



Ollscoil  
Teicneolaíochta  
an Atlantaigh

Atlantic  
Technological  
University

## Minutes of the 35<sup>th</sup> ATU Governing Body Meeting

Held on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> September 2025 at 9.30am

Galway City – Dublin Rd Campus and TEAMS

### Present:

Maura McNally – in person	MMcN
Dr Orla Flynn – in person	OF
Conor Murphy – in person	CM
Dara Foyne – in person	DF
Dr Brian De Souza – in person	BDS
Dr Martin Robinson – in person	MR
Emil Kindl – online	EK
Joe Cunningham – in person	JC
John Daffy – online	JD
Joseph Sweeney – in person	KS
Kathya Rouse – in person	KR
Regina Daly – in person	RD
Seamus Hughes – in person	SH
Thomas Gallagher – in person	TG
Dr John Bartlett – in person	JB
Naomi Walsh – online	NW
Rachel Ashworth – online	RA

### In attendance:

Jim Fennell (Secretary) – in person	JF
Dr Billy Bennett – online – item 5	BB
Carol Geraghty (Recording Secretary) – in person	CG
Shane O'Connor – online – items 3 & 8	SO'C
Aidan Haughey – online – item 6.4	AH
Dr Jacqueline O'Toole – online – item 5.1	JOT
Dr Nicola Anderson – online – item 5.1	NA
Tom Reilly – online – item 7	TR

**Apologies:** Joanne Grehan

## **GB 35.01 Declaration of Conflicts of Interests**

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

### **GB 35.02.1 Minutes of 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2025**

The following additions were requested in advance of the meeting –

- GB 33.03.2 replace “*Strategic Development*” with “*Finance*”
- 33.07.1.1 remove 1<sup>st</sup> action “*The financial risk related to recruitment to be reviewed by ARC*” and update remaining action to read “*Risk Register risks F2 & F3 - the Recruitment Report and ECF Report to be periodically reviewed by FSC & ARC to confirm that budget and forecasts make adequate provision for recruitment*”
- Add “*MG advised that he has tendered his resignation to the Governing Body Chair & stated that this will be his last meeting*”.

**Decision:** The minutes of the 23<sup>rd</sup> June Governing Body meeting, with the above detailed additions, were approved on the proposal of KR and seconded by JC.

## **GB 35.03 Matters Arising & Correspondence**

### **GB 35.03.1 Governing Body Log of Actions**

The Governing Body Log of Actions was circulated to members in advance of the meeting.

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

**Action:** Circulate log of items to be addressed with HEA / DFHERIS for all meetings.

### **GB 35.03.2 Report from Subcommittee with Delegated Authority**

The Governing Body Subcommittee with Delegated Authority met on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2025.

Three staff appointments were approved:

- **Head of Department - Civil Engineering and Construction** - Emma Coyle
- **Nordic Bridge Project Manager** - Noel Mulkeen
- **Head of Department - Mechanical and Industrial Engineering** - Eamon Walsh

Two senior leadership appointments were approved:

- **Dean of Business:** Dr Amelia Au-Yeung
- **Dean of Engineering and Computing:** Professor Graham Heaslip

A report from the Subcommittee, the paper circulated for the meeting and a copy of the draft minutes were circulated for information.

### **GB 35.03.3 Correspondence with HEA - AGS 2023-24 Feedback Letter**

Correspondence with HEA relating to the AGS 2023-24 Feedback Letter was circulated for information. The HEA has acknowledged receipt of the response from the University and to date has not reverted with any further questions.

### **GB 35.03.4 Correspondence with HEA – Regular Reporting Queries**

Correspondence with HEA re queries on the Regular Report was circulated for information. The HEA has acknowledged receipt of the response from the University and to date has not reverted with any further questions.

### **GB 35.03.5 Correspondence with the Committee of Public Accounts**

Correspondence with the Committee of Public Accounts addressing a query about procurement was circulated for information. The Committee of Public Accounts has acknowledged receipt of the response from the University.

### **Other Matters Arising**

In response to a question about a gap analysis between the University's interim code of governance and the State Code, JF advised the meeting that this has been completed by Deloitte & previously circulated to GB. The Governance team is drafting updates to the Interim Code of Governance. In response to a question about the additional responsibilities for GB outlined in S89 HEA Act 2022, JF informed the meeting that legal advice will be sought about this and it will be an agenda item for the October meeting.

## **GB 35.04 President's Report**

### **GB 35.04.1 President's Update to Governing Body**

OF presented the report circulated with meeting papers and gave the following updates:

- The business case for the last four SLT positions has been sent to DFHERIS. Once any questions have been addressed and DFHERIS has approved the report they will send it to the Department of Public Expenditure, Infrastructure, Public Service Reform & Digitalisation (formerly known as DPER) for review and approval. The timeline for review and approval is unknown, and depends on whether sufficient savings are deemed to have been achieved. In response to a question, OF advised that there is a commitment to have a gender and geographically balanced Senior Leadership Team.
- OF indicated that, in line with the IPA report recommendations, and as the SLT became established, she would be engaging with the Chair with a view to ensuring there was a wider representation present from the "executive".
- The Student Unions were commended for the progress to date on the Student Union merger; a Student Management Forum has been formed and will start its work this month.
- An addition to the President's Report to GB was introduced, this will focus on the Strategic Plan.

- A report on Research data indicates the challenges experienced with gathering consistent data.

**Action:** Risks to be added to the Risk Register:

- Potential impact on SLT recruitment of salary scale and tenure for Senior Leadership Team approved by the Department of Public Expenditure, Infrastructure, Public Service Reform & Digitalisation.
- Potential impact on recruitment and available funding related to inability to appoint Professor roles in the TU sector.

#### **GB 35.04.2 UPT Meeting Minutes**

The meeting discussed how items going to GB for approval are documented in UPT minutes, if the University's commitment to the ladder system could be better communicated to prospective students and how & when relevant information from UPT meetings could be provided to GB to inform decision-making.

**Action:** GB requested that UPT decisions on items going to GB for approval are documented as "recommended to Governing Body for approval".

**Action:** Relevant extract of draft or approved minutes in respect of any item which UPT recommends for approval by GB to be included in GB paper.

#### **GB35.05 Report from Academic Council & Registrar**

The additional responsibilities of GB as outlined in section 89 of the HEA Act 2022 are to be considered by GB.

**Action:** Agenda item for October GB meeting - review additional responsibilities of GB as outlined in Section 89 HEA Act 2022.

**Action:** Report on how the University's commitment to the "ladder system" is communicated to prospective students.

#### **GB 35.05.1 Academic Quality Assurance (QA) Framework**

BB, JOT and NA joined the meeting. JOT & NA presented the QA Framework. Members requested two additions to the document: 1) add reference to the TU Act 2018 as amended by the HEA Act 2022; 2) include information about GB responsibilities as laid out in the legislation. In response to a discussion about the responsibility for approval of procedures, BB stated that approval of procedures is in line with the advice received from the University's solicitors.

**Decision:** Subject to the inclusion of the changes detailed above and noting the dissent of JB, the QA Framework was approved on the proposal of MMcN and seconded by JC.

**Action:** Annual Review of the Academic Quality Assurance and Enhancement (AQAE) Framework by Academic Council and the Annual Quality Report to QQI shall be presented annually to Governing Body.

**Action:** Recommendation for Guidance Document for GB Presentations & Papers (ref actions related to IPA Report in 25<sup>th</sup> August meeting minutes) – presentations should be brief & should focus on the implications for GB; additional background information, etc. could be provided in a separate report.

### **GB 35.05.2 Academic Quality Report (AQE)**

A copy of the University's Academic Quality Report to Quality & Qualifications Ireland (QQI) was circulated for information.

### **GB 35.05.3 Academic Council Minutes**

BB summarised decisions documented in the Academic Council minutes circulated for information.

## **GB 35.06 Items for Approval**

### **GB 35.06.1 Appointment of Deputy Chair**

Mr Joe Cunningham was appointed Deputy Chair at the meeting of the Governing Body on 25<sup>th</sup> August 2025.

### **GB 35.06.2 Staff Appointments**

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

Post	Location	Contract Type & Term	Grade	Basis for Appointment	Recommended Candidate
Facilities Manager	Galway City				Keith Connolly
Head of Department Law, Public Service and Education	Donegal Letterkenny				Dr Brónagh Heverin

**Decision:** These posts were approved on the proposal of MMcN and seconded by JC

### **GB 35.06.3 Appointment of Student Representatives to Governing Body Subcommittees**

Membership of Governing Body subcommittees is set-out in the subcommittee Terms of Reference. Governing Body Student representatives are members of the EDI Subcommittee and the Strategic Development Subcommittee.

The student representatives on Governing Body have nominated Joseph Sweeney for the EDI Subcommittee & Thomas Gallagher for the Strategic Development Subcommittee.

**Decision:** The appointment of Joseph Sweeney as student GB representative on the EDI Subcommittee and Thomas Gallagher as student GB representative on the Strategic Development Subcommittee was proposed by RD and seconded by SH.

**Action:** Send letters of appointments to the EDI Subcommittee & Strategic Development Subcommittee Student members.

### **GB 35.06.4 Annual Report 01/09/2023-31/08/2024**

The text of the ATU Annual Report 01/09/2023 – 31/08/2024 was presented to GB members for approval. Members requested that in Section 5.1 the reference to legislation should read *Technological Universities Act 2018 as amended by the Higher Education Authority Act 2022*.

**Decision:** Subject to the inclusion of the above change, the text of the ATU Annual Report 01/09/2023 – 31/08/2024 was approved on the proposal of DF and seconded by JC.

### **GB 35.06.5.1 Domestic Violence Leave Policy & Procedure**

This policy outlines the arrangements in place at the University for the provision of paid leave relating to domestic violence, as required in the Work Life Balance and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023. The meeting discussed feedback received from members, it was agreed that this would be sent to the policy owner for consideration.

**Decision:** V1 of the Domestic Violence Leave Policy & Procedure was approved on the proposal of DF and seconded by KR.

### **GB 35.06.5.2 Procedures for the Resolution of Grievance / Disputes**

This Procedure provides effective and fair processes by which employees can seek redress of grievance. The procedure was developed and agreed between Management representatives from Institutes of Technology Ireland and the Trade Unions and this legacy procedure was proposed for adoption by the Governing Body. Feedback received from members was discussed, it was agreed that this would be sent to the policy owner for consideration. An annual report to GB detailing grievances that have exceeded timelines without agreement of all parties involved was requested.

**Decision:** V1 of the Procedures for the Resolution of Grievances / Disputes was adopted on the proposal of MR and seconded by DF.

**Action:** Annual report to GB detailing grievances that have exceeded timelines without agreement of all parties involved.

**Action:** HR Policies team to review document to ensure that all references to the Labour Relations Commissions (LRC) have been updated to reference the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC).

### **GB 35.06.5.3 Disciplinary Procedure**

The purpose of the disciplinary procedure is to ensure that the University acts reasonably and fairly towards employees in investigating and dealing with alleged instances of unacceptable conduct or performance. This procedure was developed and agreed between Management representatives from Institutes of Technology Ireland and the Trade Unions and this legacy procedure was proposed for adoption by the Governing Body. Feedback received from members was discussed, it was agreed that this would be sent to the policy owner for consideration. Members requested that a reference to the TU Act 2018 as amended by the HEA Act 2022 be included in the procedure.

**Decision:** Subject to inclusion of a reference to the TU Act 2018 as amended by the HEA Act 2022, V1 of the Disciplinary Procedure was adopted on the proposal of MR and seconded by CM.

**Action:** For three HR policies - send feedback to the policy owners for consideration.

### **GB 35.06.5.4 Social Media Policy**

This item was withdrawn by the policy owner to give them an opportunity to address feedback received on the morning of the meeting.

## **GB 35.07 Committee & Subcommittee**

### **GB 35.07.1 Update to EDI Subcommittee Terms of Reference**

TR joined the meeting & explained that the EDI Subcommittee proposes an update its Terms of Reference to reflect current membership.

**Decision:** The update to the EDI Subcommittee Terms of Reference was approved on the proposal of MMcN and seconded by RD

### **GB 35.07.2 Appointment of External GB Member to Subcommittee**

There is currently a vacancy for an external male GB member to join the EDI Subcommittee. No nominations have been received for this vacancy.

**Action:** EDI Subcommittee to reconsider its membership on the basis that there may be insufficient numbers of male members of GB to ensure gender equality on all GB subcommittees.

### **GB 35.07.3 Public Sector Equality & Human Rights Duty Familiarisation Session**

TR advised the meeting that the **Public Sector Duty** is a legal obligation on public bodies, provided for in Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014ii, to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and protect the human rights of public sector staff and service users. The Performance Agreement 2024–2028 between the HEA and ATU commits to provide training for the Governing Body and other decision-making bodies in the University on their responsibilities in delivery of the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty throughout all levels of the University. The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC) monitors implementation of the Duty across the public sector and reports on this process in its annual report.

**Action:** All members of GB and its committee and subcommittees to be invited to the Public Sector Equality & Human Rights Duty Familiarisation Sessions.

**Action:** Recording of one of the Familiarisation Sessions to be made available to GB, committee and subcommittee members who are not available to attend the sessions.

## **GB 35.08 Corporate Governance**

### **GB 35.08.1 Governing Body Training & Induction**

SOC gave information about the GB Induction scheduled for 10<sup>th</sup> September. All members of GB and its committees and subcommittees have been invited to the Induction.

**Action:** To assist members of GB and its committee and subcommittees, identify changes to the legislative landscape since the last governance training session.

**Action:** Record the induction training & making it available to members who are not available to attend.

**Action:** Arrange the material in the training section of the GB SharePoint site by topic, to facilitate easier navigation.



### **GB 35.08.2      Review of Governing Body Standing Orders**

SOC advised that per the review schedule for this document, the Governance team reviewed this document and are not proposing any changes at this time, noting that some changes may be required when addressing the Deloitte report on the gap analysis between the university interim code and the state code and any legal advice received on the HEA Act 2022. The meeting discussed the importance of meeting the timeline documented in section 11.5.1 for distribution of papers for GB meetings, members were thanked for feedback received on papers and asked that going forward such feedback is provided as early as possible.

**Decision:**                The review completed and the recommendation that no changes are to be made at this time was approved on the proposal of DF and seconded by SH.

**Action:**                Consider updates required when reviewing the recommendation arising from the gap analysis between the University's Interim Code and the State Code.

**Action:**                Consider updates required when reviewing legal advice on the implication of the HEA Act 2022 section 89.

### **AOB**

#### **App for Students**

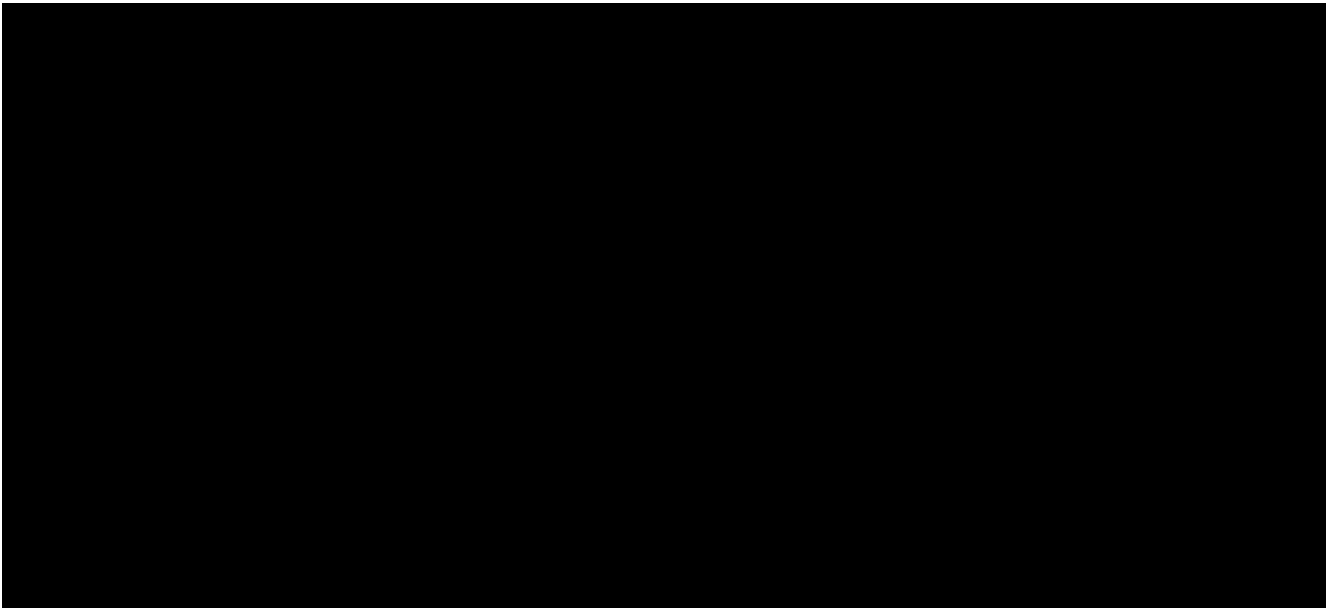
A member suggested that it would be beneficial for students to have an app where all interactions with the University could be accessed on one platform. The member was advised that this is a matter for the executive and was asked to contact the President directly with the suggestion.

#### **Allocation of Resources**

A member raised the issue of class sizes at the start of each academic year noting this is an ethical matter relating to the allocation of teaching and learning resources and its impact on the student experience.

The member was advised that resource allocation is not a reserved function of GB, it is a matter for the executive and was asked to contact the President directly. Members requested information from students about their experience and were reminded about the decision made at the 25<sup>th</sup> August meeting to have a presentation from GB student representatives at the October meeting. It was suggested that GB would benefit from advice from IPA or another consultant on the management of time at GB meetings.

**Action:**                Consider requesting IPA or another consultant to do time management exercise.



The next meeting is scheduled for Monday 6<sup>th</sup> October 2025 at the Donegal - Letterkenny campus.



Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson

05/11/2025  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_