

From the Office of the Minister



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**Enterprise, Trade
and Investment**

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Paul Maskey MLA
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 May 2010

Dear Mr Maskey,

FOLLOW UP TO DETI ASSEMBLY QUESTION ON 10 MAY 2010

As a follow-on to a question posed about what discussions I have had with the Minister for Employment and Learning on linkages with Queen's University and the University of Ulster to translate innovation into businesses during DETI Questions on 10 May, you had asked me to detail the amount of money that my Department has spent on research and development in the further education sector. As I did not have all of the relevant information to hand at the time I am now writing to you in response to your query.

Invest NI currently supports research and development in the further education sector through its Innovation Voucher programme.

£2.7m has been allocated to deliver the Innovation Voucher programme over a three year timescale. The programme aims to enable small Northern Ireland registered enterprises to access knowledge and expertise from the HE and FE sector, to develop solutions to business issues.

Since the launch of the pilot programme in June 2008 there have been 707 applications resulting in the award of 377 vouchers.

161 projects have been completed and there are an additional 65 projects in progress. This represents a financial commitment of £1.2m.

The Northern Ireland colleges are the Knowledge Partners for 51 projects (22% of the overall completed or in progress projects). This equates to a commitment of £275,000.

I shall be sending copies of this response to Anna Lo MLA, who tabled the original question, to those MLAs who asked supplementaries to the original question and to the Speaker. I have also asked for a copy to be placed in the Assembly Library.

*Yours sincerely,
Arlene Foster*

ARLENE FOSTER MLA

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment