



An Roinn Breisoideachais agus Ardoideachais,
Taighde, Nuálaíochta agus Eolaíochta
Department of Further and Higher Education,
Research, Innovation and Science

Minister Harris appoints first governing body of the new Atlantic Technological University

Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science Simon Harris TD has today (Friday, Feb 11th) appointed the first governing body of the new Atlantic Technological University, which will be established and open its doors on 1st April 2022. It follows the granting of Technological University status to a consortium comprising Galway-Mayo, Sligo and Letterkenny Institutes of Technology, which entities will cease to legally exist from that date. Minister Harris has also signed the order confirming the establishment of the ATU on April 1st.

Welcoming the appointment Minister Harris said: “I am delighted to announce the appointment of Ms Maura McNally, Chair of the Bar Council of Ireland, as the chair of the first governing body of this new TU serving the West and North West. “Ms McNally brings a vast and invaluable wealth of experience to the role which will be crucial in steering the new Technological University through its formation.

“She will be ably assisted by colleagues Ms Oonagh Monaghan, founder and Managing Director of Alpha Omega Consultants Ltd and Felim McNeela, founder of Avenue Mould Solutions, as external members of the governing body, along with Ms Anne McHugh, Chief Executive of Donegal ETB, who is the nominee of all three Education and Training Boards in whose areas the TU multi-campus are located.”

Providing higher educational programmes across all levels of the National Framework of Qualifications from apprenticeships to doctoral level qualifications, the new TU will play a pivotal role in the strategic regional development of the West and North West and in so doing, will ensure a global outlook and a civic centric value system.

The first governing body appointed by Minister Harris is now charged with establishing and implementing the requisite election and appointment procedures to fill the remaining posts on the governing body from cohorts including undergraduate and postgraduate students, academic and non-academic staff as well as a number of additional external members.

These pivotal appointments were made following an open competition process operated by the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science.

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Notes to the Editor

The Technological University Agenda:

The development and progression of technological universities (TUs) is an established policy objective of Government in the context of higher education landscape restructuring, research capacity building and socio-economic regional development. It has its genesis in recommendations contained in the National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 published in 2011.

Since the publication of the National Strategy a number of consortia of Institutes of Technology (IoTs) have, with Exchequer co-funding support, progressed proposals to become TUs. The process to do so is prescribed in the Technological Universities Act 2018 which then Minister of State for Higher Education, Mitchell O'Connor, brought to enactment March 2018.

Under the statutory framework provided in the 2018 Act, two or more IoTs may jointly seek TU designation through a prescribed legislative process. Section 29 of the 2018 Act provides for the application jointly by two or more applicant Institutes to the Minister of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science for an order seeking designation as a TU, subject to their jointly meeting specified eligibility criteria. Section 38 of the 2018 Act provides that an applicant institute and an established TU may apply to the Minister for an order.

In October 2019 the TU Research Network (TURN) high level advisory group, comprising the president of TU Dublin and all presidents of higher education institutions then seeking TU status and chaired by an independent UK higher education transformation expert Professor Phil Gummert, produced their seminal report 'Technological Universities: Connectedness & Collaboration enabled by Connectivity'.

The report details the case for and requirements necessary for a state change in higher education reform in Ireland whereby TUs will assist in the delivery of national strategic objectives for regional socio-economic development, higher education access, research and skills progression. The TURN report is available at

<https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Education-Reports/connectedness-collaboration-through-connectivity.pdf>

On foot of the TURN report Government announced in Budget 2020 the provision of €90 million over the next three years under a TU Transformation Fund to support IoTs to jointly achieve TU designation and to further the advancement of established TUs. This dedicated funding is additional to the €31 million in Exchequer funding invested in TU development and progression since 2013. To date some €60 million of the Transformation Fund has been allocated to relevant HEIs through the Higher Education Authority (HEA) with the final funding tranche of €30 million to be allocated later this year.

In addition, €40 million is being allocated to a TU education and reforms project under the National Recovery and Resilience Plan in the period to 2024. Minister Harris's Department, working in conjunction with the HEA, is also advancing a further TU oriented research funding application worth over €80 million under the auspices of the European Regional Development Fund 2021-2027.

The first TU in the history of the state, TU Dublin, was established on 1 January 2019 followed by Munster Technological University or MTU (formerly Cork IT and IT Tralee) on 1 January 2021 and then TU of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest (formerly Athlone IT and Limerick IT) on 1 October 2021.

On 3 February Minister Harris formally granted TU designation status to what will become the country's fifth TU. This will see the dissolution of IT Carlow and Waterford IT and the establishment of the South East Technological University with all parties working towards an establishment date of 1 May.

In addition, the two remaining stand-alone Institutes of Technology, Dundalk IT and IADT Dun Laoghaire, are working on trajectories to achieve TU status with the continued assistance of Exchequer funding from the TU Transformation Fund and technical advice and support provided by the Higher Education Authority.

Press Office

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