



COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS
HEA AUDITED ACCOUNTS 2011
BRIEFING NOTE

The Higher Education Authority

The Higher Education Authority is the statutory (Higher Education Authority Act 1971) funding authority for the universities, institutes of technology and a number of designated higher education institutions. It is also the planning and policy development body for higher education and research in Ireland and has an advisory role to the Minister for Education and Skills throughout the whole of the third-level education sector.

The Mission Statement of the HEA is

"The HEA will support the higher education system to achieve the defining characteristics identified in the vision for the HEA.

We will lead a process of system reform characterised by sound governance, regulation, strategic dialogue, collaboration, consolidation, and potential new relationships with private sector higher education providers.

We will implement HEI funding in a fair and transparent way so that, combined with a process of strong strategic engagement and dialogue, we can ensure well-functioning, well-governed, accessible and accountable HEIs, providing high quality education, training and research.

We will guide national, evidence based higher education policy development through the conduct of research; the development of comprehensive and reliable data sets and the provision of well developed, cogent advice to the Minister for Education and Skills and his Department.

We will act as a strong and objective advocate for higher education and research, publicising benefits and strengths, supporting institutional autonomy and academic freedom, identifying risks and opportunities and arguing the case for higher education and research convincingly to Government, enterprise and society generally.

Our over-riding mission will be that, in performing our functions, we do all that is practicable to ensure that students are engaged in a rich and rewarding higher education experience and emerge as high quality graduates equipped with the skills to pursue successful lives and careers.

Overall performance – 2011 Audited Financial Statements

The HEA manages a very substantial budget encompassing a wide range of activities. In 2011, the HEA was responsible for allocating, managing and controlling income of €1,369M. In addition to funding relating to recurrent, capital and research expenditure, the HEA is also responsible for the Erasmus Programme, the National Office for Equity of Access to Higher Education (Access Office), the Irish Research Councils and a range of European funded programmes.

The full details of spend in individual areas is set out in the audited accounts and the HEA will be happy to assist with any detailed queries arising.