



Ollscoil
Teicneolaíochta
an Atlantaigh

Atlantic
Technological
University

Minutes of the 36th ATU Governing Body Meeting

Held on Monday 6th October 2025 at 10am

Donegal – Letterkenny Campus and TEAMS

Present:

Maura McNally – online	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
Joe Cunningham – in person	JC
John Daffy – online	JD
Joseph Sweeney – in person	KS
Kathya Rouse – in person	KR
Regina Daly – online	RD
Seamus Hughes – in person	SH
Thomas Gallagher – online	TG
Dr John Bartlett – online	JB
Naomi Walsh – online	NW
Rachel Ashworth – online	RA

In attendance:

Jim Fennell (Secretary) – in person	JF
Dr Billy Bennett – in person	BB
Carol Geraghty (Recording Secretary) – in person	CG
Shane O'Connor – in person – items 8.2 & 8.3	SO'C
Dr Des Foley – online – item 7.2	AH
Dr Jacqueline O'Toole – online – item 8.1	JOT
Ann Marie McCormack – online – item 6.1	AMMcC
Elizabeth McCabe – online – item 7.2	EMcC
Dr Michele Glacken – online – item 9	MG

Apologies: Joanne Grehan, Emil Kindl

GB 36.01 Meeting of External Members

No actions reported from the private meeting of external members.

GB 36.02 Declaration of Conflicts of Interests

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

GB 36.03 Approval of Governing Body Minutes

GB 36.03.1 Minutes of 25th August 2025

Decision: The minutes of the 25th August Governing Body meeting were approved on the proposal of KR and seconded by CM.

GB 36.03.2 Minutes of 1st September 2025

Minutes to be updated as follows and circulated for review:

- Item 35.05.1 – a member requested that his dissent to this decision be recorded in the meeting minutes.
- AOB Allocation of Resources – the member who raised this matter requested that the wording be revised to reflect the intention that this be considered by GB as an ethical concern. Proposed update - replace "~~A member requested that the GB consider the impact of allocation of teaching & learning resources on the student experience~~" with "*A member raised the issue of class sizes at the start of each academic year, noting this as an ethical matter relating to the allocation of teaching and learning resources and its impact on the student experience*".

Action: Wording to be agreed & circulated; review of Minutes of 1st September 2025 to be agenda item for 3rd November GB meeting.

GB 36.04 Matters Arising & Correspondence

GB 36.04.1 Governing Body Log of Actions

The Governing Body Log of Actions was circulated to members in advance of the meeting. JF summarised "propose closed" items. Papers were provided for actions 175, 173, 174, 177 & 186.

Action 32 – the Finance team and Academic Affairs reporting team is working on providing the requested information in the next SRS report.

Action 185 – this will be kept open until November, when the item will be on the GB agenda.

Action 175 – legal advice received is that GB should consider updating the Standing Orders to include sanctions for breaches of the Code of Conduct.

Action 173 – BB presented the paper. In response to a question BB clarified that restrictions to resource access is confined to a small number of students who have not paid any fees or engaged in any manner with the Fee Collection team.

Action 174 – BB summarised the report and provided information about the source of the funds. Members welcomed the proposed student emergency fund referenced in the report and discussed the impact of the lack of student accommodation.

Action 177 – it was decided to trial an on-line meeting in November.

Action 186 – the report on how the ladder system is communicated to students was welcomed.

There was a discussion about the definition of “closed”. It was agreed that items should be closed when there is no further follow-up or updates to be given to GB.

Decision: On the proposal of DF and seconded by KR all actions listed as propose closed, except action 185, to be closed.

Decision: The Secretary to GB to instruct the University’s legal advisors to draft an update to the Standing Orders on the proposal of KR, this was seconded by CM.

Decision: The 3rd November GB meeting will be 100% online, this was approved on the proposal of DF and seconded by KR.

Action: GB to raise its concerns in a letter to the Minister for FHERIS regarding the lack of availability of student accommodation.

Action: Student Representatives to provide any available quantitative data & student stories relating to student accommodation to support the communication to the Minister for FHERIS.

Action: Review Log of Actions to confirm that no further follow-up or updates to GB required for propose closed items.

GB 36.05 President’s Report

GB 36.05.1 Presidents Update to Governing Body

OF summarised the report circulated in advance of the meeting giving further updates on:

- National Ploughing Championships – staff from all campuses attended to represent the University; the Veterinary team attended and there was a public announcement of the new Veterinary programme team, with the programme launch due in November.

- SLT – an additional business case was provided to DFHERIS, who have completed their review of the business case for the last 4 Senior Leadership Team (SLT) positions; a decision is now awaited from DPER.
- Welcomed the decision to invite BB to Governing Body meetings in his capacity as a member of the SLT.
- Student accommodation – it is expected that the National Student Accommodation Strategy will be launched by the Government in the coming weeks.
The meeting discussed the impact of lack of student accommodation on the ability of the University to achieve its strategic objectives.
- Student numbers – the University showed a strong performance for the 2024/25 academic year. Members gave their congratulations for the increase in student numbers.
- The final draft of the HEA Performance Agreement Self-Evaluation Report was submitted last week, copy to be circulated to the Strategic Development Committee and also made available to members of GB.

Action: Include any feedback on the National Student Accommodation Strategy in the letter to Minister for FHERIS re student accommodation.

GB 36.05.2 UPT Meeting Minutes

OF advised that major items from UPT meetings are highlighted in her report to GB.

GB 36.06 Report from Academic Council & Registrar

GB 36.06.1 Registered Student Numbers & Student Profile 2024/25

AMMcC presented a summary of the report on Registered Student Numbers & Student Profile 2024/25. The Academic Affairs Reporting team was complemented on the report and their categorisation of data across the four new faculties. In response to concern raised by a member about what could be perceived as a high percentage of 1st class honours, AMMcC provided information about the University's performance versus national trends since 2021. BB clarified that the University offers PhD, traditional research masters and structured masters programmes; while these are different types of research degrees, they are all categorised as research students when reporting student numbers as per HEA definitions. Members discussed how this data could be used to improve the student experience and student retention.

Action: Provide research enrolment data, including student research numbers if possible, for other TUs and traditional universities.

GB 36.07 Items for Approval

GB 36.07.1 Staff Appointment

The following staff appointment was presented to Governing Body for approval:

Post	Location	Contract Type & Term	Grade	Basis for Appointment	Recommended Candidate
Head of Dept of Education	St Angelas				Ann Marie Casserly

Decision: This post was approved on the proposal of CM and seconded by JD

GB 36.07.2 Annual Review of IP Commercialisation & Conflicts of Interest

DF and EMcC joined the meeting. DF provided information about the Knowledge Transfer Office, performance highlights detailed in the report and the committee membership. No conflicts of interest were noted for 2024. OF stated that IP is one of the major assets that the University can have and it is important that GB has oversight of IP commercialisation and any related conflicts of interest.

Decision: The annual review of IP commercialisation and conflicts of interest was approved on the proposal of MMcN and seconded by JC.

GB 36.07.3 Social Media Policy

CD joined the meeting and presented the ATU Social Media Policy, including information about the development of the policy and the consultation process.

Decision: The Social Media Policy V1 was approved on the proposal of DF and seconded by KR.

GB 36.08 Committee & Subcommittee Reports

GB 36.08.1 Report from EDI Subcommittee Meeting of 15th September

JMcC presented the report from the EDI Subcommittee Meeting of 15th September. The University has been awarded its first Athena Swan Bronze award, congratulations were extended to everyone involved.

GB 36.08.2 Report from Finance Subcommittee Meeting of 22nd September

CM outlined the highlights of the Report from FSC on their meeting of 22nd September including:

- A report was received on the duplicate payments to Ukrainian students last June.
- The meeting received information about the recent decision to approve capital funding for the Veterinary facilities.
- There was a discussion on adjustments to the financial statements and controls that have been put in place.
- Student fee collection was discussed, the FSC has requested regular updates on the project to move the responsibility to Finance for all fee collection .

FSC is recommending each of the following items for approval by GB.

GB 36.08.2.1 Update to FSC Terms of Reference

SO'C summarised changes proposed to the FSC Terms of Reference as recommended in the IPA Report.

Decision: The proposed update to the FSC Terms of Reference was approved on the proposal of JC and seconded by DF

GB 36.08.2.2.1 State Aid Policy

The purpose of this new policy is to ensure that State aid granted to the University by the government complies with European Union (EU) rules regarding the separation of economic and non-economic activities. This policy has been agreed with Research Ireland and Enterprise Ireland. Feedback received from a member will be sent to the policy owner for consideration when the document is next being reviewed or updated.

Decision: V1 of the State Aid Policy was approved on the proposal of DF and seconded by KR.

GB 36.08.2.2.2 Additional Payments to Academic Staff Policy

This is an update to an existing policy to increase the maximum hours payable to take into account work undertaken during the period from 21st June to 31st August. This includes but is not limited to research supervision and research work. Two updates were requested:

- A correction is required to the first sentence of Section 4 paragraph 4, this should read "*the total additional hours paid to a staff member should not exceed 353 hours* ,,,".
- Add "*Participation in additional work is voluntary and is not a contractual condition nor is it evaluated as a contribution to career progression*" to section 4.1.

Decision: Subject to the updates detailed above, V1.1 of the Additional Payments to Academic Staff Policy was approved on the proposal of MMcN and seconded by JD.

GB 36.08.2.2.3 Fixed Assets Policy

This is an update to an existing policy to address items noted in the Management Letter dated August 2023 from the Office of the Comptroller & Auditor General.

Decision: V1.1 of the Fixed Asset Policy was approved on the proposal of DF and seconded by KR.

Action: Send feedback from GB Members to policy owners for future consideration.

GB 36.08.2.3 Fee Schedule

SO'C summarised the changes to the 2025/26 fee schedule.

Decision: Updates to the 2025/26 fee schedule approved on the proposal of KR and seconded by RD.

GB 36.08.2.4 Bank Account Closure

A list of bank accounts which are no longer in use was presented to GB and approval was requested to close these accounts.

JF advised of the AIB, Bank of Ireland and PTSB practice of requiring new accounts to be opened when money is placed on fixed term deposit.

Decision: Bank accounts listed in the paper circulated prior to the meeting to be closed on the proposal of DF and seconded by MMcN.

Decision: On the proposal of SH and seconded by CM, approval was given to continue to place fixed term deposits with AIB, Bank of Ireland and PTSB, with the understanding that banks open new accounts for each deposit made.

GB 36.08.2.5 Capital Development Reserve (CDR)

SO'C advised the meeting that a review of the University's CDR has been completed by the Finance team & presented to the FSC. This review has resulted in surplus reserves for completed projects and reserves previously allocated to projects which are not currently funded being released to the revenue reserves. The review consequently identified that a net transfer from revenue reserves to the CDR of €6,990,000 is required to fund those projects for which CDR has been committed. This now accurately reflects the University's Capital Development Reserve position.

Decision: The net transfer of €6,990,000 to the Capital Development Reserve was approved on the proposal of JC and seconded by DF.

GB 36.08.2.6 Employment Control Framework at 30th June 2025

This was circulated for information, no additional information requested from members.

GB 36.08.3 Report from ARC Meeting of 24th September

JC & SO'C summarised the report from ARC on their meeting of 24th September.

ARC is recommending each of the following items for approval by GB.

GB 36.08.3.1 Charities Code Amended Return 2022-23

SO'C summarised the proposed changes.

Decision: The amended Charities Code Return 2022-23 was approved on the proposal of CM and seconded by DF.

GB 36.08.3.2 Risk Appetite Statement

The Cyber Security risk in the University's formal Risk Appetite Statement is being updated. In response to questions, the meeting was advised that no controls are being reduced and monitoring of this risk falls under the remit of the ICT Security Subcommittee of ARC. Membership of the ICT Security Subcommittee includes a University IT management representative and external industry experts.

Decision: The update to the Risk Appetite Statement was approved on the proposal of CM, this was seconded by KR.

GB 36.08.3.3 Annual Review of Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy

Following its annual review of the adequacy and effectiveness of the Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policies, ARC recommends both policies for approval without any amendments.

Decision: V1.3 of the Anti-Corruption Policy & V1.3 of the Anti-Fraud Policy were approved on the proposal of JD and seconded by MMcN.

GB 36.08.3.4 Delegation of Policy Approval

SO'C provided information about the new Policy Management Framework. This Framework establishes a consistent process for the development, approval, communication, implementation, monitoring and review of university policies. The Framework proposes a streamlined approval processes in line with the IPA governance review recommendation that Governing Bodies focus on strategic and reserved functions. Feedback received from a member will be sent to the policy owner for consideration when the framework is next being reviewed or updated. GB members were asked to consider becoming members of the Policy Review Group, and were advised that more information on this Policy Review Group will be provided.

Decision: The Policy Management Framework V1 was approved & BdS was nominated to join the Policy Review Group on the proposal of MMcN and seconded by DF.

Action: Draft the Central Policy Register

GB 36.08.3.5 Annual Conflicts Report to GB

GB 36.08.3.6 Non-Compliant Procurement Report

GB 36.08.3.7 Legal Advice on TU Trustees

These reports and advice were provided for information. Members did not pose any questions on these documents.

GB 36.09 Presentation from Student Representatives

JS & TG gave an overview of Students Union activities and plans for the 2025/26 academic year. Members thanked the student representatives for their concise and informative presentation and congratulated them on the success of the Rent-a-Room Scheme flyer distribution campaign.

GB 36.10 AOB

GB 36.10.1 Capital Projects Pipeline

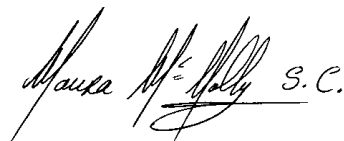
GB 36.10.2 Schedule of Agenda Items

These reports were provided for information.

A member suggested that the University consider the introduction of a letter from the President for students who achieve a high grade point average (GPA) in their final year exams. The member was advised that this is a matter for Academic Council and was asked to contact the President & Chief Academic Officer directly with the suggestion. OF stated that the University currently recognises 1st year students who achieve over 555 points in their Leaving Cert, and a range of awards are presented at the graduation ceremonies.

Members commended OF on her recent media interviews where she highlighted the impact on the region and the University of not being able to appoint professors.

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday 3rd November 2025 on TEAMS.



05/11/2025

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Chairperson