



Mr. Bob Savage,  
Governing Body Chairperson,  
Cork Institute of Technology

Mr. Lionel Alexander,  
Governing Body Chairperson,  
Institute of Technology Tralee

26 May 2020

**Re: Munster Technology University (MTU) Consortium Application**

Dear Chairpersons,

I refer to the response provided on 30 March 2020 by the applicant institutes of Cork IT and IT Tralee under section 35(4)(a) of the Technological Universities Act 2018 in demonstration of their jointly meeting the conditions which had been set out in the letter of 30 September 2019. Having consulted with the relevant expert bodies as required by section 35(4)(b) of the Act and with Department officials, I am satisfied that the applicant institutes have demonstrated compliance with the stated conditions.

Following consideration of the expert consultative views and having regard to the threshold criteria established in Section 34 of the Act, I am satisfied that the MTU consortium application has met the eligibility criteria and other requirements set out in the Technological Universities Act 2018 and will deliver unique higher education and related opportunities to students, staff and wider business and community stakeholders in the South West.

In accordance with section 35(4)(b) of the Act I wish to inform the applicant institutes of my proposed decision to grant your joint application for the making of an order under Section 36 for the establishment of a technological university from 1 January 2021.

While considerable progress has been made in laying the groundwork for a successful Munster Technological University I would, however, highlight that considerable challenges remain - not least in addressing the heavy programme of work necessary to ensure that the institutes of the MTU consortium are fully prepared for the appointed day of establishment.

Success will require the consortium to redouble its efforts and further foster the spirit of endeavour, co-operation and unity of purpose that are the hallmark of this new type of higher education institution in the state, with all the benefits and advantages that brings to the new institution, all of its many stakeholders, its region and the country.

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In this context I suggest that particular focus should continue to be maintained in further engagement with staff representatives to resolve outstanding industrial relations issues before the appointed day of establishment. Focus should also be maintained on stabilising the financial situation in Tralee in line with the sustainability plan which has been developed and which has received positive assessment and endorsement by the Higher Education Authority. My officials will be in further contact with the institutes in these regards.

More generally, I would suggest that the consortium now needs to direct its resources and efforts towards the phase of translating strategy and planning into action and effecting the necessary changes on the ground, working with internal and external stakeholders, to shape and build a new institution for the region. To support this activity, consideration should be given to identifying, and strengthening, those elements of the structure put in place in response to my letter of 30 September 2019 which worked well to bring the consortium to this point of success.

As provided for in Section 35(4)(c) of the Act, I now invite the applicant institutes to make any representations to my proposed decision, including in the context of the contents of this letter, no later than 30 days from the date of this letter.

Subject to consideration of any such representations I shall notify the applicant institutes of my final decision to grant the application for the making of an order under Section 36 of the Act.

Please find enclosed with this letter a copy of the letter received from the Higher Education Authority confirming the consortium's compliance with the conditions set and the memorandum provided to me with the Authority's letter detailing the process leading to the Authority's assessment in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Joe McHugh T.D.  
Minister for Education and Skills

Yours sincerely,

Mary Mitchell O'Connor  
Minister of State for Higher Education