgraduate students, undermining the principle of accessible education.

Comhdháil Recognises

If education is purported to be free in this country, then it is imperative that the government does not turn a blind eye to the financial burdens placed on postgraduate students seeking to advance their academic careers.

Comhdháil Mandates

The Coiste Gnó is mandated to lobby the government to intervene and establish controls on annual postgraduate fee increases, ensuring that students are not unfairly burdened by rising costs.

Comhdháil Further Mandates

The Vice President for Postgraduate Affairs is mandated to support Member Organisations (MOs) in their efforts to lobby their institutions against unjustified fee increases.

Reforms for Non-EU Postgraduate Researchers

Authors:

Sarah Fitzpatrick, USI/ÁMLE

Abstract ID: 425

Event: USI/ÁMLÉ Comhdháil 2025

Topic: Academic Affairs & Quality Assurance

Keywords: international, postgraduate, research, working rights

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Reforms for Non-EU Postgraduate Researchers

Proposed by Postgraduate Working Group

Comhdháil notes

Non-EU postgraduate researchers face difficulties in pursuing postgraduate research and education in Ireland, such as higher fees and additional costs in the form of visas, resident permits and healthcare. The current process for an Irish Residence Permit (IRP) and private health insurance for Postgraduate Researchers coming from outside of the European Union is costly and repetitive.

Comhdháil further notes

There is unfair treatment regarding immigration status between Irish government-funded/HEIs-funded non-EU PhD researchers and EU/Marie Curie PhD researchers. Moreover, there are a number of visa refusals of PhD researchers and their spouses on insufficient funding grounds despite having scholarship awards from funding agencies and HEIs.

Comhdháil further notes

The time spent in postgraduate research by non-EU postgraduate researchers is not counted toward Irish naturalisation and residency. The family member (s) accompanying PhD researchers do not receive access to the labour market or even part-time working rights.

Comhdháil also notes

Postgraduate researchers do not receive any disability benefits, health benefits, and paid maternity, paternity, and sick leave.

Comhdháil further notes

The dependents of the PhD researchers under the hosting agreement can have access to the labour market but the dependents of the PhD researchers who are not under the hosting agreement cannot have access to the labour market.

Comhdháil recognises

The current policies place multiple pressures on non-EU postgraduate researchers who come to Ireland to continue their education and research that they may not have been previously aware of.

Comhdháil therefore mandates

The Vice President for Postgraduate Affairs and Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to lobby the Department of Justice and Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science to implement reforms to end discrimination against non-EU postgraduate researchers that include but are not limited to:

- Introduce reform for the unjust visa restrictions and refusals for postgraduate researchers and their spouses and dependent children.
- Abolish the recurrent cost of €300 for the renewal of the Irish Residence Permit (IRP) for PGRs.
- The fair provision of Hosting Agreement Schemes to non-EU postgraduate researchers.
- Sponsorship and processing fees for visas, Garda vetting, and residence permits should be adequately financially supported by the HEIs, funding agencies and the government.
- The time spent in postgraduate research by non-EU postgraduate researchers should be counted toward naturalization and residency.
- Provide working rights to the spouses of non-EE postgraduate researchers.

- Provide access and assistance for healthcare, affordable health insurance, disability benefits, and paid maternity, paternity, and sick leave.
- Irish and international postgraduate researchers and students pursuing taught and research degrees should receive the same financial support and fee criteria.

Comhdháil further Mandates

The Vice President for Postgraduate Affairs to work with the Vice President for Equality and Citizenship, and Vice President for Campaigns, to organise an information campaign highlighting the additional costs of pursuing postgraduate education and research if travelling to Ireland as a non-EU researcher.

Repeals:

2023 EQ 11: Reforms for Non-EU Postgraduate Researchers

College Awareness Week

Authors:

Bryan O'Mahony, AMLÉ

Abstract ID: 424

Event: USI/AMLÉ Comhdháil 2025

Topic: Academic Affairs & Quality Assurance

Keywords: Pathways

College Awareness Week

Proposed by Leas Uachtarán um Ghnóthaí Acadúla

College Awareness Week

Comhdháil Notes:

That College Awareness Week is a national campaign which seeks to offer encouragement, support, and information to people of all ages about post-leaving certificate educational opportunities by showcasing and celebrating local role models.

Comhdháil Acknowledges:

The continuing need to tackle educational disadvantage and the absence of equal opportunities as seen by the expansion of the DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity In Schools) school programme announced on March 9th, 2022.

Comhdháil Mandates:

The Coiste Gnó to endorse and promote the national annual campaign: College Awareness Week.

Comhdháil Further Mandates:

The Vice President for Academic Affairs to seek to collaborate with the ISSU (Irish Second Level Students' Union) in support of College Awareness Week and its events. To also work with SOLAS (An tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna), ETBI (Education and Training Board Ireland) and NTO (National Tertiary Office) to promote the diverse pathways of higher education

Comhdháil Therefore Appeals the Motion: 2022 EM (AA) 3

Postgraduate Research Rights Charter

Authors:

Sarah Fitzpatrick, USI/ÁMLE

Abstract ID: 423

Event: USI/ÁMLÉ Comhdháil 2025

Topic: Academic Affairs & Quality Assurance

Keywords: postgraduate, research, working rights

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Postgraduate Research Rights Charter

Proposed by VP Postgraduate Affairs USI

Comhdháil Notes

The existing USI/ÁMLE Postgraduate Workers Rights Charter works at cross-purposes to the campaigns of several grassroots groups of postgraduate workers who are campaigning for the employment rights of postgraduate researchers. The exploitation of postgraduate researchers is most effectively challenged with a collective voice, and these divisions

weaken the campaign for postgraduate researchers' rights.

Comhdháil further Notes:

Currently PhD researchers are officially classified as students.

Comhdháil mandates

The Coiste Gnó to lobby the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science on the USI/ÁMLE Postgraduate Researchers' Rights Charter and for a change to the definition of a postgraduate, to define them as an employee.

Comhdháil further mandates:

The Vice President for Postgraduate Affairs and the Vice President for Campaigns to run a campaign based on USI/ÁMLE Postgraduate Researchers' Rights Charter collaborating with relevant groups and organisations.

Repeals:

2023 AA 13: Postgraduate Research Rights Charter

Student mobility & Erasmus Accessibility

Authors:

Bryan O'Mahony, AMLÉ

Abstract ID: 422

Event: USI/AMLÉ Comhdháil 2025

Topic: Academic Affairs & Quality Assurance

Keywords: Erasmus, Student Mobility

Student mobility & Erasmus Accessibility

Proposed by Leas Uachtarán um Ghnóthaí Acadúla

Student mobility & Erasmus Accessibility

Comhdháil Notes

International exchange opportunities for students continue to grow, with a significant number of students studying abroad during their degree. However, there can be significant social, physical and financial barriers preventing students from availing of these opportunities.

Comhdháil Believes

There are great benefits for students engaging in student mobility.

Comhdháil Mandates

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship and Vice President for Academic Affairs to work with member organisation representatives to ensure their Higher Education Institution clearly communicates the available supports, physical accessibility, cost transparency and suitability to their degree of their partner institutions and to push for HEI's to continually lobby for improved accessibility for students.

Comhdháil Further Mandates

The Vice President for Academic Affairs to support MO officers in lobbying for the standardisation of application processes, grade conversion tables and spreading the knowledge of opportunities of student mobility in HEI's across the country.

Comhdháil Therefore Appeals the motion: 2022 AA 7

Postgraduate Engagement and Participation

Authors:

Sarah Fitzpatrick, USI/ÁMLE

Abstract ID: 421

Event: USI/ÁMLÉ Comhdháil 2025

Topic: Academic Affairs & Quality Assurance

Keywords: engagement, postgraduate, representation

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Postgraduate Engagement and Participation

Proposed by VP Postgraduate Affairs USI/ÁMLE

Comhdháil notes

Due to the nature of postgraduate programmes, there are often distinct challenges and opportunities for postgraduate engagement. Postgraduates' experiences and needs differ in many ways from undergraduate learning experiences. Postgraduate Taught (PGT) students often study one-year courses. Postgraduate Research (PGR) students do not enroll on courses in a taught environment. Moreover, postgraduate cohorts often have elevated levels of part-time or distance learning study and large numbers of mature and international students.

Comhdháil believes

PGTs and PGRs representation and engagement in member organisations (MOs) as well as on relevant committees/boards in higher education institutions (HEIs) as well as national educational boards and committees benefit the quality of postgraduate education and research experiences.

Comhdháil mandates

The Vice President for Dublin, the Vice President for the Southern Region, and the Vice President for the BMW Region to support member organisations in enhancing engagement with postgraduate students through establishing and enhancing support frameworks for member organisations who are interested in broadening and further developing postgraduate representation in member organisations' positions, class representative councils and institutional committees/boards.

Comhdháil further mandates

For the President to examine the educational committees and boards that USI/ÁMLE sit on and consider for the Vice President for Postgraduate Affairs to sit on as a postgraduate

representation.

Repeals:

2023 AA 4: Postgraduate Engagement and Participation

Laptop Loan Scheme

Authors:

Kevin Sweeney, ATU SU Donegal

Abstract ID: 420

Event: USI/AMLÉ Comhdháil 2025

Topic: Academic Affairs & Quality Assurance

Keywords: digital technology, disadvantaged students

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Laptop Loan Scheme

ATU Students' Union Donegal

Comhdháil Notes:

Access to digital technology is essential for students to succeed in higher education. There are many financial barriers that prevent students from purchasing their own laptops, which in turn significantly impacts their ability to complete their coursework, virtual learning etc. This is furthering the gap of equity within higher education.

Comhdháil Also Notes:

The Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science allocated funding as part of a package of COVID supports to higher and further education institutions to support disadvantaged students in accessing ICT devices based on the target groups identified in the National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education 2015-2019.

Comhdháil Further Notes:

Most HEIs established a Laptop Loan Scheme with this funding to support students who could not afford to purchase a laptop for their studies. However, this has now become an expectant with many HEIs unable to meet the demand and continue the rollout of this scheme due to limited funding.

Comhdháil Mandates:

The Vice President for Academic Affairs with the support from the Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to engage with key stakeholders in the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science to provide adequate long-term funding to institutions to allow students from disadvantaged backgrounds to have the crucial access of a laptop during the course of their studies.

StudentSurvey.ie

Authors:

Bryan O'Mahony, AMLÉ

Abstract ID: 418

Event: USI/AMLÉ Comhdháil 2025

Topic: Academic Affairs & Quality Assurance

Keywords: Survey

StudentSurvey.ie

Academic Affairs Working Group

StudentSurvey.ie

Comhdháil Notes

The StudentSurvey.ie is well respected and recognised across Irish Higher Education Institutions having been launched in 2013, and the Postgraduate Research survey in 2018, following years of lobbying from AMLÉ. The survey was created to ensure the gathering of empirical data from students in colleges across the country.

Comhdháil Further Notes

That AMLÉ and Students' Unions have worked to ensure that StudentSurvey.ie is recognised and engaged with by students and are often the main driving force behind promoting the survey, using their own human and financial resources. StudentSurvey.ie data should be readily available and accessible to student representatives to allow them to examine the findings and seek ways to action them through their institutional processes. The expectation or burden of data analysis should not be placed upon student representatives. AMLÉ and StudentSurvey.ie should aid Student Representatives to advocate for their role in strategy and decision making, using the findings of the survey.

Comhdháil Notes with Concern

The success of this national initiative hinges on the power of the data generated to bring about positive, meaningful and long-lasting impacting the participating institutions. Despite significant efforts of student representatives and rising response rates, collaboration between student representatives and institutions is not always facilitated and sabbatical officers in most cases, do not have access to the institutional data. This has led to push back from Student Unions and led to some union's passing student survey boycott motions.

Comhdháil further notes with concern

That StudentSurvey.ie is also known as Irish Survey of Student Engagement. While in its last launched state, this survey never captured a holistic picture of student engagement in higher education. This survey primarily asked students questions such as how much they engaged with lectures, while never factoring in working or other time commitments that now affect students all over the country. This led to putting blame on students for their engagement rather than the underfunding of higher education.

Comhdháil Believes

That student survey is a corporatised organisation that doesn't actively contribute to en - mass positive reform and change in HEIs that benefits the students, and that many AMLÉ MOs have put in countless hours of work in promoting the survey in return for increasingly low amounts of actual results and action from their institutions. The equivalent, the National Student Survey is boycotted in the U.K. by the NUS for similar reasons.

Comhdháil Therefore Mandates

That the VP Academic Affairs ensures StudentSurvey.ie is reformed in such a way that prevents inordinate exploitation of students' union resources in StudentSurvey.ie processes, and that the survey focuses not on "the amount of time and effort that students put into meaningful and purposeful educational activities, and the extent to which institutions provide such opportunities and encourage students to engage with them" (StudentSurvey.ie website) and instead on teaching quality, student welfare, quality assurance processes, staff working conditions, and socio-economic impacts of access on education and student wellbeing.

Comhdháil Further Mandates

The Vice President for Academic Affairs to run a townhall for MOs before the launch of a new survey. This townhall will look at the changes made to the survey. This townhall provide feedback on the survey to be sent to student survey. Within the next two meetings of Comhairle Náisiúnta following on from this, MOs will vote and decide on AMLÉ's stance on whether to endorse or boycott the dissemination of the survey. This motion is to be updated and rewritten by Comhdháil 2026 by the Vice President of Academic Affairs, taking the result of this vote into account.

Comhdháil Also Mandates

The Vice President for Academic Affairs and Vice President for Campaigns to co-ordinate a briefing session with the StudentSurvey.ie Project Manager for all officers, prior to the launch of field work each year, to inform on the StudentSurvey.ie processes and idea share for promotional opportunities. Also, to support MO's to work in partnership with their

registrar or designated nominee, throughout the fieldwork period, return of results and analysis.

The Vice President for Academic Affairs to facilitate a training session, following the publication of results, to support officers' ability to engage with the results and recognise the possible strategic actions arising from the survey findings. This should include the provision of a template for an institutional action plan arising from the findings of the survey for officers to utilise and crossover to their successors each year.

Comhdháil Therefore Appeals the motion: 2022 AA 8

Postgraduate Taught Funding

Authors:

Sarah Fitzpatrick, USI/ÁMLE

Abstract ID: 417

Event: USI/ÁMLÉ Comhdháil 2025

Topic: Academic Affairs & Quality Assurance

Keywords: funding, postgraduate

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Postgraduate Taught Funding

Proposed by VP for Postgraduate Affairs USI/ÁMLE

Comhdháil Notes

That Postgraduate Taught students not eligible for the postgraduate tuition fee grant have limited means with which to fund for their education, with major funding bodies such as Research Ireland typically only providing grants for Postgraduate Researchers.

Comhdháil further notes

That the fee reduction announced for the 2025 Irish Budget does not affect Postgraduate Taught Fees. In addition, many Postgraduate Taught programmes offer research projects as part of the degree programme, and that these projects often entail a high bench fee for access to resources, materials etc. These projects are often as time consuming as full-time PhD/MRes projects, reducing opportunities for students to work part-time jobs to support their education.

Comhdháil Welcomes

The fee contribution increases from €4,000 to €5,000 and the 15 increase in the income thresholds for the maintenance grant apart of SUSI announced in the 2025 Irish Budget. However, with continuous annual rising of fees, cost-of-living crises and the reasons stated above we believe that

Comhdháil Believes

That Postgraduate Taught students should have greater access to funding opportunities from governmental and research funding bodies to support their education.

Comhdháil Mandates

The VP for Postgraduate Affairs to lobby the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science to extend future fee reductions to Postgraduate Taught students, and to work with existing research funding agencies to investigate the feasibility of extending existing grants and developing new grants for these students.

Repeals:

2024 AA CN 4 Postgraduate Taught Funding

Decolonising & Diversifying Education

Authors:

Kyla Henry, Maynooth Students' Union

Abstract ID: 406

Event: USI/AMLÉ Comhdháil 2025

Topic: Academic Affairs & Quality Assurance

Keywords: Deconlise, deconolising, diversifying

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Decolonising & Diversifying Education

Proposed by Maynooth Students' Union

Comhdháil notes:

The historical legacy of colonialism and white supremacy has profoundly shaped academic institutions and curricula, which has led to the marginalisation and omission of diverse voices and perspectives within education materials. This legacy perpetuates a 'coloniality of knowledge' that privileges Eurocentric perspectives and unjustly pushes BIPOC, LGBTQIA+,

women etc. into anonymity despite their significant contributions in academia. We must aim to achieve a truly liberated and antiracist education system this requires addressing racial injustice for students, staff, and workers within institutions.

The student voice is crucial for this development and improvement of all aspects of university provisions, including curriculum design and the diversification of collections. The current curriculum reflects "white ideas" and "white authors," reinforcing a colonial mindset and excluding non-Western knowledge systems (Peters, 2015). Student movements such as the "Rhodes Must Fall" protest at the University of Cape Town, which exposed the colonial roots of the curriculum and demanded structural reform (English and Heilbronn, 2024).

Decolonising the curriculum is not merely adding diverse content but requires a fundamental interrogation of the underlying assumptions, power structures and epistemological frameworks that shape what is taught and how knowledge is valued. It allows for students to read literature from different viewpoints which can boost students confidence and reduce prejudice allowing students to think more critically and understand how the world works.

Comhdháil further believes:

Diversifying and decolonising the curriculum in tandem is essential to counter the historical biases embedded within academic institutions. The curricula should reflect the diversity of the student population and incorporate a wider range of voice to enhance learning and promote a more comprehensive understanding of global issues. Seeing diverse authors and educators in curricula is vital for students motivation and for reducing stigma and discrimination, drawing from diverse cultural ways of knowing and theorising, including those from the Global South and Indigenous perspectives. Decolonisation efforts should involve a critical examination of whose knowledge and narratives are currently privileged in curricula.

Higher education institutions have a responsibility to prepare students to engage with a complex and interconnected world, which shows the necessity for understanding of diverse perspectives and a critique of colonial legacies. Diversification and decolonisation will look different for each department as the course materials differ. Therefore, diversifying and decolonising the curricula will require significant

involvement from many students and educators across all departments. This is connected to a much broader effort to address systemic inequalities within higher education.

Comhdháil mandates:

The Vice President for Academic Affairs to establish a dedicated working group on Decolonising Education, who will explore ways of enhancing diversity and decolonisation of the curricula holistically. Members of the working group will provide feedback and suggestions to the Vice President for Academic Affairs on methods to achieve a more diversified and decolonised that are compatible for the different curricula. The working group should research studies, and case works carried out in other academic institutions that have positively impacted the experiences of ethnic minority students in higher education as a whole.

The working group should, with help from other Member Organisations (MOs), be introduced to the wider student population from universities across the country. Utilising students from all backgrounds and disciplines to recognise students' lived experiences and diverse ways of thinking. The working group will develop recommendations and strategies for diversifying curriculum content including the exploration of non-Western epistemologies and the critical analysis of how colonial legacies have shaped disciplinary knowledge.

The Vice President for Academic Affairs and Vice President for Equality & Citizenship should aim to organise events, workshops and discussions to raise awareness among the wider student bodies and faculties about the importance of decolonising education. By expanding on events such as EMPower and introducing guest lecturers from diverse backgrounds to further educate students from non-Western centred ideas.

Comhdháil also mandates:

The Vice President for Academic Affairs to produce a comprehensive report in time for the last Comhairle Náisiúnta of the 2025-2026 Academic Year outlining the working groups finding, recommendations and a proposed action plan for decolonising the curriculum as a basis for other institutions to utilise as a resource.

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155-165. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jopedu/qhae043>.

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Modernising Assessment

Authors:

Chris Stewart, USI/AMLÉ

Abstract ID: 402

Event: USI/AMLÉ Comhdháil 2025

Topic: Academic Affairs & Quality Assurance

Keywords: assessment, dissertation, research, thesis

Modernising Assessment

USI/AMLÉ Vice President for the Border, Midlands, & Western Region

COMHDHÁIL NOTES:

Due to its traditional nature, academia is slow to adapt to an ever-quicker changing world. This is particularly true when it comes to the teaching and learning aspects of the student experience, in which modernisation tends to be much more reactive than proactive. USI/AMLE is currently working with QQI in this space, and more work will need to continue.

COMHDHÁIL FURTHER NOTES:

Dissertations (and theses) are soundly outdated and overly traditional forms of assessment, unsupported by academic research literature. Additionally, students/candidates may incur additional costs from printing & binding of these documents. Literature that does exist highlights the negative outcomes (mental, academic, financial, and professional) students can experience in these processes, while falling short of calling for meaningful change. These long-form assessments do not have analogues in the professions and careers they gatekeep, even within academia, indicating they are not fit for purpose and only persist due to a lack of institutional independence.

COMHDHÁIL THEREFORE MANDATES:

The Vice Presidents for Academic Affairs and Vice President for Postgraduate Affairs, with the support of the Coiste Gnó, to aid Member Organisations (MOs) seeking to engage their institutions in replacing dissertations & theses with more appropriate, research-informed assessments.

COMHDHÁIL FURTHER MANDATES:

That USI/AMLÉ develop a position paper on modern forms of assessment to be used for lobbying purposes. This should use short forms (e.g., summaries, synopses, bullet points) and accessible language so that the output can be shared with government, institutional, and learner stakeholders alike.