



Ollscoil
Teicneolaíochta
an Atlantaigh

Atlantic
Technological
University

Minutes of the 26th ATU Governing Body Meeting

Held on Monday 2nd September 2024 at 9.30am

Mayo Campus and TEAMS

Present

Dr Orla Flynn (President) – in person	OF
Dr Brian De Souza – in person	BDS
Dr Martin Robinson – online	MR
Joe Cunningham – in person	JC
Dr John Bartlett – in person	JB
John Daffy – online	JD
Michael Gilvarry – in person	MG
Oonagh Monahan – online	OM
Regina Daly – in person	RD
Seamus Hughes – online	SH
Dara Foynes – online	DF
Kevin Sweeney – online	KS
Julia Bocianowska – online	JB
Sarah Mohan – online	SM
Rachel Ashworth – online	RA
Joanne Grehan – in person	JG

In attendance:

Jim Fennell (Secretary) – in person	JF
Carol Geraghty (Recording Secretary) – in person	CG
Michael Henehan – in person – Items 5.1 & 6.1	MH
Dr Billy Bennett – in person – item 8	BB
Michael Hopkins – online – Items 4.4 & 5.4	MHop
John Gannon – online – Item 4.4	JG
Deirdre Kinearney – online – Item 5.4	DK
Dr Patrick Tobin – in person – Item 4.5	PT
Aidan Haughey – online – Item 4.1	AH
Cleo Devaney – online Item 4.2	CD

Apologies: Maura McNally, David Minton

OM was nominated to chair the meeting on the proposal of MG, this was seconded by JC

The new student representatives were welcomed to their first meeting.

GB 26.01 Declaration of Conflicts of Interests

No conflicts of interest were declared.

GB 26.02 Approval of Governing Body Minutes

Draft minutes of the 24th June meeting were circulated to members in advance of the meeting. The following updates were requested:

- [REDACTED]
- GB 25.05.4.2 Wellpark Modular Building – add “Concern was expressed about the cost of the modular building.”

Decision: The minutes of 24th June were approved with the above detailed changes on the proposal of RD and seconded by MR

GB 26.03 Matters Arising and Correspondence

GB 26.03.1 Governing Body Log of Actions

- Action 1 *Set up Designated Activity Company (DAC) for philanthropic donations*: update received from DFHERIS in August - they are working on a standard form for DACs, this will be issued as soon as available.
- Action 16 *Update on Student Building Galway*: Members agreed that this action would be removed from this log, the action will be managed by the Strategic Development Subcommittee and, when applicable, updates on the progress of the building will be included in the Strategic Development Subcommittee report to Governing Body.
- Action 105 *Template for Capital Projects* – will be presented to the next Strategic Development Subcommittee meeting & to following Governing Body meeting. It was clarified that the template will be for large-scale capital projects only, equipment investment is financed through the annual devolved grant.
- Action 111 *3rd Ministerial Nominee*: DFHERIS has requested further information and clarification on the information to be included in the booklet from the Public Appointment Service (PAS).

All items presented as *Propose Closed* can be closed.

Proposed by JG, seconded by JD

GB 26.04 Items for Approval

GB 26.04.1 Annual Reports

4.1.1 ATU Annual Report 1 April 2022 – 31 August 2023

4.1.2 GMIT Annual Report 1 September 2021 – 31 March 2022

4.1.3 LYIT Annual Report 1 September 2020 – 31 March 2022

4.1.4 IT Sligo Annual Report 1 September 2021 – 31 March 2022

OF summarised the legislative requirement for Governing Body to approve the first annual report of the TU and the last Annual Report for the three legacy institutes. The final annual report for St. Angela's is not yet available. There is no provision in the legislation for situations such as St Angela's becoming part of ATU. As soon as the final annual report for St Angela's is available it will be submitted to Governing Body for review and approval and, when approved, will be sent to DFHERIS. It was clarified that members are asked to consider the approval of the content of the annual reports at this meeting. Once the content is approved it will be sent to the designers who will put the reports into their final format.

ATU annual report:

Clarification – Table: Summary of Programme Validations (1 April 2022 – 31 August 2023) on page 14 does not include any level 6 or level 7 programmes. Members asked for clarification on whether any level 6 or level 7 programmes validated during the timeframe. If yes, the table should be updated to reflect these.

Addition – it was agreed that the paragraph headed Academic Recognition and Research QA on page 14 should be updated to more accurately reflect the processes used during the interim period before the ATU policies were implemented. Suggested wording for this paragraph to be submitted to the Communications team for inclusion in the report.

Decision: Members approved that the content of the ATU, GMIT, LYIT and IT Sligo annual reports, with the addition and clarification detailed above to the ATU annual report, could be sent to the designers. This was proposed by MG and seconded by DF

Action Final version of annual reports to be circulated to Governing Body members.

GB 26.04.2 Sponsorship of Sligo GAA

A summary of the sponsorship policy was provided, along with information on how sponsorships are considered by the Sponsorship Committee. CD joined the meeting & presented the sponsorship agreement circulated to members prior to the meeting, confirming that the ATU logo appears on Sligo GAA county jerseys for all ladies and men teams. It was agreed that this sponsorship agreement represents good value for money. There was a discussion about the sponsorship agreements currently in place including sport, music, culture and other activities, the type of sponsorship requests being received and the future plans for sponsorships. Members were advised that the Sponsorship Committee is currently drafting guidelines for future sponsorships which will take into account the expectation of inclusion and geographic representation as outlined in the University's policies and strategic plan.

Decision: The extension of the existing sponsorship agreement with Sligo GAA for a further 2-years with the value of the agreement set at €15k per annum was approved on the proposal of MG, this was seconded by JD

Action: When finalised, share sponsorship guidelines with GB

GB 26.04.3 Recruitment & Selection Procedure

JF summarised the proposed updates to the Procedure which are mainly practical changes to help the process run more smoothly. In response to a question, it was confirmed that the University's gender representation policy (40% female & 40% male) is reflected in section A point 5. Members discussed the "*additional member in an advisory capacity to the interview board*" (Part A 1) including what their role is, whether they ask questions at the interview, whether they are involved in the decision-making part of the interview process, when their involvement starts and ends. Members requested that this role be clarified in the procedure. Under the RTC Act, there was a requirement that Governing Body members be involved in interview panels for senior staff, this is no longer a requirement under the TU Act. It was requested that Part B Shortlisting be updated to reflect the current practice that the shortlisting is approved by all interview board members.

Action: Further review / update requested:

- Clarify the role of the "*additional member in an advisory capacity to the interview board*" (Part A 1)
- Update Section B Shortlisting to the current practice that the shortlisting is approved by all interview board members.

GB 26.04.4 Contract for Network Solutions and Associated Services

In response to questions from members, MHop and JG provided information on the OGP (Office of Government Procurement) tender process, the cost comparison to similar works completed at the Donegal campus and how costs of the contract will be charged e.g. a large initial cost for equipment.

Decision: The award a contract for Network Solutions and Associated Services for ATU to Vodafone Ireland with an estimated upper value of €3.5m (exc VAT) was approved on the proposal of OM, this was seconded by JG. The initial contract will be for Galway-Mayo campuses, with drawdown available across all campuses

GB 26.04.5 Wood Dust Extraction Replacement & Upgrade Connemara Campus

OF provided an overview of the programmes delivered at the Connemara campus. PT joined the meeting and summarised the proposal. The discussion included how the cost will be funded; how long it is expected that the equipment will be in use; equipment maintenance, how this is tracked & financed, the impact of maintenance costs; how the risk associated with the failure of this equipment is recorded in the functional risk register for the School. In this case, the time taken to progress through the tender process has resulted in an increase in costs, however, it was noted that the University now has a dedicated Procurement team who have put procedures in place and the tender process is more efficient.

Decision: Subject to the Finance Subcommittee approving the required funding, JC proposed the approval to proceed to award the contract to Maginn Pure Air for the upgrade for Phase 1 at a cost of €1,076,300 (inc. VAT) and re-issue the tender for Phase 2 with an expected cost of [REDACTED] (inc. VAT), this was seconded by BDS.

Action: Highlight to the Office of Government Procurement (OGP) that there may be circumstances when a procurement process can impact negatively on achieving value for money.

GB 26.04.6 Staff Appointment

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



Decision: The above post was approved on the proposal of OM and seconded by DF

GB 26.05 Corporate Governance

GB 26.05.1 Governing Body Self-Assessment Review – feedback from Members

This item was deferred to a future meeting.

Members agreed that the feedback received could be shared with the training provider who is contracted to give Governing Body training.

GB 26.05.2 Review of Governing Body Standing Orders

JF advised that per the Governing Body Workplan, the Corporate Governance team reviewed this document and are not proposing any changes. Members were asked if they concur with this decision or would like to propose changes to the document. In response to questions about sections 7.3 and 11.6.2, it was confirmed that the wording used in the document comes from the TU Act 2018 as amended by the HEA Act 2022.

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

GB 26.05.3 Governing Body Training

JF updated attendees on the process of sourcing a training provider and scheduling training.

Action: Agree suitable dates with GB members and schedule training

GB 26.05.4 Report on Non-compliant Procurement

MHop and DK presented benchmark data for other Irish Universities and summarised the processes that the Procurement team has put in place to track and deal with non-compliances including the implementation of a Contract Management System and the plans to link it to the Finance System (Agresso). Members thanked the Procurement team for the informative data provided in response to a request at the June meeting and again expressed the opinion that following the procurement process may be impacting negatively on value for money. In response to a question about conflict of interest, MHop advised that the University has a Conflict of Interest Policy and applicants are asked to declare any conflict of interest during the tender and sole source processes. There is no guidance from the HEA on how non-compliant procurement should be classified and no agreement about this across the sector with different universities using various thresholds and criteria for reporting.

Action: Ask HEA for guidance on how non-compliant procurement should be classified

GB 26.06 Committee & Subcommittee Reports

GB 26.06.1 Items approved by Governing Body Subcommittee with Delegated Authority
There were two meetings of the Governing Body Subcommittee with Delegated Authority, a summary of decisions was circulated to members.

GB 26.06.2 Governing Body Subcommittee with Delegated Authority meeting minutes
Minutes of the two meetings of the Governing Body Subcommittee with Delegated Authority were circulated to members.

Decision: The minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body Subcommittee with Delegated Authority on 14th August were approved on the proposal of OM, this was seconded by JC.

GB 26.07 President's Report

GB 26.07.1 President's Update to Governing Body
OF summarised the information provided to members prior to the meeting.

GB 26.08 Report from Academic Council & Registrar

GB 26.08.1 Academic Council Meeting Minutes
Minutes of two Academic Council meetings were circulated. BB presented a summary of the decisions made at these meetings.

GB 26.08.2 Academic Council Term of Office
The term of office of the current Academic Council ends mid-December 2024. BB & OF presented options for the Academic Council term of office, provided a summary of the proposed consultation process and requested the opinions of Governing Body members, asking them to take into consideration the expected timing of the agreement on faculty structures (during academic year 2024/2025) which will impact the constituencies for election of Academic Council members, work to be completed by the QAET and finalising the CINNTE Review (end of academic year 2024/2025), as well as the CORE integration project.

Decision: Governing Body members expressed the opinion that the best option would be the extension of the term of office of the current Academic Council for no more than 9-12 months, subject to consultation with Academic Council and the relevant unions. This was proposed by JB and seconded by MR.

GB 26.09 AOB

GB 26.09.1 Governing Body Workplan
JM advised that this is a live document, subject to change and is provided for every meeting. Members requested further information on the process for approval of the Budget, which is an agenda item for the March Governing Body meeting. Suggestions were made for agenda items including a presentation from one of the student representatives to Governing Body on behalf of students and presentations from coal-face practitioners across the University.

Action: Finance Subcommittee to include information about the budget preparation process in their next report to Governing Body.

Action: Student representatives to make a presentation to Governing Body

GB 26.09.2 Sponsorship Schedule
JM advised that this is a schedule of approved sponsorships which is circulated to Governing Body regularly throughout the year, for information.

GB 26.09.3 Meeting with QQI CINNTE Review Team
There will be an on-site visit by the QQI (Quality & Qualifications Ireland) CINNTE Review Team at the Sligo campus. The QQI CINNTE Review Team has requested a short meeting (45 minutes approx.) on 11th November with representatives from Governing Body during their on-site visit.

Action: Members to advise their availability to attend the meeting with the QQI CINNTE Review Team.

GB 26.09.4 Award of Honorary Doctorates

Plans are being made to award two honorary doctorates; these are likely to be stand-alone events. The first is provisionally scheduled for the Donegal Letterkenny campus on 2nd October @ 1.30. The date and location for the second is still being discussed, it is expected that this will be during November or December and will be at either the Galway city or Mayo campus.

GB 26.09.5 Communication with the Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science

Members suggested that, if the executive and the Chair agreed, a letter should be written to the Minister outlining the top concerns of the Governing Body e.g. the lack of TU representation on the HEA Board, student accommodation and the inability of TU's to borrow money; and request a meeting to discuss these in person.

Action: Discuss with the Chair the issue of a communication to the Minister

Members thanked OM for chairing the meeting.

The next Governing Body meeting will be on 7th October at the Letterkenny campus & on TEAMS.



Signed: _____
Meeting Chairperson

Date: October 7th 2024