

Mr Simon Harris, T.D.,
Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science,
Leeson Lane,
Dublin,
D02 TR60.

26 January 2022

Re: South East TU (SETU) Consortium Technological University Application

Dear Minister,

Further to your letter of 2 December 2021, I am writing on behalf of An tÚdarás to report the findings of the assessment process undertaken to verify the compliance of the SETU consortium with s28(1)(k)(i) of the Technological Universities Act, 2018.

Following your request, the HEA put in place a process to enable the consortium to provide evidence of their capacity to perform the functions of a TU through having in place integrated, coherent and effective governance structures concerning academic, administrative and management matters. The process was designed around the six conditions stipulated to the consortium in the appendix to your letter of 2 December 2021.

The consortium was requested to provide a formal submission to the HEA demonstrating compliance with the six conditions. In addition, the consortium was required to provide a series of presentations relating to the specified conditions to a specially convened sub-committee of the HEA Board on 13 and 14 January 2022.

The consortium provided an extensive formal submission and comprehensive supporting documentation to demonstrate the progress made in a number of operational domains since the meetings of the Advisory Panel. In addition, the series of presentations by the consortium enabled the sub-committee to engage directly with the consortium on matters related to the submission.

The HEA Board sub-committee was impressed by the quality of the documentation submitted by the consortium and by the cohesive nature of the presentations and the responses provided by the participants in the engagements.

Following a thorough review of the formal submission and supporting documentation (including minutes of meetings requested by the HEA sub-committee), consideration of the presentations provided in the engagements and the assurances offered directly by the

consortium, the sub-committee is satisfied with the breadth of evidence presented in respect of the six conditions.

The wider HEA Board considered the report of the sub-committee at the HEA Board meeting on 25 January 2022. Following discussion, An tÚdarás is of the view that the consortium has satisfactorily met the conditions stipulated and has presented compelling evidence of its compliance with section 28(1)(k)(i) of the TU Act, 2018. Accordingly, An tÚdarás sees no impediment to you proceeding with your intention to designate and establish the new technological university on 1 May 2022.

An tÚdarás would like to take the opportunity to raise an important matter that recurred throughout the engagement with the SETU consortium. The adverse implications of a delay in approving the name of the new technological university on enabling progress with certain critical operational functions was highlighted by the consortium. An tÚdarás therefore requests your assistance in ensuring that the issue of the name of the new TU is resolved as a matter of urgency.

Finally, I wish to express the thanks of An tÚdarás to the SETU consortium for their engagement with the process and for the substantial documentation and informative presentations provided to assist with this important undertaking. As Chair, I wish to commend the unstinting efforts of our own Executive, especially Alan Wall, Tim Conlon and Louise Callinan.

We look forward to the establishment of Ireland's fifth technological university and remain committed to assisting you, Minister and the consortium on the pathway to the establishment of the new technological university in the South East in the months ahead.

Your sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Horgan', followed by a period.

Michael Horgan
Chair