



Ollscoil
Teicneolaíochta
an Atlantaigh

Atlantic
Technological
University

Minutes of the 31st ATU Governing Body Meeting
Held on Monday 31st March 2025 at 9.30am
Sligo Campus and TEAMS

Present:

Maura McNally – online	MMcN
Dr Orla Flynn – in person	OF
Joanne Grehan – online	JG
Dr Brian De Souza – in person	BDS
Dr Martin Robinson – in person	MR
Joe Cunningham – in person	JC
John Daffy – in person	JD
Julia Bocianowska – in person	JBoc
Kevin Sweeney – online	KS
Oonagh Monahan – in person	OM
Regina Daly – in person	RD
Sarah Mohan – online	SM
Seamus Hughes – in person	SH
Michael Gilvarry – online	MG
Dr John Bartlett – in person	JB

In attendance:

Jim Fennell (Secretary) – in person	JF
Carol Geraghty (Recording Secretary) – in person	CG
Michael Henahan – in person – items 6.1 & 6.2	MH
██████████ (IPA) – in person – observer	████
Sinead Donnellan – online – item 5.2 & 5.3	SD
Henry McGarvey – online – item 5.5	HMcG
Eoin Bradley - online – item 5.5	EB
Elizabeth McCabe – in person – items 4.1.1, 6.1 & 6.3	EMcC
Rod Toner – online – Item 4.1.1	RT
Brid Prendergast – online – items 6.1, 6.3.1 & 6.3.2	BP
Paul McEldowney – online – item 6.3.1	PMcE
Billy Bennett – in person – items 6.3.6 & 6.3.7	BB

Apologies: Dara Foyne, Rachel Ashworth

GB 31.01 Meeting of External Members of Governing Body

A meeting of the External Members of Governing Body was held with [REDACTED] in attendance.

GB 31.02 Declaration of Conflicts of Interests

No conflicts of interest were declared at the start of the meeting.

MMcN reminded the meeting that Oonagh Monahan has tendered her resignation, effective on 31st March 2025; and advised that David Minton resigned from Governing Body on 27th March 2025. The Chair, on behalf of the Governing Body, thanked Oonagh and David for their service to the Governing Body and the University.

GB 31.03.1 Minutes of 17th February 2025

GB 30.03.1 ref to Dignity at Work Policy – update to add “In a consultation with the Management team HR agreed to revert to members of the Management team who provided written feedback”.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

AOB item 1 – replace “objection” with “dissent”; remove “that the opinions of individual members are not recorded”.

Action: Members are asked to send their comments and requested changes to the minutes of the 17th February 2025 Governing Body meeting to the Secretary in writing. The minutes will be updated accordingly & considered again at the next meeting.

Action: Members are reminded that any comments or suggested changes to papers circulated for Governing Body meetings should be notified in writing to the Chair and Secretary prior to the meeting.

MMcN advised that the election of a deputy chair will be an agenda item when the current Governing Body vacancies have been filled.

GB 31.04 Matters Arising and Correspondence

GB 31.04.1 Governing Body Log of Actions Items

JF summarised actions and confirmed that a list of items to be addressed with DFHERIS and HEA will be recorded. The following changes to priority of actions were agreed:

Action 1 – change priority to medium

Action 153 - change priority to high

Decision: The meeting agreed to close all items presented as *Propose Closed* on the proposal of JB and seconded by OM.

GB 31.04.1.1 Report on Recruitment & Selection Procedure - Action 137

Questions raised by members at the October 2024 Governing Body meeting on the Recruitment & Selection Procedure have been considered by HR. HR had conducted benchmarking with other IoTs and TUs to determine sectoral shortlisting practices and a report was prepared, which was reviewed with the University Planning Team (UPT) before being submitted to Governing Body for information. HR has proposed updates to documents issued to interview panels to clarify responsibilities for shortlisting, no changes are proposed to the Recruitment & Selection Procedure. Members discussed the report; the results of benchmarking on shortlisting practices, the potential impact of the changes to the shortlisting practices suggested by Governing Body members and how shortlisting is documented in policies of other TUs.

Action: Members to send their feedback on this report and suggested changes to the Recruitment & Selection Procedure to Jim Fennell.

GB 31.04.1.2 Correspondence to Minister Lawless – Action 153

A copy of the letter sent to the Minister for FHERIS by the Chair in relation to pay scales for the Senior Management team was circulated for information. MMcN stated that the Minister has acknowledged receipt of the letter but has not yet responded.

Action: Follow-up letter to the Minister requesting a response.

GB 31.04.2 Correspondence from HEA re Ardaghown Land Acquisition

A copy of the letter received from the HEA confirming their approval of the acquisition of lands at Ardaghown from Sligo Co. Co. was circulated for information. MMcN noted that delays experienced in the progress of this acquisition are at this time attributable to Sligo Co.Co.

Other Matters Arising

Technological Sector Strategic Projects Fund (TSSPF)

In response to a request for a copy of the notification from HEA about the change to the funding available under TSSPF Sligo and St Angelas, OF advised the meeting that the University has not received this information in writing, it was communicated to ATU attendees at a TSSPF workshop in August 2024.

GB 31.05 Items for Approval

GB31.05.1 Staff Appointments

The following staff appointments were presented to Governing Body for approval:

Post	Location	Contract Type & Term	Grade	Basis for Appointment	Recommended Candidate
Academic Systems Integration Project Manager	Galway				
Head of Department of Business & Accounting	Galway				
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Lead	Galway				
Head of Department of Veterinary Medicine	Donegal				
Head of Department of Engineering Apprenticeships	Donegal				

Decision: These post were approved on the proposal of RD, this was seconded by MMcN

GB31.05.2 Employee Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy

Members welcomed this policy and discussed the timeframe for the implementation plan documented in Appendix A – OF advised the meeting that some responsibilities outlined in Appendix A will fall within the remit of the Chief Officer for People and Culture when appointed.

The Working Group who developed the policy was asked to consider the following:

- the inclusion of a note at the start of the policy to provide information on where to seek help – to assist employees in distress who may read the Policy;
- section 4.3, 2nd last bullet point – update to replace “absence related to their mental health” with “health-related absence”;
- Section 5.0, last bullet point - update to replace “absence related to their mental health” with “health-related absence”;

Requested changes:

- Section 3.0 External Reference Documents – remove “for” from first bullet point;
- revise Appendix A to remove “TBA”;
- Appendix B – remove “in” from sentence 1.

Decision: Subject to the inclusion of the requested changes, the Employee Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy was approved on the proposal of MR, this was seconded by JD.

Action: Communicate suggested changes to Working Group 6 for consideration.

GB31.05.3 Core Meeting Times Policy

SD provided some information about the policy, which was welcomed by members.

Decision: The Core Meeting Times Policy was approved on the proposal of BdS, this was seconded by JD

There was a discussion about how Governing Body should give feedback on policies – members are requested to provide feedback in writing to the Chair and the Secretary in advance of Governing Body meetings. In response to a question about the review period for policies, JF advised the meeting that the review period is considered when the documents is being developed, this varies depending on the policy e.g. some policies may need to be in place for a full academic year before effectiveness can be determined.

Action: Provide a copy of the Policy on the development of policies to GB members

Action: Develop a summary of the process for development & update to policies

GB31.05.4 Permanent Standing Committee

This item was deferred pending the filling of current Governing Body vacancies..

Action: Members are asked to submit any feedback on this item to the JF.

GB31.05.5 Letterkenny Regional Sports Activity Hub - Preliminary Business Case, Proceed to Tender for Phase 1 & Phase 2 and Allocation of Capital Development Reserves

HMCG summarised the history of this project and advised that this site has also been identified as a suitable location for the veterinary building. Members commended staff on the progress to date and look forward to the development of and continued improvement to sports and recreation facilities on all campuses.

Decision: OM proposed the approval of the following, this was seconded by JD:

- The strategic assessment and preliminary business case (Gate 1 approval) for Letterkenny Regional Sports and Activity Hub, in accordance with the Infrastructure Guidelines.
- Approval for phase 1 (enabling works) & phase 2 (lower lands) of the project to proceed to tender in accordance with the Infrastructure Guidelines (gate 2) and Capital Works Management Framework (project review 7).
- Approval of the pre-tender estimated budget of [REDACTED] and allocation of funding from capital development reserves for Phase 1 and Phase 2 of €8.65m.

GB31.06 Committee and Subcommittee Reports

GB31.06.1 Joint ARC and Finance Subcommittee Meeting of 21 March

GB31.06.1.1 Financial Statements for 12 months ended 31st August 2024

JF advised the meeting on the work completed by the Finance department and the joint meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee and the Finance Subcommittee. A report from the joint ARC and FSC meeting was circulated in advance of the meeting. The joint ARC and FSC meeting recommended that the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st August 2024 be submitted to the Comptroller & Auditor General (C&AG) for audit. OF commented that the core grant increase is reflective of the good performance across full-time, part time and online student numbers.

Requested change – page 39, Net Outcome paragraph– replace “top slice” with “performance”.

Decision: Subject to the requested change, the meeting approved the submission of the Financial Statements for 12 months ended 31st August 2024 to C&AG for audit on the proposal of JG, this was seconded by JD.

GB31.06.1.2 Management Letter for 17 months ended 31 Aug 23

The management letter received from C&AG on the audit of the Financial Statements for 17 months ended 31st August 2023 was circulated with meeting papers. This management letter was considered at the joint ARC & FSC meeting. JC assured the meeting that ARC will be monitoring progress on the implementation of the recommendations contained in the management letter.

GB31.06.2 Report from ARC meeting of 18th February

JC presented the report from the 18th February ARC meeting.

GB31.06.2.1 Internal Audit Charter

No changes are recommended to the Internal Audit Charter other than that the next review should be in 3 years.

Decision: The amendment to the Internal Audit Charter was approved on the proposal of SH, this was seconded by JG

GB31.06.2.2 Protected Disclosure Policy V2

The policy has been updated to reflect the Protected Disclosure Act 2022.

It was suggested that the policy should state who takes responsibility in the event that the Head of Corporate Governance is a party to a protected disclosure, example given – President's nominee.

Requested changes:

- Page 11 replace "Student Code" with "relevant codes";
- Remove reference to PwC, current external third party provider for the University's reporting channel;

Decision: Subject to the requested changes, the Protected Disclosures Policy V2 was approved on the proposal of JB, this was seconded by OM.

GB31.6.2.3 Appointment of ARC member

ARC recommended the appointment of Ms Kerrie Power to ARC and as Chair of the ICT Subcommittee of ARC. In response to a question about the responsibility of the ICT Subcommittee of ARC with respect to AI, JC advised that the Subcommittee looks at all IT related threats to the University, one of which is AI. OF commented that, while AI is a risk to the University from the perspective of teaching & academic integrity, it can bring benefits to other functions.

Decision: OM proposed and MR seconded approval of the appointment of Kerrie Power to ARC and as Chair of the ICT Subcommittee.

GB31.6.3.9 Sligo Leitrim ITS Regional Development Projects DAC

EMcC declared her potential conflict of interest – she is a director of the Sligo Leitrim ITS Regional Development Projects DAC (DAC).

The DAC was a regular agenda item at meetings of ARC & FSC. Members were advised that the DAC will continue to trade and the University's strong working relationship with the DAC will continue. The Finance Subcommittee at its meeting recommended to the Governing Body that, provided the value of the shareholding was less than €240,000, equating to the amount of the loan to be provided by Sligo Co. Co. to the DAC, the shareholding in the DAC would be transferred to Sligo Co. Co. at a nominal value. Subsequent to the Finance subcommittee, on Friday 28th March, the Valuation Report on the value of the 34% shareholding in the DAC prepared by Gilroy Gannon Auditors to the DAC was received advising that the shareholding had a nominal value.

Decision: Subject to approval from DFHERIS and confirmation from the DAC that the University has no further financial obligation, the transfer at nominal value of the University's shareholding in the Sligo Leitrim ITS Regional Development Projects DAC to Sligo Co. Co. was approved on the proposal of MMcN, this was seconded by JG.

Action: Seek approval from DFHERIS for the transfer of the University's shareholding in the Sligo Leitrim ITS Regional Development Projects DAC to Sligo Co. Co.

Action: Seek confirmation from the Board of the Sligo Leitrim ITS Regional Development Projects DAC that, on transfer of ownership to Sligo Co. Co., the University will have no further financial obligation to the DAC.

Returning to the report from the February ARC Meeting, JC commended the Marketing function on their work and their presentation to ARC.

GB31.06.3 Report from Finance Subcommittee Meeting of 24 Feb & 21 Mar

Reports on both meetings were circulated in advance.

GB31.06.3.1 Finance outturn for year ended 31st December 2024

BP presented the 2024 outturn.

GB31.06.3.2 University Budget 2025 & Financial Projections 2024/25, 2025/26 & 2026/27

PMcE presented the University Budget for the 2025 calendar year and financial projections for the current and next two academic years. The layout used for the financial projections is based on a HEA reporting template. Members were advised of the timelines for receipt of budgets from HEA and impact that these timelines can have on effective budgeting. In response to a question about research projections OF provided some information about research funding and changes required within the Finance and Research departments on recording and reporting on funding to meet external requirements and enable the University to continue to be eligible to receive funding.

Decision: The University budget for 2025 was approved on the proposal of MG, this was seconded by JB

GB31.06.3.3 Staffing Headcount (ECF) Report

The Staffing Headcount Report as at Q4 2024 was circulated for information.

GB31.06.3.4 Amendment to Finance Subcommittee Terms of Reference

JF provided the background to the proposed amendment – the FSC has a vacancy for one external member as the result of a resignation. Nominations for two excellent candidates were received. The FSC proposed the expansion of its membership so both candidates can serve on the subcommittee.

Decision: On the proposal of MMcN and seconded by JD the amendment to the Finance Subcommittee terms of reference was approved.

GB31.06.3.5 Appointment of Finance Subcommittee members

The Finance Subcommittee is recommending the appointment of two external members - Brid Beirne and Mary Campbell.

Decision: On the proposal of MMcN and seconded by JD the appointment of Brid Beirne and Mary Campbell to the Finance Subcommittee was approved.

GB31.06.3.6 Fees Policy

BB gave a summary of changes to the Fees Policy; a detailed list of changes was circulated with the draft policy.

Decision: V1.1 of the Fees Policy was approved on the proposal of OM, this was seconded by JC.

GB31.06.3.7 Fee Schedule 2025/2026 Academic Year

The 2025/2026 fee schedule includes fees for new programmes, an increase in non-EU fees and alignment across the university of fees for special purpose awards. Further updates to this fee schedule will be presented to Governing Body when the University receives confirmation of approved Springboard programmes and when online and part-time non-EU student fees are finalised. The fee schedule is compiled by the Fees Committee in consultation with representatives from many faculties and departments across the University. OF thanked everyone involved. The meeting was advised that there is no difference in fees for EU and non-EU research postgraduate students and a further increase in non-EU fees is being considered for future academic years to bring the University in line with fees charged across the sector.

Decision: On the proposal of JB and seconded by MR the Fee Schedule for the 2025/2026 academic year was approved.

GB31.06.3.8 Credit Card Policy V1.1

EMcC summarised the proposed change to the policy.

Decision: V1.1 of the Credit Card Policy was approved on the proposal of JD, this was seconded by MR.

GB31.06.3.9 Treasury & Cash Management Policy V1.1

EMcC summarised the proposed change to the policy.

Decision: V1.1 of the Treasury & Cash Management Policy was approved on the proposal of BdS, this was seconded by MR.

OM thanked GB members and University staff for their support during an interesting 3 years and commended everyone involved for the work done and future plans.

The meeting ended and remaining agenda items were deferred.

The next Governing Body meeting will be on 12th May 2025 at the Galway City campus.



Signed: _____

Date: 05/06/2025

Chairperson