

# CCBS – LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

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13/11/2015 - 20/11/2015



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

Monday 2 November 2015

Education: Cross-Border Education

**Summary:** Mr Flanagan asked Minister O'Dowd to provide assurances to the portability of second level education achievements. Mr O'Dowd advised the Member that Universities will be able to read across and that educational achievements will be portable for Universities in the Republic of Ireland.

**Mr Flanagan:** Go raibh maith agat, a LeasCheann Comhairle. Gabhaim buíochas leis an Aire as a ráiteas. What assurance can the Minister give, particularly with regard to the continuing existence of barriers to cross-border mobility at undergraduate level, that this system will indeed be portable, compatible and recognisable in the rest of Ireland for people who want to go to university where stipulations are in place that they need a certain standard of GCSE English or maths?

**Mr O'Dowd:** The same rule applies perhaps, as I said to Mr Craig, in relation to universities in the South of Ireland: they will only be going down as far as GCSEs for the very-high demand topics. Universities will be able to read this across, as has been the case before. We are not making any changes to our scores in that sense, so universities in the South will understand our GCSE scores, and they will be comparable to whatever other measures they have in place for entry to their courses.

As the Member will be aware, discussions will continue with university organisations in the South to ensure that our qualifications are given the due credit that they deserve. Significant progress has been made over the last number of years.

Indeed, Mr Farry has been involved in those discussions as well. I am aware that discussions are continuing with the Irish Universities Association and within it about how to continue to improve the recognition of our qualifications here to ensure that young people have the ability to travel to either part of the island to continue their education.

**Source:** <http://data.niassembly.gov.uk/HansardXml/plenary-17-11-2015.pdf>



18 November 2015

**Seanad Debates – A Fresh Start: Stormont House Agreement Implementation Plan**

**Summary:** During a Seanad Debate, Michael Mullins welcomed the Agreement reached in Northern Ireland and paid tribute to those involved, including Minister Charles Flanagan. Michael Mullins welcomed the task force that will be established to identify priorities for combating cross-border organised crime.

**Michael Mullins:** I join colleagues in welcoming the agreement reached in Northern Ireland last night. It is the culmination of ten weeks of very hard work. I pay tribute to everybody involved, including the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Deputy Charles Flanagan.

The agreement builds on the Stormont House Agreement and is, hopefully, a significant step in normalising politics in Northern Ireland and society generally. The agreement is a credible roadmap for the implementation of many aspects of the Stormont House Agreement, tackling the continuing impact of paramilitarism, reconciling of all peoples on the island and bringing about of greater economic prosperity. We all welcome the fact that a joint agency task force will be established to identify priorities for combating cross-Border organised crime and to oversee operational co-ordination. This will be given additional resources.

This is an issue that has been raised by many Members in the House. It is causing serious damage to economic life north and south of the Border and it is an issue that must be tackled. Hopefully, the agreement will bring about greater prosperity and reconciliation on the island and the normalisation of politics even further.

**Source:** <https://www.kildarestreet.com/sendebates/?id=2015-11-18a.30&s=cross-border#g37>