



Ollscoil
Teicneolaíochta
an Atlantaigh

Atlantic
Technological
University

Minutes of the 27th ATU Governing Body Meeting

Held on Monday 7th October 2024 at 9.30am

Letterkenny Campus and TEAMS

Present:

Maura McNally – online	MMcN
Dr Orla Flynn (President) – in person	OF
Dara Foynes S.C. – online	DF
David Minton – online	DM
Dr Brian De Souza – in person	BDS
Dr John Bartlett – in person	JB
Dr Martin Robinson – in person	MR
Joanne Grehan – online	JG
Joe Cunningham – online	JC
John Daffy – online	JD
Julia Bocianowska – in person	JBoc
Kevin Sweeney – in person	KS
Oonagh Monahan – online	OM
Professor Rachel Ashworth – online	RA
Regina Daly – in person	RD
Sarah Mohan – in person	SM
Seamus Hughes – in person	SH

In attendance:

Jim Fennell (Secretary) – online	JF
Carol Geraghty (Recording Secretary) – in person	CG
Michael Henehan – in person	MH
Dr Billy Bennett – in person – items 9 & 10	BB
Dr Michele Glacken – in person – item 9.4 & 10	MGl
Elizabeth McCabe – online – items 4.3, 6.1.5, 6.3	EMcC
Dr Des Foley – in person – item 4.3	DFol
Henry McGarvey – online – item 4.5	HMcG
Noel McLoughlin – online – item 4.5	NMcL
██████████ – in person – item 6.1.2	██████
Jacqueline McCormack – online – item 6.2	JMcC
Jacqueline O'Toole – in person – item 9.4	JO'T

Apologies: Michael Gilvarry

MMcN was not available at the start of the meeting. SH was nominated to chair the meeting on the proposal of OF, this was seconded by MR.

GB 27.01 Declaration of Conflicts of Interests

No conflicts of interest were declared.

GB 27.02 Approval of Governing Body Minutes

Draft minutes of the 2nd September meeting were circulated to members in advance of the meeting. Item GB26.03.1 Action 16 - it was clarified that regular updates on this will be provided to Governing Body by the Strategic Development Subcommittee.

Decision: The minutes of 2nd September were approved on the proposal of OM and seconded by DF

GB 27.03 Matters Arising and Correspondence

GB 27.03.1 Governing Body Log of Actions

- Action 1 *Set up Designated Activity Company (DAC) for philanthropic donations*: still awaiting a response from DFHERIS in August. ATU has completed registration for the Ireland Fund
- Action 86 - *propose closed* – approval received from DFHERIS for membership of CAO
- Action 107 – OF stated that, in the absence of an announcement from the Government about student accommodation, a letter has been sent stating the University's commitment to build student accommodation on the land.
- Action 112 – concerns were again raised about the use of preferred name on Student ID. This will be discussed at the next EDI Subcommittee meeting, and legal advice will be sought in parallel.

All items presented as *Propose Closed* and item 86 can be closed. Proposed by BDS, seconded by RD

Action: Ask legal advisers to characterise and quantify any and all potential risk to the university on the issuing of formal ATU identity cards that are not in the legal name of the individual involved.

GB27.03.1.1 Updates requested to ATU Annual Report

Further information was requested on the inclusion of Level 6/7 programme to Table: Summary of Programme Validations (1 April 2022 – 31 August 2023 on page 14). This was addressed at Item 9 of the agenda.

[REDACTED]

Decision: The above posts were approved on the proposal of JB and seconded by DM

Members discussed the consideration given to gender balance during the recruitment process; if there should be a minimum number of candidates for interview, whether this is dependent on the contract type and if this should be reflected in the Recruitment and Selection procedure.

Action: EDI Subcommittee to analyse the impact on gender balance of staff appointments taking into account the gender balance of applicants and successful candidates

Action: Request further information on disparity between number called for interview and number actually attending for interview - Post 2

GB 27.04.2 Appointment of Student Member to Strategic Development Subcommittee

Student members have nominated Julia Bocianowska to be a member of the Strategic Development Subcommittee.

Decision: Julia Bocianowska was appointed as Student Member to Strategic Development Subcommittee to the end of her current term on Governing Body on 30th June 2025 on the proposal of OM, this was seconded by OF

GB 27.04.3 Annual review of IP Commercialisation and Conflicts of Interest

OF referred to item 3.1.2 and the question from HEA about IP commercialisation and conflicts of interest and advised the meeting that it is the expectation of HEA that this will be reviewed at least annually. This is the second annual review for the University. EMcC summarised the report circulated including information about the IP Committee and a summary of items considered by the IP Committee. No conflicts of interest relating to commercialisation have been identified. DFol gave an overview of the Knowledge Transfer Office, including work completed to date and future plans.

Decision: The annual review of IP Commercialisation and conflict of interest was approved on the proposal of JB, this was seconded by MR

GB 27.04.4 Recruitment & Selection Procedure

Members received a response to the items identified for review / update when the proposed updates to this procedure were reviewed at the September meeting. There was further discussion about whether shortlisting should be approved by only the shortlisting panel or by the entire selection panel; the make-up of the shortlisting panel was discussed; it was suggested that the text “must be capable of performing duties required” be added to Part C 6 of the procedure.

Decision: Proposed changes to the procedure were approved on the proposal of BDS, this was seconded by RD

Action: Request further information from HR as follows:

- Benchmark the practice across the sector re shortlisting process
- Consider request to add “must be capable of performing duties required” to Part C 6 of the procedure
- Consider expanding shortlisting panel to min 3 persons

MMcN joined the meeting and took the Chair.

GB 27.04.5 Land Transfer – Sligo Campus

HMcG and NMcL summarised the paper circulated with meeting papers.

Decision: The transfer of the lands in folio SL704F to the University was approved on the proposal of OM, this was seconded by SH

GB 27.05 Corporate Governance

GB 27.05.1 Governing Body Self-Assessment Review – feedback from Members

This item was deferred from the September meeting. Members were asked to consider:

1. What is working well for Governing Body
2. What could be improved in the workings of the Governing Body.

The responses received were circulated to members. These were discussed.

Action: Send responses to the corporate governance training provider (IPA)

Action: Governing Body members to complete Unconscious Bias training

Action: Develop a glossary of terms for Governing Body members

GB 27.05.2 Governing Body Training

Training has been scheduled for 14th October @ 9.30, this will be provided by the Institute of Public Administration (IPA).

GB 27.06 Committee & Subcommittee Reports

GB 27.06.1 Report from Audit & Risk Committee

JC reported on the September ARC meeting.

Action: ARC, with input from the internal auditors if required, to review mechanism for recording the concerns of Governing Body members

GB 27.06.1.1 Report from Corporate Governance Audit

The report from the Corporate Governance Audit was reviewed by ARC, there was one moderate finding from the audit. A member expressed a view that the audit seemed limited in its scope as there was no reference to students, teaching or learning. The meeting noted that the scope of the audit was to determine compliance with the Code of Governance

GB 27.06.1.2 Areas of Focus for those in Governance

██████████ from Deloitte joined the meeting and gave a presentation on areas of focus for those in governance.

GB 27.06.1.3 Capital Development Reserve Policy

ARC recommended for approval an update to the Capital Development Reserve Policy to reflect an update to the *HEA Protocol for Transfers to Capital Development Reserves in the Technological Sector* which allows interest earned to be included in allowable transfers to Capital Development Reserves. In response to a query, OF stated that a template for tracking capital projects has been developed. This will be reviewed at the next Strategic Development Subcommittee meeting and will then be reported to Governing Body. Members asked for details of the type of information considered during the tendering process for capital or building projects e.g. if previous history of delivering projects on time and on budget is reviewed.

Decision: The update to the Capital Development Reserve policy was approved on the proposal of MR, this was seconded by SH

Action: Request report on items considered during the tendering process for capital / building projects

GB 27.06.1.4 Code of Conduct for Governing Body Members

ARC recommended for approval the Code of Conduct for Governing Body Members which has been drafted by Deloitte, taking into account the State Code, good practice, the THEA Template Code of Conduct for Governing Body and input from Governing Body members.

Decision: On the proposal of JB the Code of Conduct for Governing Body Members was approved, this was seconded by MMcN

GB 27.06.1.5 Update on Sligo Leitrim ITS Regional Development Projects DAC

EMC presented an update on the Sligo Leitrim ITS Regional Development Projects DAC. During the discussions BDS requested a site visit to the AIM Centre, developed by the DAC, to understand the work in which they are engaged.

Action: Write to DFHERIS requesting a response on the issues raised relating to the DAC

Action: VPFCS Sligo to arrange a site visit for members

GB 27.06.2.1 Equality Statement

JMcC summarised the requirement per the TU Act 2018 as amended by the HEA Act 2022 for the University to have an Equality Statement & clarified that the draft statement was sent to the Minister for consultation. The draft statement was also sent to the other stakeholders for consultation. A slight change to wording as follows was agreed: ~~ATU is anti racist, taking action to address all forms of structural, institutional and individual aspects of racism~~ ATU and has signed and strongly endorsed the Anti-Racism Principles for Irish Higher Education Institutions and is actively working to address all forms of structural, institutional and individual aspects of racism.

Decision: Subject to the changes detailed above, the ATU Equality Statement was approved on the proposal of MMcN, this was seconded by DF

GB 27.06.3.1 Transfer to Capital Development Reserves – Dust Extraction (Connemara Campus)

This project was approved by Governing Body at their September meeting, subject to funding and funding options approval by the Finance Subcommittee. The Finance Subcommittee reviewed funding options and is recommending funding as follows:

Total Cost	€1,276,300
Funding Source:	
Building and Estates Budget related to the School 2024:	€125,000
Additional places funding:	€175,000
Digital Academy for the Sustainable Built Environment (DASBE)	€140,000
Total to be allocated from reserves	€836,300

Decision: The transfer to Capital Development Reserves of €836,300 for the Dust Extraction replacement (Connemara Campus) was approved on the proposal of BDS, this was seconded by RD

GB 27.06.3.2 Transfer to Capital Development Reserves – Land Acquisition Letterkenny

This project was approved by Governing Body on 19th February 2024. The Finance Subcommittee reviewed funding options and is recommending the transfer to Capital Development Reserves of

€169,523.50 for costs associated with closing the transaction including purchase price, property advisor fee, mapping and surveying and legal fees.

Decision: The transfer of €169,523.50 to Capital Development Reserves for the acquisition of land at Letterkenny was approved on the proposal of BDS, this was seconded by RD.

The meeting adjourned for a 5-minute break

GB 27.10 Presentation from Student Representatives

SM, JB & KS presented student issues for the 2024/2025 academic year. Topics presented were student accommodation, access to student supports and Student Union funding. MGla and the Student Services team were commended for their continued support of the Students Union. Other members thanked the student representatives for their concise and informative presentation. In response to some items raised, OF and MGla gave some information about the challenges faced with different funding models for the Students Union and in agreeing a structure for the ATU Students Union; advised that the executive have agreed short-term and longer-term plans with the Students Unions; confirmed that Finance has committed to assigning a resource to work with the Students Unions; clarified that, while full-time undergraduate students are entitled to access to student services, this doesn't mean that all students services can be available on all campuses at all times. In relation to access to student services, it was clarified that approx. 14,000 full-time students are entitled to access to student services, other students studying on a part-time basis or on-line do not have the same needs.

Action: Include regular updates from Students on Governing Body agenda

GB 27.09.4 CINNTE Institutional Review

JO'T presented a printed copy of the Institutional Self Evaluation Report prepared for the CINNTE review. Members can attend the meeting with Quality & Qualifications Ireland (QQI) on 11th November in person at the Boardroom on the Sligo campus or online via TEAMS.

Action: Governing Body members to advise if they are available to attend the meeting with QQI on 11th November.

Action: CINNTE team to schedule a pre-meeting with Governing Body members who are available to attend the meeting with QQI on 11th November

MMcN left the meeting and SH resumed as Chair.

GB 27.06.3.3 Staffing Headcount (ECF) Report

A summary of the Staffing Headcount report to June 2024 was circulated for information. The ECF ceiling was referenced in the summary and the staff categories included in the figures presented were reviewed.

GB 27.06.3.3 Approval Process Budget 2025

An overview of the proposed approval process for budget 2025 was circulated for information.

GB 27.07 Meeting of External Members of Governing Body

Deferred to the start of the November Governing Body meeting.

GB 27.08 President's Report

OF provided a summary of the report, highlighting a number of items including the recent announcement that ATU had been selected, after a competitive process, to be one of two new locations for a Veterinary School in Ireland.

GB 27.09 Report from Academic Council & Registrar

GB 27.09.1 Academic Council Meeting Minutes

BB presented a summary of the decisions made at the Academic Council meeting of 17th June 2024.

GB 27.09.2 Report on Student Numbers 2023/24

A summary of student numbers reported to HEA for the 2023/2024 academic year was presented for information.

Action: A high-level report showing projected student numbers for future academic years was requested

GB 27.09.3 New Programmes approved at Academic Council 2023/24

A list of new programmes approved at Academic Council during the 2023/2024 academic year was presented. In response to a query, BB stated that ATU intends to continue to offer a range of full-time undergraduate Level 6 and Level 7 programmes. However, it must be recognised that the market has changed in the last twenty years with 70-75% of CAO acceptances in the past two years being for Level 8 programmes, even while the percentage of Level 6 and Level 7 programmes in the ATU portfolio exceeds 30% of programmes offered. The majority of programmes are designed with embedded exit awards and the option of exiting a Level 8 programme with a Level 6 or Level 7 qualification is available to students, once they meet specified learning outcomes for the programme. There was a suggestion that the communication to students of this option could be improved. The University is also continuing to work on alternative pathways to 3rd level education such as the Tertiary

Education Programme announced by DFHERIS last year (gov.ie - [Unified tertiary system \(www.gov.ie\)](http://www.gov.ie)), the expansion of the Access Programme and our ongoing work with education providers such as Education Training Boards to align their further education programme with entry to our full-time undergraduate programmes.

Action: A list of programmes withdrawn from the CAO handbook and information about the decision-making process around the withdrawal of courses listed in section 3 of the report was requested.

GB 27.11 AOB

GB 27.11.1 Governing Body Workplan

JF advised that this is a live document, subject to change and is provided for every meeting.

Other:

1. The President, in her capacity as Chair of Academic Council, received a letter signed by the five staff members on Governing Body querying an activity of Academic Council.

Action: Share correspondence with the Chair & determine if this is to be an agenda item at a future Governing Body meeting.

2. JB requested an agenda item for the next Governing Body meeting – “Communicating ATUs commitment to the ladder system”

3. [REDACTED]

The next Governing Body meeting will be on 4th November at the St Angelas campus.



Signed: _____

Chairperson

Date: 19/12/2024