

John Fitzgerald Appointed As Agency Chair

Dublin, 13 April 2006:

DIT today wholeheartedly welcomed the announcement by the Minister for Education and Science Ms Mary Hanafin, of John Fitzgerald, current Dublin City Manager, as chair of the Grangegorman Development Agency. This Agency will deliver the development of a new campus for Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) as well as health facilities for the Health Services Executive (HSE) at Grangegorman in Dublin's inner city. The establishment of the Agency reflects the scale and strategic importance of the development which follows the government decision taken in 2002 to relocate DIT in its entirety to the Grangegorman site. Legislation governing the formation of the Agency and defining its remit was enacted in July 2005.

Professor Brian Norton, President of DIT, said colleagues and students in the Institute are delighted with the announcement. "John Fitzgerald has been an enormously important force in the development and modernisation of Dublin City. I feel that under his stewardship this development will realise its full potential as a major resource for the city and for the country as a whole. The development of a world-class campus for what is one of Ireland's largest higher education institutions, co-located with health facilities and community amenities and services, will drive significant urban regeneration and development in the area."

Professor Norton said that today's announcement signals the start of the work that must now turn decisions into reality. "DIT has been working for some years on our internal strategic planning to ensure that we are in a position to give a coherent brief to the Agency and masterplanners as soon as they are appointed. The full range of DIT's provision - including apprenticeship and craft education; junior music; undergraduate and postgraduate programmes; research and innovation – will finally come together on one site. Not only will this provide for a consistently excellent student experience, it will also facilitate the development of new multi-disciplinary programmes to meet changing demands. DIT has been a landmark in education in Ireland for 120 years and this development will further enhance our economic, social and cultural contribution."

DIT is currently located on seven main sites around Dublin city centre, with a splintering of facilities and services across thirty-nine buildings. Included among facilities to be provided on the new 250,000 square metre campus, will be a central library hub, a purpose-built music conservatoire, an innovation and enterprise centre, student accommodation and sports facilities. The Institute currently has a number of indoor sports facilities including a swimming pool and gym, but for the last two years students have had access to the playing fields at Grangegorman which has proved a great asset in terms of building on sporting successes. The Institute's wider commitment to sport will be reflected in the planning of facilities at the Grangegorman campus.

DIT is a doctoral-awarding institution and member of the European University Association. With almost 22,000 students and over 2000 staff, it is the largest provider of lifelong learning and part-time education, and of apprenticeship courses in the country. The Institute is committed to tackling educational disadvantage, particularly in Dublin city. With a team of fourteen full-time staff and hundreds of willing student and community volunteers, and with the support of industry partners, Dublin City Council and state agencies, DIT has built an

innovative range of community and access programmes from wind bands to digital communities in the inner city.