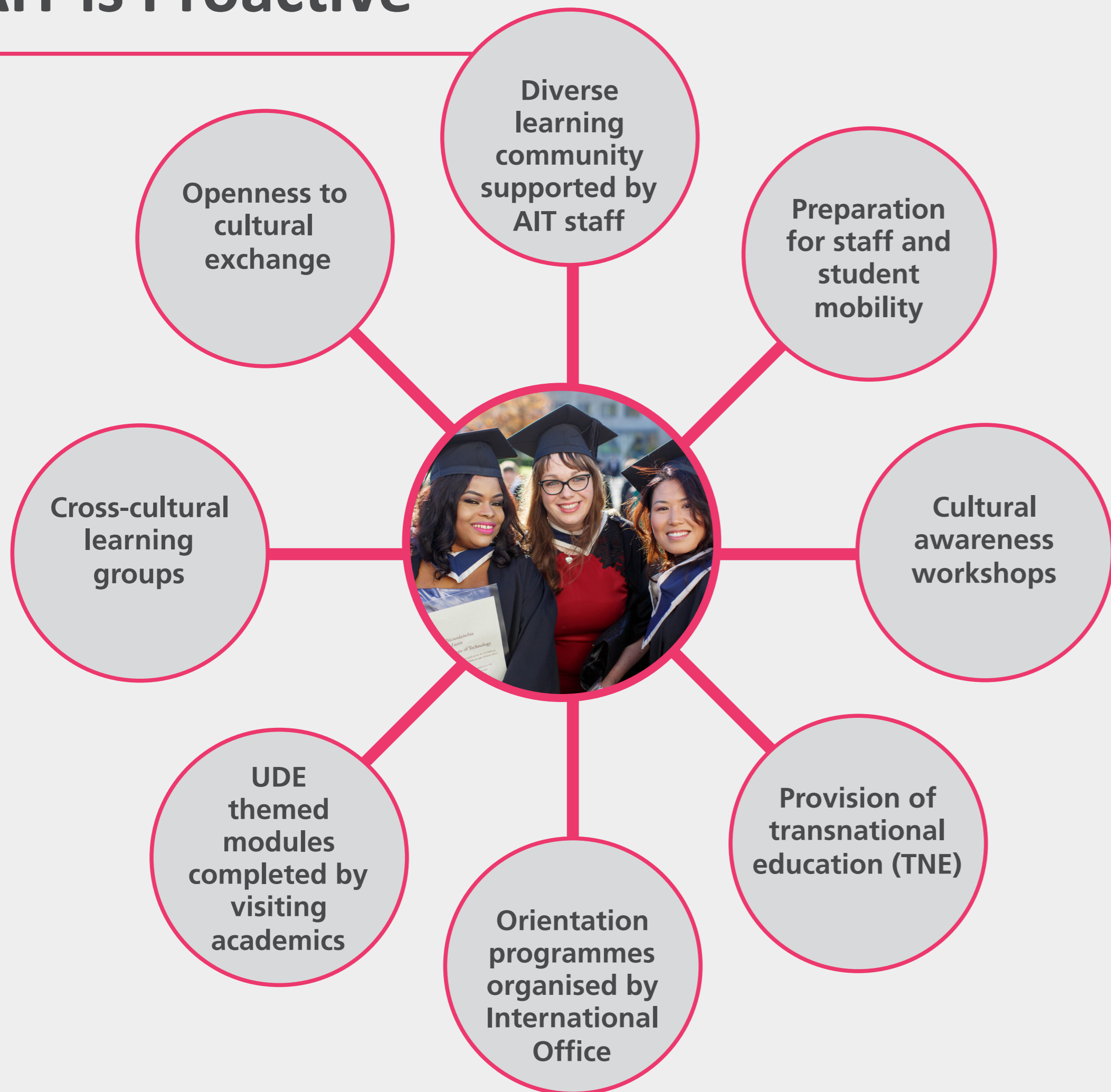# A Strategic and Collaborative Approach to Internationalisation at Athlone Institute of Technology

Eimear Kelly, Catherine O'Donoghue, Nuala Harding and Mary Simpson

International Office
Academic Faculty
Learning & Teaching Unit

AIT
Connect & Discover

AIT is Proactive

- Diverse learning community supported by AIT staff
- Preparation for staff and student mobility
- Cultural awareness workshops
- Provision of transnational education (TNE)
- Orientation programmes organised by International Office
- UDE themed modules completed by visiting academics
- Cross-cultural learning groups
- Openness to cultural exchange

AIT is Inclusive

- Curricula incorporate UDE principles
- Celebration of cultural festivals
- Student-run international society
- Cultural trips and experiences
- Internationalisation at home
- Internationalised curricula
- Building a strong global community
- Recognised as a College of Sanctuary

AIT is Responsive

- Focused team building workshops
- Targeted support for international students
- Provision of English support classes
- Academic writing support
- Development of academic culture
- Diversity recognised as strengthening interactions
- Learning and Teaching programmes are UDE based
- Globally aware community

Internationalisation in Higher Education

"The intentional process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of post-secondary education, in order to enhance the quality of education and research for all students and staff, and to make a meaningful contribution to society"(European Parliament, 2015 p. 29).

Internationalisation at AIT

Creating Internationalisation
- Create a curriculum to prepare for global participation by students;
- Facilitate mobility;
- Build relationships;
- Increase knowledge of other cultures.
(European Parliament, 2015; Knight, 2013)

Strategic goals
- Enhance the international profile of the institute;
- Foster an inclusive environment;
- Embrace diversity;
- Equip staff appropriately to address the needs of an internationally diverse student community.
(AIT, 2014 p.43)

Transnational Education
- Devise and accredit programmes for delivery in partner institutions overseas;
- Develop and maintain partnerships with institutions overseas;
- Create and deliver online English language courses to partner institutions.
(Stafford & Taylor, 2016).

Learning and Teaching
- Add targeted supports to learners who need them;
- Incorporate principles of Universal Design for Education (UDE) in all new curricula;
- Internationally focused in teaching, research and knowledge exchange.
(AIT, 2014 p.43)

Staff Feedback

Cultural Awareness
"Great to have practical examples and hear other people's experiences (in cultural awareness workshops)."

"Cultural awareness sessions are very informative and relevant."

Universal Design for Education (UDE)
"By applying the principles (of UDE) I can easily make my classes more inclusive."

"Universal Design (for Education) has helped me to accommodate and support all learners."

Student Feedback

English support classes
"Helps improve my English for my study."

"Makes me confident in my abilities."

"I have a better understanding of what lecturers explain in class."

International Society
"A chance to meet people of different backgrounds and religions."

"Feels like home."

"A place to meet new friends."

References

Athlone Institute of Technology, 2014. Strategic Plan 2014 -2018. [online] Available at: https://www.ait.ie/uploads/downloads/AIT-e-strategic-plan-2014-2018.pdf [Accessed 4th October 2017].

Department of Education and Skills, 2016. Irish Educated Globally Connected: An International Education Strategy for Ireland, 2016-2020. [online] Available at https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/International-Education-Strategy-For-Ireland-2016-2020.pdf [Accessed 4th October 2017].

European Parliament, 2015. Internationalisation of Higher Education. [online] Available at: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2015/540370/IPOL_STU(2015)540370_EN.pdf [Accessed 18th October 2017].

Knight, J., 2013. The changing landscape of higher education internationalisation – for better or worse? Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education 17(3) [online] Available at: http://srhe.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13603108.2012.753957?scroll=top&needAccess=true#.WgxV2Fu0O70 [Accessed 15th November 2017].

ERASMUS+ 30 YEARS | Athena SWAN Member | hr HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH | AIT Learning and Teaching Unit Aonad Foghlama agus Teagaisc | Places of Sanctuary | THE TIMES THE SUNDAY TIMES GOOD UNIVERSITY GUIDE 2018 INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY OF THE YEAR