# Protocol for focus group interviews on student success – Students

For distribution

### Introduction

The purpose of these focus group is to ascertain institutional and pedagogical practices that contribute to an environment where student success is achieved in Irish Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). There is a statutory requirement for all Irish higher education institutions to promote Student Success at all levels of the HEI (HEA, 2022, Technological Universities Act 2018, Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science [amendment], 2021, Universities Act 1997). The focus groups will contribute to policy recommendations as part of the larger Student Success Framework (2019) review and will inform the wider sector of specific practices and challenges in HEI’s.

### Aim

The aim of the interviews is to evaluate Student Success, as an individual holistic concept, and how it is being supported, measured and integrated into HEI from a key stakeholder perspective.

What is the perception and reality of student success in Irish higher education? The information gathered and other research will be used to create a national report with recommendations about the key practices in HEIs on an institutional and pedagogic level that are evidenced based and support student success. Ultimately the work will support all institutions to adopt high-impact strategies and practices for success within their student cohort. This work will be informed by focus groups, interviews and a survey instrument available to all students in higher education.

### Procedure for focus groups and interviews

Broadly, these will take the form of having participants take part in a semi-structured interview format, combining a pre-established set of questions for the moderator to pose in group setting, with the opportunity to explore questions, themes or responses in more detail depending on the context and progression of individuals or groups. All the sessions will take place online over late February to early April.

What is the key information that needs to be gathered (indicative questions)?

* What does ‘Student Success’ mean to you?
* How is success measured:   
  1) by you  
  2) by your institution?
* What specific practices contribute to student success (institutional – pedagogical)?
* What are the metrics of success? How is it measured and evidenced?
* What are the main challenges faced by you in achieving success?
* By your classmates?

What documentation would be distributed to each focus group for preparation for the session?

* Informed consent will be required from all participants.