Press release

Government considers next steps to increase number of healthcare and veterinary college places

From [Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (/en/organisation/department-of-higher-education-innovation-and-science/)](/en/organisation/department-of-higher-education-innovation-and-science/); Department of Health; Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
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Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science Simon Harris, Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly and Minister for Agriculture Charlie McConalogue have today announced a number of options to expand third level places for healthcare and veterinary medicine.

The Higher Education Authority was tasked by the Department of Further and Higher Education to establish how additional capacity might be provided in healthcare and veterinary medicine.

The report has found, with investment, an additional 208 doctors, 692 nurses, 196 pharmacists, 63 dentists and 230 vets could potentially be trained annually.

These options could result in an increase of up to 5,000 in total third-level enrolments in these disciplines. This increase is subject to a forthcoming process which will now begin to cross-reference available options with the ongoing demand in the veterinary and health care areas and to agree costs and funding.

Speaking today, Minister Harris said:

"This is an important moment for the delivery of healthcare and veterinary medicine. Through a very inclusive and expansive process, the government has identified a significant increase in capacity across these key disciplines.

"My department will now work with the Departments of Health and Agriculture to bring these proposals forward. Each will be subjected to a process and investment will be subject to the normal procedures.

"However, this could lead to an unprecedented change in the number of graduates in these key skills areas in the coming years and will help the health and agriculture sector begin to address workforce shortage issues."

Minister Donnelly said:

"I have set the ambitious target of doubling the number of student places across the full range of essential health professions to meet our health workforce and patient care needs.

"We cannot continue to rely on recruitment from around the world to meet the healthcare workforce needs of our growing and aging population. This planned student expansion is an important step in addressing the needs of our health service and achieving health workforce sustainability for Ireland."

Minister McConalogue said:

"Veterinary practitioners play a unique and important role in Irish society extending beyond their critical role in agriculture, to providing their expertise to the benefit of the wider society in area of pet health, animal welfare, food safety, public health in the context of zoonoses and antimicrobial resistance and in certification to support international trade.

"In terms of delivering increased capacity in veterinary medicine, it is encouraging to see such a high level of interest from our HEI's. I look forward to continued analysis of the options identified which will inform the number of places to move forward with and the locations selected for any potential new veterinary schools.

"My department will work with colleagues in the Departments of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, Health and Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform with a view to agreeing an approach to be brought to Government for decision in the very near future."

The government agreed to advance the process with investment to be considered in the context of Budgetary processes and the National Development Plan review. Individual projects will be subject to the usual appraisals to ensure value for money.

Breakdown of places

Medicine

HEI	Programme	New or expansion of existing	number of annual places at full roll out	number of places across all years at full roll out

UG	Rural & Remote Graduate Entry Medicine	New	48	192
RCSI	Undergraduate Medicine	Expansion	40	240
UCC	Undergraduate Medicine	Expansion	20	100
UCD	Undergraduate Medicine	Expansion	65	390
UCD	Graduate Entry	Expansion	5	20
UL	Graduate Entry Medicine	Expansion	30	120
Total			208	1,062

Nursing

HEI	Programme	New or expansion of existing	number of annual places at full roll out	number of places across all years at full roll out
UCC	Graduate Entry Nursing	New	85	170
UCC	Graduate Entry Conversion	New	15	30
UG	Graduate Entry Nursing	New	20	40
MU	General Nursing	New	100	400

HEI	Programme	New or expansion of existing	number of annual places at full roll out	number of places across all years at full roll out
DCU	Post-registration General Nursing conversion	New	30	60
DCU	Graduate Entry General Nursing	New	20	40
ATU	BSc General Nursing	Expansion	108	432
DCU	Undergraduate Nursing	Expansion	30	120
DkIT	Nursing – mixed	Expansion	46	184
MTU	General Nursing	Expansion	60	240
SETU	Nursing – mixed	Expansion	25	100
TUS	General Nursing	Expansion	90	360
UL	Nursing – mixed	Expansion	31	124
UG	General Nursing & Midwifery	Expansion	24	96
UG	HDip in Midwifery	Expansion	8	16
Total			**692**	**2,412**

Pharmacy

HEI	Programme	New or expansion of existing	number of annual places at full roll out	number of places across all years at full roll out
UG	MPharm	New	75	375
SETU	MPharm	New	40	200

ATU	BSc. Pharmacy/MPharm	New	36	180
RCSI	MPharm	Expansion	10	50
UCC	MPharm	Expansion	35	175
Total			**196**	**980**

Dentistry

HEI	Programme	New or expansion of existing	number of annual places at full roll out	number of places across all years at full roll out
RCSI	BSc Dental Surgery	New	35	175
TCD	Dental Science	Expansion	8	40
UCC	BSc Dental Surgery	Expansion	20	100
Total			**63**	**315**

Veterinary Medicine

HEI	Programme	New or expansion of existing	number of annual places at full roll out	number of places across all years at full roll out

UL	Veterinary Medicine & Surgery	New	90	450
ATU	Veterinary Medicine	New	40	200
SETU	Veterinary Medicine	New	40	200
UCD	Veterinary Medicine	Expansion	45	275
UCD	Grad Entry	Expansion	5	20
Total			230	1,145

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