

Mr Joe McHugh, TD.  
Minister for Education and Skills  
Department of Education and Skills  
Marlborough Street  
Dublin 1

5<sup>th</sup> May, 2020

**Re: Response by MTU consortium to conditions required in relation to application for designation as a technological university**

Dear Minister,

I refer to your letter of 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2020, seeking the views of an tÚdarás on the response of the Munster Technological University (MTU) consortium to the conditions set out in your letter of September 30<sup>th</sup> 2019, in accordance with the provisions of section 35(3)(b) of the Technological Universities Act 2018.

Having regard to the conditions set out in your letter of 30<sup>th</sup> September 2019 and the contents of your letter to our Chief Executive of April 3<sup>rd</sup> 2020, the HEA Executive engaged an Advisory Panel to provide a third party, independent review of the MTU submission. The HEA Executive viewed that this would provide impartiality, continuity and context, as this Advisory Panel also assessed the 2019 MTU submission. Given the global Covid-19 pandemic, an advisory panel visit was not prudent, and the Advisory Panel was asked to complete a desk-based review and indicate where further engagement with the MTU Consortium would be necessary. Following completion of the review and on the recommendation of the Advisory Panel, the HEA Executive engaged with MTU stakeholders on the areas requiring further documentation and clarification as identified in the Advisory Panel's report. To support the process and to ensure no obvious bias occurred and that the relevant criteria were applied, the HEA Executive engaged a process auditor. The reports and views of the Advisory Panel, HEA Executive and process auditor are attached for your information.

The HEA Board notes the challenging timeframe and context, in light of Covid-19, in which this review was carried out. In this context the HEA Executive has undertaken a review of the MTU submission, examined additional documentation and met online with the consortium and key stakeholders. A report of the executive's work in this regard was submitted to the Board.

Having reviewed and discussed the reports at its meeting on April 28<sup>th</sup> 2020, An tÚdarás submits the following views for your consideration:

The HEA Executive, using the advisory panel's report, followed up with the MTU Consortium and ascertained, through documentation and dialogue, evidence of recent progress sufficient to confirm that the conditions have been met for designation of MTU as a Technological University. The HEA Board accepts this conclusion.

The HEA Board further wishes to alert the Minister to the following contingent issues:

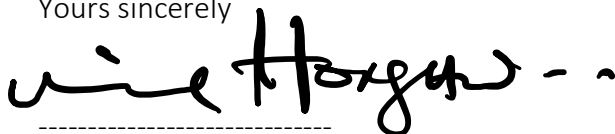
There remains a challenge in relation to significant disquiet from one stakeholder group in this process, namely, the Teachers Union of Ireland. They reiterated when asked that their concern focuses on timely progress in working through matters set out in the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) agreed between TUI and the MTU Consortium in December 2018. Should the Minister decide to award designation, we recommend that the matters set out in the MoU are progressed in advance of designation day, with the support of your Department.

And

It is the view of the HEA Board that the Department of Education and Skills will be required to continue providing aid to the MTU in the next phase of the process.

I trust that the attached reports will assist you in making your decision.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Horgan", with a horizontal dashed line underneath it.

Michael Horgan  
Chairperson