



Ollscoil
Teicneolaíochta
an Atlantaigh

Atlantic
Technological
University

Minutes of the 34th ATU Governing Body Meeting
Held on Monday 25th August 2025 at 9.30am
Sligo 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 – in person	EK
Joe Cunningham – in person	JC
John Daffy – in person	JD
Joseph Sweeney – in person	KS
Kathya Rouse – in person	KR
Regina Daly – in person	RD
Seamus Hughes – online	SH
Thomas Gallagher – in person	TG

In attendance:

Jim Fennell (Secretary) – in person	JF
Dr Tom Ward (IPA) – in person – item 2	TW
Eoin Bradley – in person- item 5	EB
Carol Geraghty (Recording Secretary) – in person	CG
Shane O'Connor – in person	SO'C
Graham Heaslip – in person	GH

Apologies: Joanne Grehan, John Bartlett, Naomi Walsh, Rachel Ashworth

GB 34.01 Declaration of Conflicts of Interests

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

GB 34.02.1 Dignity at Work Policy Effective Date 1st September 2025

The Dignity at Work Policy was approved at the 23rd June Governing Body meeting. JF informed the meeting that since the policy was approved the implementation plan and implementation date for the policy have been agreed. The proposed implementation date is 1st September 2025.

Decision: The implementation date of 1st September 2025 for the Dignity at Work Policy was approved on the proposal of BDS and seconded by JD.

GB 34.03 External Evaluation of Governing Body – IPA Report

TW joined the meeting and thanked members for the extra time given to the review of the report and its recommendations. The list of recommendations from the IPA report was reviewed; decisions were taken and actions were agreed.

R1 *The GB should consider engaging, without delay, external specialist assistance to support it in addressing the current dynamics within the GB. The focus should include building a firm understanding of roles, agreement on common purpose and building working relationships.*

Induction for new members of Governing Body and its Committee & Subcommittees has been scheduled for 10th September 2025. Existing members have been notified of the date & time of the induction and are welcome to attend. Governing Body Training will be scheduled for early 2026.

Action Members who cannot attend induction on 10th September are asked to notify a member of the Governance team.

Action: Members are asked to notify the Secretary if they identify gaps in the training provided or specific training needs which will/could enhance the effectiveness of Governing Body.

R5 *The GB could develop a Skills, Experience and Diversity Matrix to inform reflection on its composition needs and its engagement with stakeholders on nominations to the GB. This should be reviewed periodically.*

Action: Develop and circulate skills & experience self-evaluation for GB members to complete.

Action: Circulate document used by the External Nominations Committee when evaluating external members.

R7 *The GB could consider the merits of a Students' Report as a standing item on the agenda, presented by the President of the Students' Union*

Decision: Add regular reports from Student members to Governing Body Schedule of Agenda Items.

Decision: October Governing Body Agenda Item – Report from Student Members.
This should be one report with separate sections delivered by the three student members.

Action: Student members to agree what the regular report will address, who will deliver the presentation, etc.

R8 *If not the case already, draft minutes should be circulated to members within 7-10 days of the GB's meeting, with members invited to provide feedback and comments. Thereafter, the approval of the minutes at the next meeting should be a routine approval process.*

Action: Members are asked to send feedback on any of the papers or agenda items to the Chair and the Secretary as soon as possible. This is requested to gather and communicate the views of members in advance, it also gives the governance team the opportunity to prepare responses to questions or provide further information if requested.

R9 *All GB papers, except for the minutes, should include a common cover page, which includes details on the nature of the item (i.e., For decision, For noting), a short summary and a recommendation for decision, where applicable.*

Decision: Cover page for Governing Body papers should include, where relevant:

- Options considered with preferred option highlighted
- Summary of limitations associated with the preferred option

R10 *There may be merit in the GB developing a guidance note for the Executive, which outlines its expectations on GB papers, including desired length, use of illustrations, presentation style etc.*

Action: Draft guidance document for members of the executive and staff who submit papers to Governing Body.

R11 *The President's Report could be strengthened through an approach of updating the GB on progress under the key strategic themes of ATU alongside other key matters for its attention.*

OF provided information about changes to the President's Report to Governing Body which will align updates with the strategic plan. These changes will begin to be implemented for the 1st September meeting, but unlikely to be implemented in full until the complete Senior Leadership Team is in place.

Action: Update Governing Body Schedule of Agenda items to include regular reports from the Executive as members of the Senior Leadership Team take up their roles.

Action: Update Governing Body Schedule of Agenda items to include a "strategy" category; should be an agenda item once per semester

R12 *The GB should commit to holding meetings either fully in-person or fully online, with the majority being in-person. This is save for exceptional circumstances whereby a member has a valid reason for not being able to attend in-person.*

Action: Further review of meeting schedule – options to be considered includes:

- Having a number of 100% on-line meetings each year.
- Evaluate suitability of meeting rooms and equipment at all campuses for hybrid meetings.
- Later start time of 10am for Governing Body meetings held away from a central location, i.e. Letterkenny or Galway City.

R13 *All GB meetings should include provision for a midway break of 10-15 minutes*

Implemented at May 2025 meeting.

R14 *The GB could develop and approve a work programme for the year, which will comprise standing items (e.g. President's Report, minutes), cyclical items (e.g. financial statements) and areas that the GB would like to afford attention (such as strategic deep-dives, progress reports)*

Action: Review policies to determine:

- Policies that must be reviewed by Governing Body, ARC and Subcommittees
- Policies that can be delegated to the President or Executive for approval
- If an additional Governing Body Subcommittee is required
- If approved policies should be regularly reported to Governing Body

R15 *There may be merit in restructuring the GB's agenda with the early 'section' comprising Strategy and Performance items and the latter section for compliance and control type items.*

Action: Review meeting agenda layout, in line with actions listed for recommendation 14 to ensure that agenda prioritises strategy and performance matters upfront, with control and compliance addressed thereafter.

R16 Risk should be a standing item on the GB agenda, with consideration (over a given year) of the University's Principal Risks, and management of same, emerging risks, material risk events, Risk Appetite and the Risk Management Policy

Risk is reviewed by ARC at each meeting and this is included in the ARC report to GB.

The meeting discussed the recommendations from IPA on the Governing Body Committee and Subcommittees. These recommendations will be reviewed in more detail by each Committee and Subcommittee. The Student members of GB requested that the FSC membership be updated to include a student representative.

Decision: Membership of FSC updated to include a student representative, this was approved on the proposal of KR and seconded by MMcN.

Action: FSC to update its TOR to reflect decision to update its membership to include a student representative.

TW thanked members for their engagement in the external evaluation process, encouraged GB to continue to implement the recommendations in the report and summarised the main finding from the evaluation.

While welcoming the IPA evaluation and the recommendations in the report, JC reminded the meeting that the University has gone through a period of enormous change since April 2022 in bringing together the staff, systems, processes and culture of four different institutions. He commended everyone involved, and in particular the President for her leadership.

MMcN welcomed the new student members of GB: Emil Kindl, Joseph Sweeney & Thomas Gallagher. The Chair also welcomed Mr Shane O Connor, ATU Governance & Compliance Manager, and Dr Graham Heaslip, Dean of Faculty of Engineering and Computing.

GB 34.01.1 Governing Body Schedule of Agenda Items 2025/2026

JF stated that this is the starting point for GB meeting agendas, facilitates preparation for GB meetings and is a template for the work of the Governance team. This is a live document, it is circulated with papers for every meeting and is subject to change if required.

Decision: Subject to the inclusion of items detailed during the review of recommendations from the IPA Report on the evaluation of GB, the Governing Body Schedule of Agenda items 2025/2026 was approved on the proposal of MMcN and seconded by CM

GB 34.04 Strategic Plan

OF provided an overview of the development of the first ATU Strategic Plan and the 2024-2028 Performance Agreement with HEA. A dashboard showing the progress on meeting objectives of the Strategic Plan is in development. OF summarised progress to date, with information on how the Strategic Plan activities have been promoted as well as key initiatives related to guiding lights, KPIs and some highlights and actions to be taken or challenges in each of the guiding lights. Information about the annual Self-Evaluation report on the Performance Agreement was also provided.

GB34.05 Capital Projects

EB presented the capital projects pipeline and a summary of current and future projects. During the discussion regarding the proposed 2,000 m² motor mechanics facility on the Dublin Road campus, BDS raised concerns about the future proofing of the proposed facility given the rapid and irreversible shift toward electric vehicles (EVs) and the decline of the conventional motor mechanics model. A point was made that the existing apprenticeships already have a significant focus on EV technologies.

Action: Plans for PPP buildings to be displayed on Galway City – Dublin Rd and Letterkenny campuses.

Action: Consider the use of colour coding for the capital projects pipeline.

Action: Communicate ATU structure, campus names, etc to local media.

GB34.05 Sponsorship Profile

The sponsorship profile which had been circulated to the meeting was noted.

AOB

Appointment of Deputy Chair of Governing Body

This was an agenda item for the 1st September meeting which was brought forward.

Decision: On the proposal of KR, Joe Cunningham was approved as Deputy Chair of Governing Body, this was seconded by MMcN.

Master of Pharmacy (MPharm) Programme

OF advised the meeting that the University has just been formally accredited by the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (PSI) to deliver a new Master of Pharmacy (MPharm) programme. The programme will be delivered at the Sligo campus and will start in September 2025, with an initial intake of 32 students through CAO's Available Places option in Round 2.

AIB Sculpture

A sculpture loaned to the University by AIB has been installed at the Galway City – Dublin Rd campus.

Action: Formal unveiling to be scheduled.

Honorary Doctorate

Action: Proposals for the award of Honorary Doctorates to be submitted by email to president@atu.ie using the Honorary Doctorate Degree Candidate Nomination Form which is available on the GB SharePoint site at this link [AQAE019 001 Honorary Doctorate Degree Candidate Nomination Form.docx](#)

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday 1st September 2025 at the Galway City – Dublin Rd campus.



05/11/2025

Signed: _____
Chairperson

Date: _____