

MUNSTER TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY
Leading, Partnering, Empowering and
Transforming

Report to the Minister for Education and Skills
for Designation of the Munster
Technological University

30 March 2020

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Report to the Minister for Education and Skills for Designation of the Munster Technological University

Introduction

In his letter of 30 September 2019, the Minister for Education and Skills, exercising his powers under sections 35(1) and 35(2) of the Technological Universities Act 2018, set out conditions with which the institutes forming the Munster Technological University Consortium are required to jointly comply in order to meet the eligibility criteria for designation as a technological university under the Act.

This report provides a statement of how, in the view of the governing bodies of the institutes, the conditions set out by the Minister, individually and collectively, have been met and the work that is on-going to create a strong and effective MTU. The Report takes each of the conditions set by the Minister and outlines how the consortium has responded to meet it.

Underlying this report, is the work of hundreds of staff and students of the institutes. Through the work of working groups, town-hall and focus group meetings and other consultative fora, the consortium is in a position to report that it has met the conditions for designation. Furthermore, through this work, a broader and deeper understanding of the mission and vision for the MTU has been developed among staff and students along with a clear sense of the work still needed to be done over the next months, and in some cases years, to achieve our objective – a technological university anchored in the South West of Ireland that will play a leadership role in the strategic development of the region, but with a global outlook and a civic centric value system, participating fully on both the national and international stages.

It is not practical to capture in the report itself all the inputs that have been made in further developing the MTU project. Additional information and evidence, in considerably greater detail, is provided in a separate volume of appendices and addenda. The latter are necessary to segregate data and information subject to GDPR requirements.

Condition 1

Progress towards the preparation of an overarching statement of the strategic purpose of, and vision for, the proposed MTU to be demonstrated, as proposed by the advisory panel, through the completion of a profile statement for MTU and the identification of the benefits of the new institution, demonstrating a commitment to the establishment of a single cohesive, integrated and unitary multi-campus TU.

1.1. The South West Region

Cork Institute of Technology and the Institute of Technology Tralee are located in the South West region of Ireland - a region which, in many respects, is a microcosm of modern Ireland. To the east, it is anchored by Cork city (Ireland's second-largest urban centre), a nexus for foreign direct investment, indigenous business development, and cultural and artistic expression. To the west, it is more rural in character and is anchored by a number of independent urban towns, situated in areas which feature a high concentration of microenterprises, a number of niche and large-scale enterprises, low population density and a richness in culture and heritage. Many of these towns operate as significant local employment and service centres for a large rural hinterland. This is a region with a wide geographic spread. It has a population of 690,575 (2016) which is well educated and very engaged with the higher education sector (33,408 fulltime and part-time students in higher education in 2017). Under every scenario used by the Central Statistics Office (CSO) to develop projections, the population of the South West is forecast to grow significantly over coming years as shown in Appendix 1 Fig 2.

The South West, connected by the N22, features the largest economy in Ireland outside of the Dublin region, having significant strengths in pharma, med-tech, engineering, financial services, information and communications technology, agri-tech, tourism, manufacturing, food and life sciences. CSO data (from Q4 2019) reveals that this translates to a workforce of 351,400 employees and a labour force participation rate of 61.9%. From CSO data from 2017, it is estimated that these employees are distributed across 35,990 micro enterprises, 2,431 small enterprises, 409 medium-size enterprises and 57 large enterprises.

1.2. MTU - Role in the Region

The South West Region offers a counterbalance to the overconcentration of development activity in Dublin and has been targeted in Project Ireland 2040 for significant expansion of its population and enterprise base, as well as for sustainable rural development and renewal. As a consequence, demand for access to higher education will rise significantly over the next 10 years in particular. This is illustrated in the chart in Appendix 1 Fig 2 which displays the projected number of 18-year-olds in the South West to 2036, under all CSO planning scenarios. As is the case with many developed countries, the number of older people resident in the region will also rise significantly over time, a development which MTU will need to address proactively in terms of meeting their education and training needs. In addition, approx. 14% of the population of the South West held nationalities other than Irish in 2016, a proportion that is likely to grow if Ireland's economy continues to perform strongly.

Taking account of all the factors referenced above, the strategic purpose of MTU is to play a leadership role in the economic, social and cultural development of the South West region

through connected, collaborative, responsive and inclusive education, engagement, research and innovation. While the primary focus of MTU will be on the region, its success will be dependent on having a national and international outlook. The challenges that exist globally, from climate change to issues of health and equality, all have reflections in, and implications for, the South West region.

As a technological university, the contribution of MTU to the region will be complementary to that of the existing traditional universities in the region, which have a stronger focus on fundamental research and a lesser focus on engagement with industry and community. MTU will collaborate with these universities as well as aiming to be the partner of choice with other HEIs nationally and internationally, particularly in the context of the emerging European Universities sector.

A particular opportunity for MTU, and a differentiator from the current set of higher education institutions in Ireland, will lie in the differences between its campus offerings, identities and cultures, and the cohesive integration of these differences into the character and identity of a single, unitary University. MTU will harness, and scale up, what CIT and IT Tralee currently do well. Both institutes are student-centred, with a strong focus on student support and student engagement. MTU teaching, learning, assessment and student engagement will be underpinned by connections with people. MTU will build on current student and staff coaching and mentoring initiatives to build a culture where the value and values of human connectedness create an optimal environment for both student and staff to fully and actively engage in learning.

MTU will build on its current diversity of learners, who will access lifelong learning and research, ranging from apprenticeships to PhDs, across NFQ levels 6-10, at their own pace, anywhere and anytime, delivered in a wide variety of flexible modes. MTU will have a strategic focus on developing learners for life and for work and building graduate capacity for continuous growth and development in a fast-changing world. MTU will build on its tradition of enhancing access, transfer and progression opportunities for learners. These developments will be particularly important for an engaged university serving a population across both urban and rural environments, with demographic trends as referenced above.

The MTU curriculum will build on the institutes' connectedness and collaboration with community and enterprise, including with small and medium sized enterprises for which the institutes have been a particular source of support. It will do this through embedding work and lifelong learning activities in the curriculum, with work placement in private industry and public services, curricular and co-curricular community engagement and research opportunities, embedded within programme design and delivery. It will maintain and build on intensive and broad-based links with businesses, industry sectors, public services, NGO enterprises, community and voluntary organisations, professional bodies and alumni to inform curriculum development, teaching and learning, assessment and research.

MTU will seek to maximise its societal impact and support the development of a socially inclusive region that targets equality of opportunity and a better quality of life for all of its people. MTU will be central to supporting sustainable growth in the region. It will strengthen the social fabric of the South West, and address rural decline and social isolation by working

to make the South West a “sticky region” in which students and graduates choose to remain and realise their full potential in their careers and within their communities. It will also enhance the attractiveness of the South West for people from countries other than Ireland who are seeking a wonderful place in which to live and work. The development of MTU’s “digital university” capabilities will facilitate strategic, data-informed decision making, enhance connectedness with all stakeholders and underpin development of skills to support the digital economy and balanced regional growth.

MTU will serve a region of Ireland particularly rich in Irish culture, language, music and the arts in a uniquely beautiful and pure environment. MTU will seek to harness the value of Irish arts and culture in the knowledge that socially vibrant towns, cities and regions are economically successful. MTU will support the maintenance and sustainable development of all that is best in the region as well as promoting these qualities and values to local, national and international students and staff. It will attract and develop creative industries while also optimising the development of traditional areas such as tourism, food and agriculture.

While rooted regionally, MTU will offer an expanded international orientation and portfolio of international activity to its students and stakeholders. It will seek designation as a European University as part of the European Universities Initiative and, in so doing, will bring its students together with those of other like-minded universities to create a new generation of creative Europeans able to cooperate across languages, borders and disciplines to address societal challenges and skills shortages on a Europe-wide and global basis.

Appendix 2 contains three currently active examples that serve to illustrate what is possible in terms of engagement and the benefits to be derived from the development of MTU in the South West Region. Extending from these examples, MTU will provide a wide range of benefits for the South West that, individually, IT Tralee and CIT could not provide. These are set out in tabular form in Appendix 3, with reference also to the national strategic outcomes impacted.

1.3. Realising MTU Strategic Purpose

In seeking to realise its strategic purpose, while supporting the achievement of national strategic objectives (NSO) and the South-West Regional Enterprise Plan, MTU’s academic domains will be centred on the set of broad thematic areas identified in the table below.

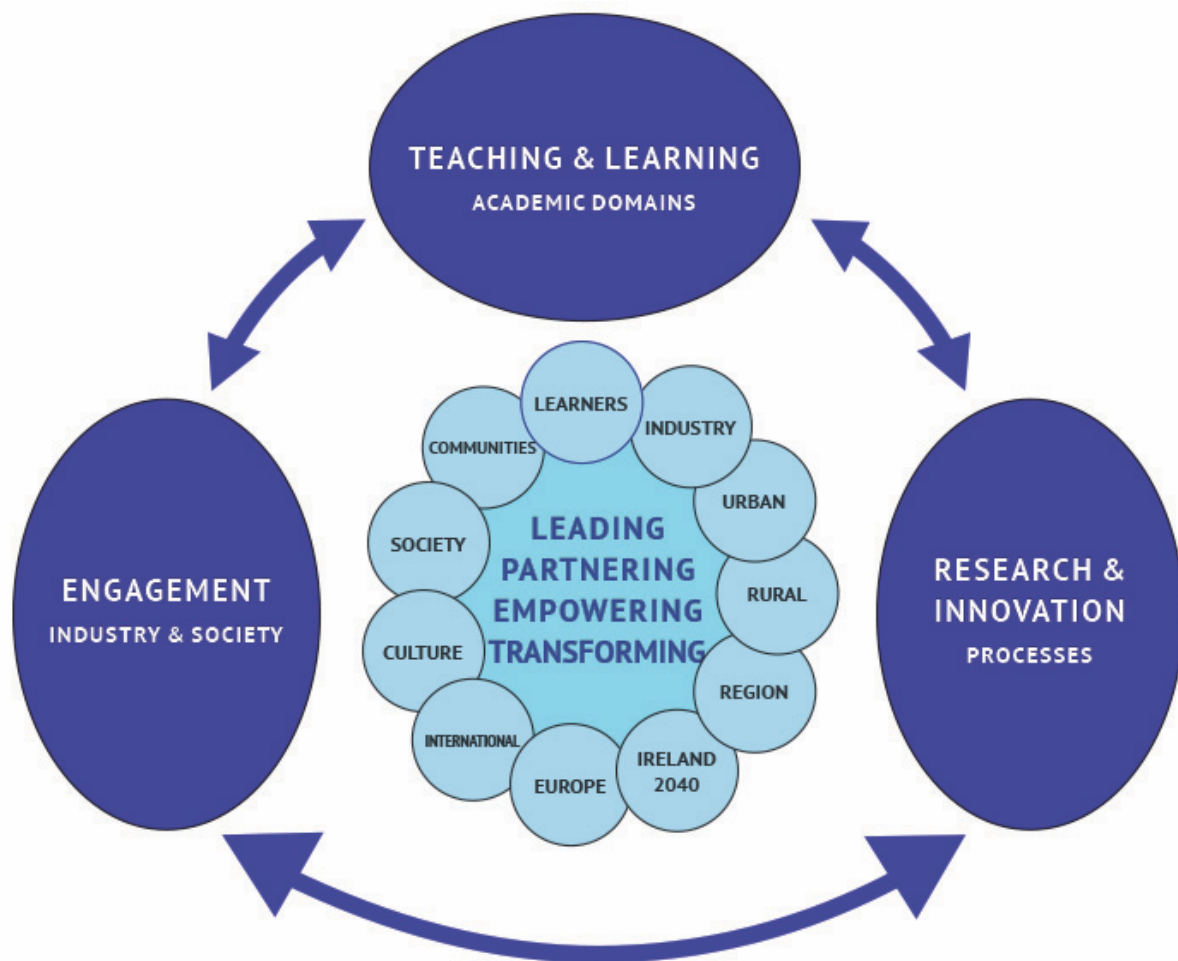
Academic Domains	Strategic Alignment
Creative & Performing Arts & Media	Central to MTU's social and cultural contribution, strongly supported by its constituent colleges of art and music respectively.
Business	Developing the talented graduates needed across all areas of business, with a strong focus on entrepreneurship and innovation.
Engineering (including Maritime)	Delivering the graduates, engagement, and research and innovation required by the wide range of STEM organisations based in the South West. Producing the maritime professionals required by the merchant navy and related sectors from the National Maritime College of Ireland, a constituent college of MTU.
Health & Social Sciences	Supporting the provision of key services by public and private sectors, NGO enterprises, community and voluntary organisations, in a socially inclusive region.
Science & Informatics	Supporting the life sciences and ICT industry sectors which are vital to the future development of the South West.

MTU will focus on establishing a number of region-wide research entities of greater depth, scale, reach and impact than those which currently exist in CIT and IT Tralee. The areas listed below will be prioritised in this context.

MTU Research Fields	Strategic Alignment
Information & Communications Technology	Supporting the demand for research and innovation in cyber-physical systems, internet of things, information and operational technologies, cyber security, artificial intelligence, data science and analytics, and agri-tech.
Health, Wellbeing & Food	Supporting the industry demand for research and innovation in Health Sciences, Food, Health and Nursing
BioSciences	Supporting the BioPharmaChem industry demand for research and innovation in the Life Sciences, including food and pharma
Energy, Climate & Sustainability Manufacturing & Materials	Supporting the industry demand for research and innovation in Sustainable Infrastructure, Maritime Research, Agri-Technology and the Circular Bioeconomy and Pharma.
Services & Business Processes	Supporting the industry demand for research and innovation in Healthy Living, Entrepreneurship Education.
Humanities	Supporting research and innovation in the Creative and Performing Arts, Languages & Intercultural Studies and Social Studies

The interrelationships between all the above-described facets of MTU are summarised in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1 Graphic representation of the strategic purpose of MTU



1.4. MTU Strategic Trajectory

The Higher Education System Performance Framework provides a useful basis upon which to plot the development trajectory of MTU over coming years. The respective performance profiles of CIT and IT Tralee are shown in Appendix 4. It is clear that the performance profiles of both institutions are highly complementary to each other. IT Tralee is currently stronger in the areas of full-time mature entrants and international student recruitment while CIT is currently stronger in research and enrolment of flexible learners. Across all other headings, performance levels are relatively similar.

Over the next five years, the unified profile of MTU can be expected to show very significant development in all profile headings associated with research. In addition, growth in the recruitment of international students and flexible learners can be anticipated as MTU exploits its enhanced brand and unique region-wide reach.

Over a ten-year period, it is reasonable to expect that MTU will achieve solid progress under all headings. Research intensity will increase in line with legislative requirements and development of the South West while, as MTU extends its influence into every community in the region, it is reasonable to expect that more learners from non-traditional backgrounds, more “flexible learners” and more learners from international backgrounds will be recruited.

Level 6/7 enrolment trends will vary by disciplinary area as MTU evolves its programme portfolio in line with changing societal and industry requirements.

1.5 Summary

In summary, MTU will play a leadership role in the strategic development of the South West region, and, in so doing, it will adopt a global outlook and a civic centric value system. MTU will anchor the development of the South West region, and be anchored in the region, while participating fully on both the national and international stages.

Condition 2

A detailed process of engagement with all stakeholder groups – internal and external - relating to the development of a clear shared vision and mission for the proposed TU as a single cohesive and unitary multi-campus TU and a plan for the continuation of this engagement prior to the establishment of MTU and post-designation.

This section outlines the internal and external engagement undertaken by the MTU Consortium and how it is proposed to continue that engagement post designation. The process of engagement and consultation across internal and external stakeholders has been extensive. Appendix 5 - MTU Internal and External Engagement provides supporting evidence relating to the stakeholders, the key outcomes of the consultation/engagement with respect to MTU and, where possible, how the engagement and consultation is contributing, or will contribute, to the delivery of the vision and mission of MTU. The role of external stakeholders has been a specific focus of the MTU project, while a dedicated focus has also been placed on issues relating to the multi-campus nature of MTU and the role played by internal and external stakeholders. Additionally, meetings have taken place across all facets of MTU and the details of these can be found in Appendix 16.

The MTU Consortium has adopted a communications plan based on maximum sharing of information of the project with staff, students and external stakeholders and is responsive to stakeholder needs as the project progresses.

2.1 Internal Engagement

While the MTU Consortium is focused, in the first instance, on meeting the Minister's conditions, the Consortium is also cognisant of the need for a long-term focus and continued development of the University.

A detailed process of engagement is being realised through the setting up, and ongoing work, of 21 working groups comprising of almost 300 staff members of both institutes (182 individuals) and additional representatives of the Students' Unions. Addendum 1 outlines the working groups and their memberships. There has also been a stepped-up level of engagement with staff unions and an IR specialist has been appointed, dedicated to the MTU.

A Joint MTU Governing Bodies Steering Group has been established and this forum provides an important governance link to both governing bodies and realises the working together approach of MTU at the highest level. The MTU Project Leadership Group reports to the Steering Group. See section 3 for more detail on how the governance of the MTU project is structured.

To broaden engagement with the MTU vision and mission beyond those directly involved in working groups, surveys were conducted with staff and students relating to their perceptions of, and expectations for, MTU (see Addendum 2 and 3 for summaries). In addition to the working groups, there are regular meetings of the joint executives of the institutes and joint meetings of senior management. These engagements have provided collaborative opportunities for "Acting As One" and have also empowered managers to cascade communications to their teams. This has resulted in a better, shared understanding and

ownership of the vision and mission of MTU and a commitment to the establishment of a single cohesive, integrated and unitary multi-campus technological university. Appendix 6 “Acting as One” Inventory outlines the collaborative projects and initiatives currently underway.

It is envisaged that the working group approach will continue up to and beyond designation, adjusted as circumstance require and as the MTU develops and integration across campuses broadens and deepens.

The involvement of students in the development of MTU has been central. Students’ Union Presidents from CIT and IT Tralee are members of the MTU Project Leadership Group and the Joint MTU Governing Bodies Steering Group, enabling them to participate fully with the project and lead areas of work, which is critical for the future of MTU. Working with the Students’ Union, MTU information stands have been made available across all campuses to allow students ask questions and receive updates on MTU.

Both Presidents, together, met with staff and students across all campuses in November and December 2019, with follow-up sessions planned for April 2020. Additional staff briefings are ongoing, being conducted at Academic Department and Functional Unit level. Any of these processes are of course now subject to requirements of the Covid-19 crisis.

The MTU website (mtu.ie) has become the primary repository of project information. A weekly update is e-mailed to staff and students and is also available at www.mtu.ie. This provides project highlights, key outcomes and upcoming plans. The minutes of the MTU Project Leadership Group meetings are also made available via mtu.ie on a weekly basis. A private section of the website has been created for staff and students only. Here internal stakeholders can view documentation relating to working groups: minutes, discussion documents and papers.

2.2 Industrial Relations Issues

The development of MTU as outlined in this report will require considerable effort and commitment from all staff at all levels in the institutes, and in the MTU once designated. Apart from the statutory guarantees to staff regarding their terms and conditions, the management of the institutes is committed to consultation with all staff and their unions with a view to ensuring that their interests are fully recognised and protected and a high level of shared agreement is achieved for all significant developments. A comprehensive list of issues is not practical but among the academic areas of focus will be –

- The implications for terms and conditions of staff of the development of a comprehensive system of lifelong learning;
- Optimisation of the use of online and digital technology;
- Selective recruitment to increase the proportion of staff who hold PhDs;
- The continuation of the staff-PhD scheme;
- Placing academic staff within workplace domains, and vice versa;
- The operational structure of the MTU.

As of the date of submission of this report, the Teachers Union of Ireland (TUI) have initiated industrial action to the effect that their members are obliged not to co-operate with actions

aimed at the development of MTU. The basis for this action is their view that there is ongoing failure by management to engage meaningfully with the Union in relation to the MTU/TUI Memorandum of Understanding of December 2018. The position of management of the institutes is that they have sought, through regular meetings with the Union, to progress MOU related matters and they continue to be ready to employ institutional and national dispute resolution processes to resolve all outstanding issues with TUI.

Administrative staff in the institutes are represented by the TASS (Technician, Administrative and Support Staff) group of unions. In their response to a draft of this report, the Unions have restated their support for the merger of CIT and ITT which they regard as an opportunity for the next evolution in the institutes of technology. They note that the engagement with management has been a positive experience and that the MTU consortium were the first to establish a TASS Forum. They note that this forum between management and officials and representative from the three unions has met on a regular basis since it was first established and it is where meaningful consultation and communication is shared by both sides. Because of its success this forum has been proposed as a template for trade union/ management forums for the other TU consortia.

2.3 External Engagement

Mindful of the need to ensure that parents, graduates and a wide range of external stakeholders are kept informed of the development of MTU, the Presidents of the Institutes have taken a leadership role. To that end, both Presidents, together, attended the CIT and IT Tralee Graduation Ceremonies in October and November 2019, meeting students, graduates, their families and many external stakeholders. Presidents have also briefed external bodies and groups on the status of MTU. See Appendix 5 for a comprehensive list of external engagement. These activities build on the wide-ranging engagement that formed a key part of the MTU project from earliest days and prior to the advisory panel review in May 2019.

As mentioned above, the MTU website has become the first point of contact for information regarding MTU. The website is promoted on all external communications. Social media channels, Facebook and Twitter are also used to share information and increase awareness of the project. Engagement on social media channels continues to increase.

In September 2018, the project launched the “Together We Are” campaign used primarily at Careers Fairs and recruitment. In April 2019, the campaign “Better Together” was launched which outlined benefits of MTU as well as the mission, vision and values of the new University. In September 2019, the first ever joint prospectus cover was created for the CIT and IT Tralee prospectuses.

In parallel with these activities the MTU Branding project is working on creating the new University brand identity. This project is due for completion by June 2020. Plans are in place for the announcement of designation date and subsequent communications to internal and external stakeholders.

2.4 Post Designation - MTU Engagement Strategy

The engagement structures which are now in place will facilitate the continuation of engagement post designation. With that in mind, MTU has defined its engagement to be a

horizontal activity, integrated within and across teaching and learning, research, innovation and regional development. It adds value for students, staff and researchers as well as delivering impactful value for society. Continued successful engagement will be realised through:

- Ongoing dialogue and consultation with the student body.
- Ongoing dialogue and consultation with staff and their representative bodies/unions.
- Developing approaches sensitive to engagement with micro-industries, SMEs, local community initiatives and hubs (cognisant of the different approaches and supports that might be needed).
- Harnessing the inter and multi-disciplinary expertise of MTU to respond to the complex real-world challenges and opportunities that are identified as an important facet of an engaged University.
- Embedding a University-wide ethos of long-term mutually beneficial relationship building with public, private and not-for profit organisations, through ongoing dialogue and consultation.
- Ensuring that appropriate structures and policies are adopted to provide for recognition of the MTU and its staff for engagement activities and impact.
- Applying a data-driven approach to decision making as articulated in the Technological University Research Network (TURN) report.
- The establishment of an MTU Advisory Council, which will provide valuable external expertise, knowledge, and perspectives, to inform strategy, policy and the future direction of the MTU. See Appendix 7 for MTU Advisory Council Terms of Reference.

Overall, MTU engagement will be responsive, agile, reflective and responsible – delivering on its academic, social and economic responsibilities with external engagement conducted in a manner consistent with the *National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030, Project Ireland 2040* and the *TURN Report*¹.

¹ Higher Education Strategy Group. (2011). *National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030*. Retrieved from Department of Education and Skills website: http://www.heai.ie/files/files/DES_Higher_Ed_Main_Report.pdf; Government of Ireland (2018) Project 2040. National Planning Framework. Dublin. <http://npf.ie/wp-content/uploads/Project-Ireland-2040-NPF.pdf>; The Report of the Technological Universities Research Network to the Department of Education and Skills (otherwise known as the TURN report), *Connectedness & Collaboration through Connectivity* (2019) can be accessed at: <https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Education-Reports/connectedness-collaboration-through-connectivity.pdf>

Condition 3

In order to ensure the attainment of a strategic purpose and vision and to meet the eligibility criteria set out in section 28(1)(k)(i), and in consideration of the factors that were essential to the successful establishment of TU Dublin, the applicant institutes should demonstrate that:-

- I. as soon as possible following the receipt of this letter a joint governing body steering sub-committee has been established for the proposed MTU, made up of the main stakeholders in both institutes, to provide a single focal point, accelerated momentum and strongly evidenced progress in responding to the issues highlighted in the advisory panel's report, including the more integrated, coherent and effective governance structures that are required in preparation for a single legal entity.***
- II. on its establishment this joint steering committee has been ceded appropriate delegated authority from the governing bodies of both institutes to secure an integrated, coherent and effective approach and significant progress in relation to academic, administrative, management and governance matters required for the establishment of a TU.***
- III. the joint steering committee has worked effectively in terms of establishing an integrated, coherent and effective approach to the matters referred to in 3.1 and 3.2 above and a comprehensive and detailed work programme is in place for the steering group up to the point of a decision to grant the application and for the continuation of this work following a decision up to the point that a TU is established.***
- IV. the joint steering committee has been supported from the outset by senior personnel, drawn from the individual institutes and operating across both institutes and external experts, having specialist expertise and knowledge of higher education and mandated by both institutes' governing bodies to provide executive leadership for the steering group's programme of work including through the establishment and operation of appropriate sub-groups.***

3.1 Joint Governing Bodies MTU Steering Group

A Joint Governing Bodies MTU Steering Group (the Steering Group) has been established and is holding regular meetings (Appendix 8 –Terms of Reference).

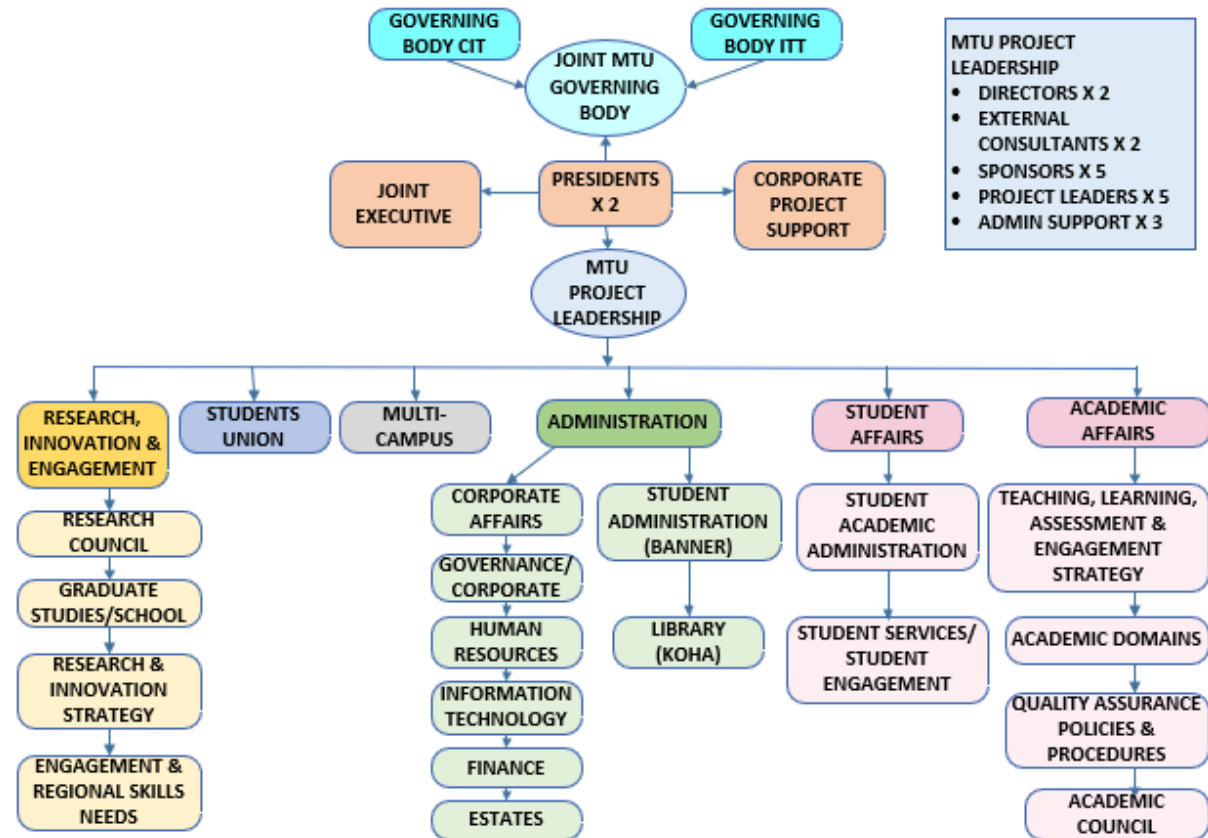
This Group held its first meeting on 16 October 2019 and meets monthly. The Steering Group comprises the main stakeholders drawn from both Governing Bodies (Addendum 4 – Membership of Steering Group) and, subject to ratification of their decisions by the Governing Bodies, has been ceded appropriate authority as required. As demonstrated throughout this Report, the Steering Group has worked effectively in terms of establishing an integrated, coherent and effective approach to establishing the TU and for the continuation of this work following designation. The Steering Group is overseeing the work taking place across the two institutes in accordance with clearly defined structures and processes and in accordance with an overall project plan which can be seen in Appendix 9.

A central element in achieving an *“integrated, coherent and effective approach and significant progress in relation to academic, administrative, management and governance matters required for the establishment of a TU”* has been the setting up of the working groups already

referred to and their responsibility to report on progress to the Steering Group. (Addendum 5 MTU Project Leadership Group membership).

The Steering Group is supported, as required by the Minister, by senior personnel of both institutes and external experts who are providing executive leadership. The latter have specialist expertise and knowledge of higher education and have been mandated by the Governing Bodies of both institutes to provide executive leadership for the programme of work, including through the establishment and operation of appropriate sub-groups (the working groups). An outline of the MTU Project organisation is provided in Figure 3.1.

Figure 2 MTU Project Organisation Chart



3.2 MTU Project Leadership Group

The MTU Project Leadership Group is comprised of ten sponsors who have direct management responsibility for delivery of individual workstreams in the project. Each sponsor is a senior member of the academic or administration management team and the Student Union Presidents. Each workstream also has an assigned project leader who works closely with the sponsors, while directly reporting to the Project Directors to ensure a coherent and well-co-ordinated system of project planning and implementation. The Project Leadership Group meets weekly.

3.3 MTU Joint Executive

An MTU Joint Executive was established by the institutes in early November 2019. The Joint Executive brings together the most senior academic and administrative leaders of the two institutes. Monthly meetings are held sequentially at each campus and chaired by the respective institute President. (Addendum 6 - Summary of Joint Executive Minutes).

The Joint Executive is addressing a number of key strategic initiatives, including processes for programme mapping and new programme development; budget planning and resource allocation; master-planning and corporate areas such as risk management and internal audit. A programme of management training is in development and some elements have commenced. It has also been agreed that, where relevant and feasible within the terms of calls for funding proposals (e.g. Human Capital Initiative, Springboard, etc.), CIT and ITT will collaborate and develop joint funding proposals. A joint submission has already been submitted to HEA on Craft Apprenticeship provision.

3.4 Ongoing Project Support

The corporate workstream is providing ongoing functional support to the project. The HR offices are involved in ongoing communications and collaboration with the staff unions on MTU matters as well as recruitment of resources for work on MTU projects which have already commenced. Additional recruitment of resources will be required over the next few months as additional projects commence across all workstreams. The finance offices are overseeing and managing the MTU budget allocation, budget control and planning for future project budgetary needs. The IT departments are providing access to, and support for, online collaboration tools and conferencing facilities. The Corporate office has provided support for development of an MTU risk register (Addendum 7 - MTU Risk Register).

Condition 4

(i) In order to meet the eligibility criteria set out in section 30(b) of the Act and on the basis of the work of the joint steering group and sub-groups which it establishes the applicant institutes should demonstrate, on the basis of additional and specific data, evidenced information that specific joint planning in relation to a future single unitary institution is effective and advancing and will continue to the point that the TU is established in relation to the management of:-

(a) academic;

(b) financial; and

(c) administrative matters, including human resources, information technology and support services;

(ii) Insofar as academic matters are concerned, the applicant institutes should demonstrate that a process has been put in place, involving academic staff and students, and that progress has been made towards proposing a future approach to programme offerings in anticipation of the establishment of MTU.

This section demonstrates the high degree of joint planning and organisational change that has been, and is continuing to be, undertaken by the MTU Consortium in relation to establishing a future single unitary institution that will be effective in advancing the objectives of the MTU as set out by the Technological Universities Act 2018 and the TURN report. Specific aspects of academic, financial and administrative matters are discussed below, including demonstrating policies and progress with respect to a future joint approach to programme offerings.

4.1 MTU Governance and Management Structures

The Joint Governing Bodies MTU Steering Group has developed a detailed work plan (Appendix 9) which addresses the range of governance areas required to establish the MTU and ensure that structures are in place to govern and manage the University from designation day and to ensure an orderly transition.

The process of forming a single Technological University through the merger of institutes of technology is complex and will take place over many years. Upon designation, MTU will be a single, integrated Technological University and the two institutes will cease to exist. The new university will have one Governing Body, one Academic Council, one President and one Executive.

The precise organisational arrangements for MTU during its early transition phase will be a matter for its Governing Body and the President to determine in close consultation with all staff and their representatives. That said, the appointment of a Senior Vice President to supervise and manage each of the two main campus locations, in Cork and Tralee, reporting to the MTU President, would ensure a high level of co-ordination of policy and practice across the multi-campus TU, as well as accountability to the Governing Body as the MTU develops.

The administrative structures will be integrated from an early date and opportunities will be taken to provide enhanced delivery of services. Plans are in place to amalgamate the administration systems and to have a single financial system, and single HR and payroll

systems on designation day. This is elaborated on later in this section. High level project plans are included in Appendix 10 and full feasibility studies have been concluded. It is expected that each main campus will continue to require financial, HR, student support staff and other functions to be co-located to ensure access and address issues specific to each location during the transition.

Ultimately, a new organisational design will be undertaken under the leadership of the incoming President. This will involve consultation with all staff. Geographic location of different functions will also be part of on-going discussion once a new organisational design is agreed.

4.2 MTU Governing Body

A high-level plan has been developed for the establishment of the first MTU Governing Body and its committees. The plan addresses the development of MTU Governing Body policies and signing authorities aligned to the TU Act 2018.

With the oversight of the Joint Governing Bodies MTU Steering Group, the process of initiating an executive search leading to the nomination of a first President is underway. A presidential nomination sub-committee will undertake this process and report directly to the Joint Governing Bodies MTU Steering Group. Close engagement with the Department of Education and Skills on this process is required.

Membership of the initial Governing Body has been progressed through staff and student fora engagements in relation to the appointment of staff and student members to the first Governing Body. This will include two members elected from the academic staff; administrative staff will also be represented. A draft agenda for the first meeting of the MTU Governing Body and an operational plan for the first six months have been developed. A plan for the establishment of the legal entity of MTU including areas such as insurance, risk management, companies' registration office, bank accounts, Charities Act and Revenue compliance has also been developed.

4.3 Academic Council

Arrangements for establishing an MTU Transitional Academic Council, to take effect on designation day, are well-advanced.

The Academic Councils of the MTU Consortium have met jointly in plenary session to discuss proposals on terms of reference (including roles and functions), quorum, membership and transitional committee requirements and structures. Standing orders will be discussed by respective Academic Councils and subsequently submitted to the Joint Governing Bodies MTU Steering Group for agreement prior to designation. On designation day, the standing orders of the MTU Transitional Academic Council and its membership will be tabled for approval by the Governing Body of the new University. The MTU Transitional Academic Council will operate until the new MTU Academic Council is established – see Addendum 12.

4.4. MTU Graduate School

The MTU Graduate School will be established, and operational from designation day. Its role will be to ensure the quality and standards of postgraduate research and the student

experience. It will lead the development, implementation and oversight of strategy and policy with respect to postgraduate research, supported by the MTU Research Office. The MTU Research Office will assist in the development and implementation of strategies that support, promote and grow the portfolio of graduate programmes.

The MTU Graduate School will report to the MTU Vice-President for Academic Affairs & Registrar. A unified set of MTU Postgraduate Research Policies and Procedures (including Regulations) are under development for approval on designation day by the MTU Transitional Academic Council. The terms of reference for the MTU Graduate School are outlined in Appendix 11.

4.5 Research Council

The MTU Research Council will be established and operational from designation day. It will be a standing committee of the MTU Transitional Academic Council and represent the university research community across all of MTU. It will foster a culture of research across MTU; formulate, consider and make recommendations on research policies and procedures; and oversee quality assurance in respect of research activity. Membership and Terms of Reference are in Appendix 12.

4.6 Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures

The MTU Consortium has agreed core working principles to underpin an MTU QA Policies and Procedures Framework based on the principle that all students will be treated with fairness and consistency, regardless of campus or programme. Therefore, a single set of MTU QA Policies and Procedures, including student regulations, and marks and standards, will be approved by the MTU Governing Body on designation day, on the prior recommendation of the respective Academic Councils of the MTU Consortium and the Joint Governing Bodies MTU Steering Group. A programme of dissemination, awareness raising and training of staff and students with respect to MTU QA Policies, Procedures and Regulations will be in place for designation day. Principles underlying the new MTU academic standards are in Appendix 13.

4.7 Academic Domains and Programme Planning

MTU will provide academic programmes across five broad academic domains which recognize current strengths and reflects regional expectations as referenced in the TURN report. These domains are set out as follows:

- Creative & Performing Arts & Media
- Business
- Engineering (including Maritime)
- Health & Social Sciences
- Science & Informatics

Adoption of an Academic Domain Framework is underpinned by a set of agreed core principles which promote collaboration within and across disciplines, support provision from Levels 6 to 10, and facilitate the growth of new areas (Appendix 14). The pre-designation phase will see the completion of a plan for alignment of the management of academic domains across MTU, to be implemented post-designation (Appendix 14). A joint response to two current HEA funding calls (i.e. the 2020 Springboard Initiative and the Human Capital Initiative) are being made within this framework.

A process for new programme development has been agreed which includes review of current programme provision. A programme review template has been developed and will be used to progress creation of an integrated and coherent MTU programme portfolio, aligned to the academic domains of MTU. An MTU Programmatic Review Policy and Procedures Framework will be ready for approval at designation. Provision of programmes requiring accreditation and approval by professional and regulatory bodies will continue to be an important aspect of the academic lifecycle and will be factored into the programme planning process. This process will be linked with the first MTU Strategic Plan and the forthcoming QQI Institutional Review of the new Technological University.

4.8 Digitalisation

The TURN Report emphasises the key role that online and digital learning must play for technological universities, allowing them to “*rethink and redevelop on-campus as well as off-campus learning methodologies for an enhanced student experience more closely aligned to contemporary learning, life and work.*” Teaching and Learning in a Digital World and the concomitant need to embrace and harness the potential of digital technologies for teaching and learning also appears as one of the four main priorities of the strategy of the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education².

The use of online and digital technology in the new Technological University will be optimised to deliver enhanced teaching, learning, assessment and student engagement; to enable MTU learners to leverage full opportunities across and between campuses and to promote internationalisation. A shared digital education infrastructure will be developed based on existing components to deliver a world class digital learning experience for students of the new University.

4.9 Student Representation

CIT Students’ Union and IT Tralee Students’ Union have come together to proactively work on the provision of strong future representation for students following TU designation, informed and directed by students themselves.

The Students’ Unions will develop their plan of work and indicative outcomes in a coherent way to ensure that the student experience is at the centre of all proposed outcomes. The process includes communication, consultation and collaboration with students across both institutions, as well as engagement with other stakeholders. These engagements are vital to ensure that the student representational structure is respected and supported by the new University, and that students feel a sense of belonging to their representative bodies. It is also agreed that the principles developed as a result of consultation undertaken by the working group on *Student Engagement in Higher Education*, established by the HEA, will be embraced by MTU.³

² NFT&L (2019) *Strategy 2019-2021. Leading Enhancement and Innovation in Teaching and Learning*. Dublin: National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/wp-content/uploads/NF_Strategy_2019-21_AW-Web.pdf

³ Report of the Working Group on Student Engagement in Irish Higher Education (2016) *Enhancing Student Engagement in Decision-Making*. Dublin: Higher Education Authority. <http://www.thea.ie/contentfiles/HEA-IRC-Student-Engagement-Report-Apr2016-min.pdf>

The Students' Unions have agreed that a balance should be struck between the level of unification necessary to ensure consistent and equitable representation of all students at a strategic level and the provision of sufficient autonomy to allow the local campuses serve the needs of their students. From designation, a priority in the development of the MTU student representation will be to ensure stability in a process that involves significant change for students. Thus, the Students' Unions will operate as separate entities at least in the foundation phase, with the option to join as one merged entity, in the future, if both unions agree that this would serve the student population more effectively. To ensure co-ordination and coherence across campuses, the executives of the Students' Unions will meet jointly on a regular basis and maintain close contact between meetings.

4.10 Student Academic Administration and Student Services

A mapping exercise has been undertaken to identify existing services and align future MTU service provision across the student lifecycle. These services have been reviewed and updated, in consultation with staff and students. The consultation process has focused on how to ensure a high-quality student service provision (responsive, timely, and efficient) and an equitable student experience for students of MTU.

The programme of work has been divided according to pre-designation, at designation and post designation actions, forming a detailed project plan of work. This process has identified priority tasks to be completed by designation day. See Appendix 10 for the project plan.

4.11 Financial Management

A single finance system will be in place on designation day. A feasibility study was commissioned in 2019 to review the existing systems and propose a solution for the merge. A detailed plan for the upgrade and subsequent merge of the two finance systems has been agreed and the first phase project to upgrade the CIT Agresso finance system commenced in December 2019 and will be completed May 2020. Work on preparing new draft joint finance policies and aligning business processes across both institutes is ongoing and will continue post designation.

It is expected that both Institutes will continue in separate funding streams until the recurrent grant allocation model administered by HEA is revised.

The Institute of Technology Tralee is in the process of finalising a financial sustainability plan with the Higher Education Authority (HEA).

4.12 Administration

The creation of MTU offers an opportunity to realign major corporate and administrative systems. The two institutes have been jointly working on significant projects in the areas of identity management and systems architecture which have allowed for the redesign of the implementation of these systems to ensure that a fully integrated system can be delivered that will provide the foundation for a digital by default strategy. MTU is positioned to take the lead within the sector in this area.

4.13 HR & Payroll

A single HR, payroll and expenses system will be in place from designation day. Engagement with Educampus and CoreHR, the 3rd party HR system suppliers, has been ongoing since 2018. A feasibility study was commissioned in 2019 to review the existing systems and propose a solution for the merger. A plan for merger of the two HR systems has been agreed. Collaboration with all trade unions on priority HR policies has been progressing well. The HR departments of both institutes continue to support regular consultation meetings with unions on all aspects of the MTU project through the MTU academic forum and TASS forum. A dedicated HR Specialist/HR Development Manager has been appointed to support the current MTU IR process and drive future development of the MTU HR service.

4.14 Information Technology

The interconnected and interdependent IT system presents a complex and costly infrastructure which will need to be accessible 24/7 in order to facilitate a smooth and efficient experience for the MTU community. MTU is in the process of designing an overarching enterprise applications strategy to support a digital university, which will also address the issue of cost. The MTU digital strategy, Digital by Default 2030, aims to design and deliver the best digital self-service supports to staff, students and alumni of MTU. The MTU priorities aim to provide useful personalised digital services to all, to enhance and support people in their day-to-day work, for example individual timetables per student.

Development of an MTU systems architecture will provide the foundation to support a full suite of services across the new University which will drive the development of consolidated information technology and information services systems. (Appendix 15 – MTU IT Systems Architecture). All systems in both institutes have been reviewed and a prioritised plan of pre-merger and post-merger systems projects has been agreed for MTU. Both institutes' IT procurement strategies have been aligned since early 2018 which is grounded in the original plan referenced above.

A joint Identity and Access Management project, which has already been in progress for over two years, is considered a strategic foundation project which is a key pre-requisite for providing access to systems in a consistent manner across the new organisation regardless of location on any of the current 6 physical campus locations or online for remote delivery and collaboration and for additional follow on IT projects.

The area of cybersecurity and GDPR has been identified as a strategic MTU project and a comprehensive listing of policies and procedures has been drafted and a gap analysis undertaken. The MTU project is being proposed as a pilot for the Irish higher education sector.

4.15 Institutional Research

Both institutes have processes that are maintained and managed using different systems. A number of offices in both institutes prepare various reports and data for senior management and external stakeholders such as the HEA and the Department of Education and Skills. Some of these reports include Strategic Dialogue, Compact, Strategic Plan compliance, student retention, progression, and are being used by management for decision making and reporting.

The institutes have made and continue to make significant investments in the development of the IT department to build application development teams and enterprise analytics and reporting teams. This investment will support the development of an institutional research function for MTU and a number of data analytic cubes have already been developed.

MTU will create an institutional research office post designation. The role of the office will be to support the university executive by providing timely and accurate data analysis and information to support strategic decisions.

4.16 Library and Learning Resources

The Library will have a key role in the new university, and there is ongoing collaboration between library and academic staff, across all campuses, in working towards a shared vision of a state-of-the-art resource, in accordance with the expectations of the TURN report. It has been decided not to merge the library systems in advance of designation and that two separate instances of Koha will continue to operate at designation phase. However, an interim solution to ensure seamless multi-campus access has been identified. An aligned policy on subscriptions and fines will be in place on designation day. The library website will be redesigned and the content management systems offering a gateway to services and supports will be merged.

While the more immediate focus is on the integration of systems and the consideration of funding models for MTU e-resource subscription services, more strategic opportunities in relation to the support of teaching, learning and scholarship are also being discussed and progressed. An interactive Open Education Resource will be launched in September 2020, while collaborative workshops have been run to support the development of a shared approach to Open Science.

4.17 Estates and Master-planning

A joint master-planning exercise has been undertaken and masterplans have been developed for each campus. Projects currently underway represent a €120 million investment with a further €144 million in planned physical development. The development of a STEM building in Kerry will ensure sufficient academic/teaching space to consolidate all activity on one campus. However there is still a requirement for a student hub in order to enhance the student experience. More significant development is required on the Cork campus to accommodate plans for growth.

The Health and Safety statements have been aligned into a single statement and a new safety management system has been implemented with a cloud-based system in planning.

Condition 5

Quantitative Eligibility Criteria

I. Demonstration by the applicant institutes that they meet the eligibility criterion in section 28(1)(a)(i) of the Act.

II. Provision by the applicant institutes of a plan in relation to the eligibility criterion in section 28(1)(a)(iii) to increase the percentage of research students from 4% to 7% within ten years.

III. Provision by the applicant institutes of a plan, in relation to the eligibility criterion in section 28(1)(d) to increase the percentage of full-time academic staff with a doctoral or appropriate equivalent from at least 45% to 65% within 10 years.

5.1 Research Students Numbers

The number of research students is defined in the TU Act 2018 “a student who is registered on a programme of education or training where not less than 60 per cent of the available credits are assigned in respect of a thesis or theses prepared by the student based on research conducted by him or her”. MTU has satisfied this condition as verified by the Deloitte Audit in 2019, as part of the original submission process.

5.2 Overview of MTU Research Plan and Management of Research

The MTU Consortium has identified six areas of research activity – based upon academic strengths and the needs of the region – in which to build capacity and capability:

- Information & Communications Technology
- Wellbeing & Food
- Bio-Sciences
- Energy, Climate & Sustainability, Manufacturing & Materials
- Services & Business Processes
- Humanities

The MTU Consortium will implement a set of strategic and inter-related initiatives in relation to the achievement of the respective increases in research students and the percentage of full-time academic staff with a doctoral qualification or appropriate equivalent. The plan includes an iterative increase in student numbers and measures to increase staff doctoral qualifications, while taking cognisance of the financial considerations (costs and funding sources), physical infrastructural requirements and research support services required to ensure a fully joined up approach is delivered upon. The main aspects are:

1. Increase the proportion of staff who hold PhDs through selective recruitment, targeted staff development, broadening the scope of activity of “research only” staff to include research supervision, and developing a highly supportive environment for growth of interdisciplinary research and researchers.
2. Increase the percentage of research students through promotion of MTU’s research pedigree on designation (Phase A), enhancement of MTU’s research capacity and capability (Phase B), and development of new research areas in conjunction with further development of current areas of research strength (Phase C). (see also Addenda 8 and 9)
3. Build capacity and capability in MTU’s core areas of research strength. (Addendum 10)

4. Enhance MTU’s physical infrastructure to provide more student and staff research facilities in line with growth projections.
5. Boost MTU’s research support services by establishing the MTU Graduate School to oversee and manage research programmes and provide support to research students and staff. (Addendum 11)

5.2 Growing Research Staff and Students

Based on the targets required, the baseline numbers indicate that MTU will need to employ a minimum of 173 additional PhD-qualified staff and grow its research enrolments by circa 287 research students over the next decade. This equates with average growth rates per annum of 17.3 PhD-qualified staff and 28.7 research students – which has been used as the basis for planning for the period 2020-2030. Table 1 below illustrates the growth trend.

Table 1 Baseline Staff and Student Numbers

	Number of Staff delivering L8/9/10	% of these staff who are PhD qualified	Students Enrolments L8/9/10	Of which % Research Enrolments
2019	546	47.44% (259)	7,547	358 (4.74%)
2030	666	65% (432)	9,208	645 (7%)

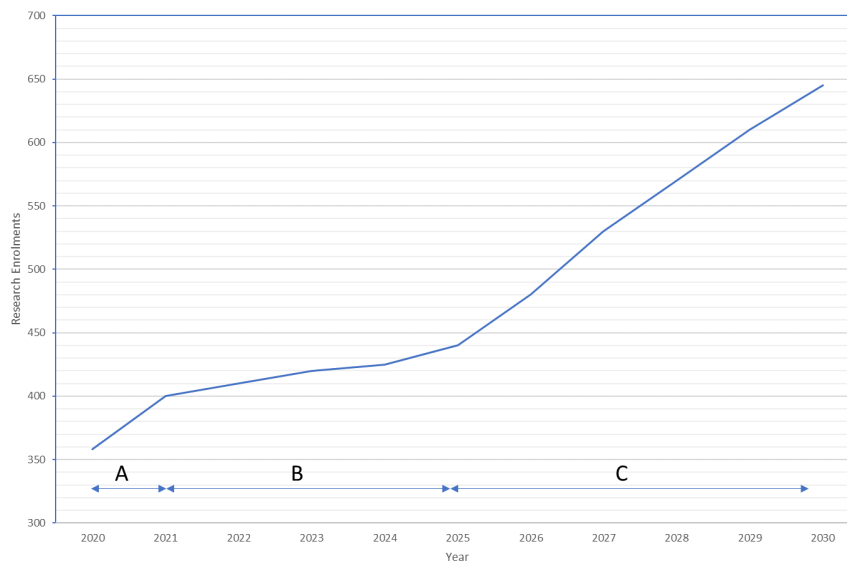
Source: Data extracted from MTU Application for Designation February 2019 and incorporating a projected overall 22% MTU uplift in student and staff numbers by 2031.

A forecast model has been developed to predict research enrolments over the period 2020-2030. A number of variables in respect to the student cohort have been identified and modelled producing a number of scenarios. Variables included:

- Percentage of research enrolments at masters and doctoral level respectively;
- Percentage of research master enrolments which follow a cohort-masters supervision model;
- Percentage of research enrolments which are campus or industry based; and
- Percentage of research enrolments by Research Field of Study.

Based on the number of students who have already expressed interest in pursuing doctoral studies, it is assumed there will an initial step change in enrolments from designation day (shown as “A” in Figure 3 below). Over the next four or five years, growth in research enrolments is predicted to rise as research capacity and capability increases (phase “B”). During this phase much of the growth is likely to be concentrated in fields of current strength in which the MTU Consortium has established Research Centres and Groups and are linked to government research prioritisation areas. Thereafter, it is anticipated additional infrastructure (e.g. laboratory and desk space) alongside the continuing maturation of newer research fields will provide the basis for on-going growth in the rate of postgraduate enrolment (phase “C”).

Figure 3 Projected Research Enrolments, 2020-2030



Projections of academic staff numbers have been developed to 2030 based on anticipated increases in student numbers and maintaining student-staff ratios. Figure 3 below illustrates projected growth, including anticipated retirements over the next 10 years. Increases in staff PhD numbers will be achieved through staff development and recruitment. Staff development actions include continuation of the staff-PhD scheme and development of structured doctorate programmes and cohort/team supervision. Assumptions regarding progress towards targets is supported by the 5% increase from May 2019 to March 2020.

Research Infrastructure to accommodate circa 300 additional research students is included within the MTU Consortium capital development plan. The infrastructure will be provided from a combination of extensions to existing research buildings, dedicated new research buildings and integration of research space into existing buildings, appropriate to the domain specialisation.

Table 2 and Table 3 provide an overview of funding requirements, and the key actions, milestones and deliverables required to achieve the relevant research targets.

Figure 4 MTU Staff PhD Trajectory 2020-2030

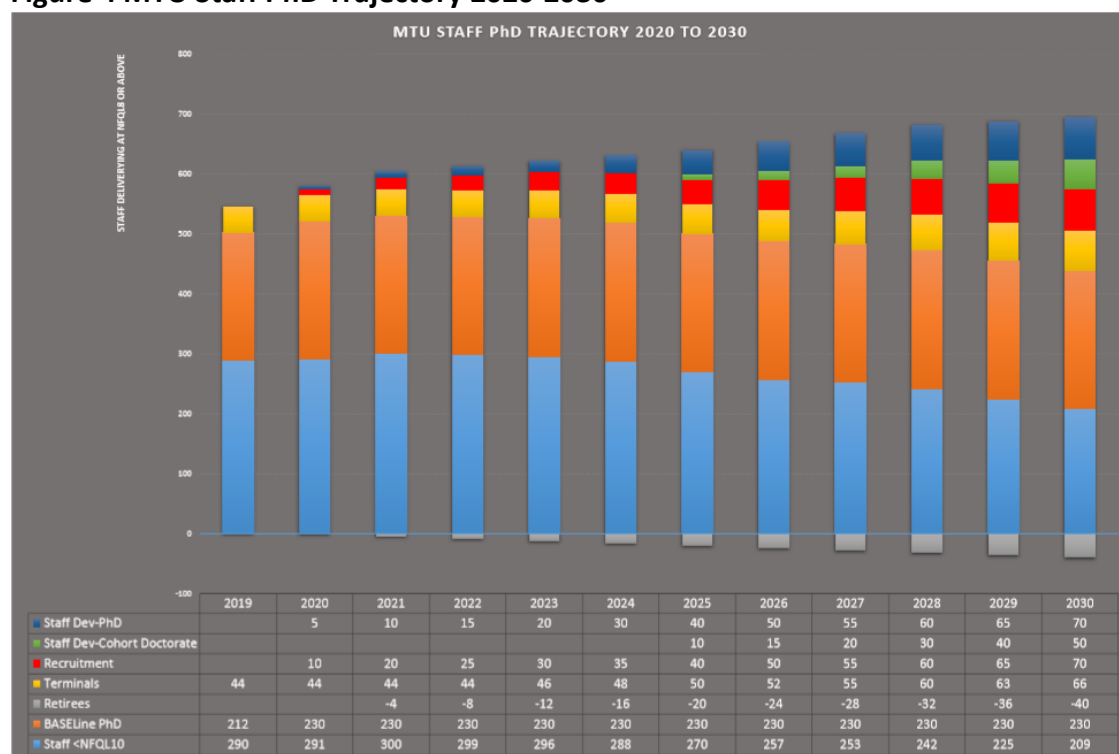


Table 2 Funding Requirements and Projected Income to Support Achievement of Targets

Funding Requirements		Year		
		2021	2025	2030
External Funding	Exchequer and non-exchequer, non-industry	€2,892,000	€3,181,200	€4,663,350
	Industry	€440,000	€484,000	€709,500
MTU Scholarship	EU Student	€203,500	€223,850	€328,144
	International	€795,300	€874,830	€1,282,421
Student Self-funding		€55,000	€60,500	€88,688
TOTAL		€4,385,800	€4,824,380	€7,072,103

Table 3 Key Actions, Milestones and Deliverables

Work Package	Timeframe	Cost	Target Outcome
Promote MTU's research pedigree	Continuously, from date of designation to 2030, inclusive	€50k per annum	Attract an additional 287 research students (full-time, part-time, on-campus, industry-based, international) to enrol in MTU
Increase proportion of MTU staff who hold PhDs or equivalent	From date of application for designation as a TU in 2019 to 2030 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selective recruitment • Targeted staff development • Broaden role of "research only" staff • Develop highly supportive research environment 	€10.9m	Achieve a net increase of 173 additional PhD-qualified staff
Build capacity and capability in core areas of research	Work ongoing currently in all thematic areas with a particular focus on the ICT thematic area. All other areas addressed within 1 year of designation.	€1m	A maximum of six thematic research areas established across the MTU for targeted development
Add research space to accommodate growth in numbers of research students and staff	Critical developments required by 2025	€16m	Provision of 6,000m ² of additional research space
Develop MTU Graduate School in line with growth in research student and staff numbers	Continuously, from date of designation to 2030, inclusive	€250k per annum from 2025 onwards	Provision of dedicated staffing in line with increase in research student and staff numbers

Condition 6

The furnishing of progress reports to the Minister at two-month intervals following the date of issue of this letter in relation to compliance with these conditions.

Two-monthly progress reports have been sent to the Minister by the Chairpersons of the Governing Bodies on 3 December 2019 and 4 February 2020.