



QQI

Quality and Qualifications Ireland  
Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann

11 December 2020

Mr Simon Harris, TD  
Minister for Further and Higher Education Research Innovation and Science  
Department of Further and Higher Education Research Innovation and Science  
Marlborough Street  
Dublin 1

Dear Minister

I am writing in response to your request to nominate at least three persons with a special interest, expertise and/or knowledge of matters relating to higher education. All nominees have expertise at an international level in standards, practices and quality assurance in higher education and are suitable if required for appointment by you to an advisory panel under Section 31(3) of the 2018 Act.

The nominees in summary include:

**Mary Ellen Petrisko (Dr.)**, Former President of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) Senior College and University Commission in Alameda, California.

**Bert van der Zwaan (Professor)**, Former Rector of Utrecht University from 2011-2018 and emeritus professor of Biogeology at Utrecht University in the Netherlands.

**Karl Dittrich (Dr.)**, President of the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR).

I attach more detailed biographies for your information.

Yours sincerely

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Ms Cliona Curley  
Interim Chief Executive Officer

cc Frances-Mary Long, Private Secretary

## Quality Qualifications Ireland

### Technological University Advisory Panel Nominations

#### Background

The profiles below are all associated with quality assurance at the level of their respective national system of higher education for countries that have overseen significant change to the configuration of national higher education institutions in many European countries and the US. All nominations have a strong background in the quality assurance of national and international systems and national and international representative bodies, European networks and other European and international bodies. All nominations are familiar with the Irish system.

#### Mary Ellen Petrisko (Dr)

Dr Mary Ellen Petrisko is a member of the Academy's Board of Directors and former President of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) Senior College and University Commission in Alameda, California (this is the Accrediting Commission for Schools and Colleges).

Dr Petrisko's extensive experience in academic leadership spans a variety of institutions across the United States and internationally. She has also worked as vice president at the Middle States Commission on Higher Education in Philadelphia, PA; deputy secretary of higher education for the State of Maryland; vice president for academic affairs at the University of Maryland University College; and academic vice president of the Tai Sophia Institute (now the Maryland University for Integrative Health). She has also worked in higher education as a teacher of philosophy in the Netherlands and in the US and holds a Ph.D. in Philosophy from Boston University. Dr Petrisko is a graduate of the Academy's Leading by Being® program. Of Leading by Being Mary Ellen said, "Next to learning how to read, Leading by Being has been the most important learning experience in my life." Mary Ellen has participated in an earlier TU evaluation process.

#### Bert van der Zwaan (Professor)

Bert van der Zwaan is the Former Rector of Utrecht University from 2011-2018 and emeritus professor of Biogeology at Utrecht University in the Netherlands.

Trained as a palaeontologist, his main research interest involved the impact of climate change on the extinction of marine faunas. Early in his career, he initiated many interdisciplinary research programs and later was director of the Darwin Center for Biogeology. Through this work he became interested in the (regional) impact of universities on innovation. He has been lead-PI and CEO of Climate KIC, one of the first Knowledge and Innovation Communities of the EU, dealing with adaptation to climate change. He became dean of the Faculty of Geosciences in 2006 and was Rector Magnificus (Vice Chancellor) of Utrecht University from 2010-2018. He recently stepped down as president of the European League of Research Universities (LERU). Bert van der Zwaan has held numerous positions inside and outside of the academia, and (co-)authored many research papers, including more recently on Higher Education. He is the author of the book, "Higher Education in 2040" (2017). Professor van der Zwaan has recently participated in the Cinnte institutional review process.

**Karl Dittrich (Dr)**

Dr Karl Dittrich was appointed President of the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) in July 2017, for a term of three years. He has held many leadership positions in higher education over several decades and started his career as a political science researcher and lecturer in Leiden, Florence and Maastricht.

Karl received his PhD in Leiden in 1978. He was member of the Executive Board of Maastricht University since 1986 and chaired the Board from 1994 until 2002. He was the inaugural chairman of the Dutch-Flemish Accreditation Organisation (NVAO) from 2005 to 2012 and in that capacity also held functions on the ENQA Board and in the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA). Karl was Chair of the Association of Universities in the Netherlands (VSNU) until October 2017. As VSNU Chairman, Dittrich was also a member of the Council of EUA. He is currently a member of the University Council of the University of York (UK).