**Tuesday November 14th**

**Minister Mitchell O’Connor announces €6.3m allocation to support Technological University development and higher education landscape restructuring**

The Minister for Higher Education, Mary Mitchell O’Connor T.D. today (Tuesday, 14 November) announced the allocation of €6.3 million in funding in support of  the ongoing restructuring of the higher education landscape including the development of consortia projects seeking to progress to designation as Technological Universities.

Minister Mitchell O’Connor said “The landscape of Irish higher education is significantly evolving. The Government continues to back this progressive evolution in higher education by all available means not least in a practical funding manner.  The latest funding allocation includes €4 million in ring-fenced funding secured in Budget 2017 for the development of technological universities and further significant funding has been secured in this regard in Budget 2018 also.”

She went on to say “The total €6.3 million in funding announced today will continue to support six significant projects. These projects will build national capacity, improve teaching and learning, the student experience, build skills supply and further strengthen the interface between higher education and industry that has been so important to Ireland’s economic recovery.

In relation to the Technological University development projects, this significant funding is of very practical assistance to consortia seeking Technological University designation. Taken together with the progression of the Technological Universities Bill, which I am bringing to Committee Stage in the Dáil tomorrow, this is further testament to the Government’s committment to make the long-sought concept of Technological Universities a reality”.

In addition to the four Technological University development consortia, the other landscape restructuring projects to which further funding has been allocated comprises the incorporation of Dublin City University, St Patrick’s College Drumcondra, Mater Dei Institute and Church of Ireland College of Education. This landscape project has created a “New DCU” pluralist teacher education centre of international relevance and scale. Finally, there is the ongoing restructuring project which has seen the successful integration of Shannon College of Hotel Management with NUI Galway and the progression of an agreement between NUI Galway and St. Angela’s College Sligo, whereby these institutions aim to create an internationally recognised centre of excellence in teacher education on Ireland’s western seaboard.

ENDS

**Notes for Editors**

The 2012 National Strategy for Higher Education provided for substantial changes to the landscape of Irish higher education including reform of teacher education, improved institutional alignment and the development of Technological Universities.

Technological Universities will have an emphasis on the social and economic development of their regions through an emphasis on programmes at levels 6 to 8 on the National Qualifications Framework and the development and use of new knowledge through industry-focused research. Technological Universities will also enhance the pivotal national role traditionally played by the Institutes of Technology in facilitating access and progression by a wide range of students.

The National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) is a system of ten levels used to describe the Irish qualifications system. The NFQ is based on standards of knowledge, skill and competence and incorporates awards made for all kinds of learning, wherever it is gained (see: [www.nfq-qqi.com/](http://www.nfq-qqi.com/)).

**2017 Funding Call in support of Higher Education landscape restructuring**

The HEA invited submissions for funding support in respect of the costs arising from landscape reform as part of the implementation of the National Strategy for Higher Education in October 2017. The total funding available under this call in academic year 2017/18 is c. €6.3 million. This call follows the allocation of similar landscape reconfiguration funding by the HEA in 2015/16. Further information and landscape reform is available on the HEA website at: <http://hea.ie/policy/he-reform/the-changing-landscape/>

**Funding Allocations by Consortia 2017–2018**

The 2017 - 2018 allocations are set out in the Table under. Expenditure will be subject to ongoing monitoring, review and formal approval by the HEA.

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| **Higher Education Landscape Funding Allocations 2017–2018 (€m)** |
| **Technological University Consortia** | **HEA to date** | **2017–2018** |
| Connacht Ulster Alliance | €0.92 | €1.20 |
| Munster Technological University | €1.27 | €1.03 |
| TU4Dublin | €2.62 | €2.26 |
| Technological University for the South-East | €0.57 | €0.15 |
| **Institutional Mergers** |  |  |
| DCU Incorporation  | €9.91 | €1.50 |
| NUIG Incorporation  | €1.65 | €0.15 |
| **Totals** | **€16.94m** | **€6.29m** |

**Technological Universities Consortia**

There are currently four consortia of Institutes of Technology engaged with the process seeking to become designated as technological universities:

* **Connacht Ulster Alliance (CUA)**, consisting of Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology, Institute of Technology Sligo, and Letterkenny Institute of Technology
* **Munster Technological University (MTU)**, consisting of Cork Institute of Technology and Institute of Technology Tralee
* **TU4Dublin**, consisting of Dublin Institute of Technology, Institute of Technology Tallaght and Institute of Technology Blanchardstown
* **Technological University for the South-East (TUSE)**, consisting of Waterford Institute of Technology and Institute of Technology Carlow.

**Technological Universities Bill 2015**

The legislative process for the Technological Bill 2015 commenced in January 2014 and had passed Committee Stage when the 31st Dáil was dissolved in February 2016.

As a result of a number of issues raised regarding the Technological Universities Bill, the Department of Education and Skills, as directed by Minister Bruton, undertook consultations with stakeholders, including Trade Unions and as part of that process, a clarification document was agreed between the Department, Teachers’ Union of Ireland and the Technological Higher Education Association.   TUI members voted to accept the agreement in June 2017 and suspended their industrial action in relation to the development of Technological Universities.  A clarification document also issued to IMPACT as part of this process. The main issues covered during consultation process related to terms and conditions for staff, strengthening the regional remit of a technological university, membership of governing bodies and amendments to the application process for designation as a technological university.

Detailed drafting of the insertions and amendments to the Bill was approved by Government in July 2017 and was progressed in the interim by the Department with the assistance of the Office of the Attorney General. The Insertions and amendments to the Technological Universities 2015 Bill (As initiated) will be brought to Committee Stage in Dáil Éireann on 15 November 2017 by the Minister for Higher Education.