



PRESIDENT'S OFFICE

Minister Simon Harris
Department of Further and Higher Education,
Research, Innovation and Science
Marlborough Street,
Dublin 1, D01 RC96

2 March 2021

Re: Public Consultation on reform of the Higher Education Authority legislation

Dear Minister,

We have read with keen interest the document: *Update on the Reform of the Higher Education Authority Act, 1971, A Shared Approach* (February, 2021). In particular, we note the vital importance of good governance and subsequent intention to develop the regulation of the higher education system.

We note that the stated objective of the new legislation is to bring greater definition to the engagement of the HEA with the institutions it funds by providing a robust and more specific basis for its existing functions. Nevertheless, we note that it is proposed that a statutory basis will be provided for codes of practice for the governance of higher education institutions which it appears may be applicable to non-publicly funded institutions.

We are, as an institution, committed to the highest standards of governance, including transparency and accountability to stakeholders. Indeed, we have been engaged in a review of our own governance arrangements in that context. We are, in particular committed to the highest standards of academic governance that ensure the quality of our teaching and research having regard to national legislation and the requirements of the Holy See.

We are assuming that it is not intended that the model of co-regulation outlined in the paper and the specific model of shared governance proposed to be underpinned by legislation will apply to small institutions which are not in receipt of public funding. For the record, we would regard it as disproportionate and inconsistent with a commitment to preserving the diversity and autonomy of institutions in the higher education sector were a model applicable to state-established and funded universities to be applied to institutions like ourselves.

President