



Ollscoil
Teicneolaíochta
an Atlantaigh

Atlantic
Technological
University

Minutes of the 23rd ATU Governing Body Meeting

Held on Monday 25th March at 9.30am

Boardroom, Sligo Campus and MS TEAMS

Present:

Maura McNally (Chairperson) – in person	MMcN
Dr Orla Flynn (President) – in person	OF
Dr Brian De Souza – in person	BDS
Dr Brian McCann – in person	BMcC
Dr Martin Robinson – in person	MR
Felim McNeela – in person	FMcN
Jeremiah Egberongbe - online	JE
Joanne Grehan - online	JG
Dr John Bartlett – in person	JB
John Daffy – in person	JD
Michael Geoghegan – in person	MG
Regina Daly – in person	RD
Sarah Mohan – online	SM
Dara Foynes – in person	DF
Seamus Hughes – online	SH

In attendance:

Jim Fennell (Secretary) – in person	JF
Carol Geraghty (Recording Secretary) – in person	CG
Michael Henehan – in person – Item 5.1.2	MHen
Elizabeth McCabe – in person - items 5.1, 5.2.1 & 5.2.2	EMcC
Edel O'Connor – online – item 5.1	EO'C
Prof. Frances Lucy – in person – item 7.4	FL
Margaret Mulchrone – in person – item 7.4	MM
Dr Billy Bennett – in person – item 8.1	BBen
Dr Michael Hannon – in person – item 8.1	MHan
Dr Des Foley – in person – item 5.1.1	DF

Apologies: David Minton, Joe Cunningham, Michael Gilvarry, Oonagh Monahan, Prof. Rachel Ashworth, Barry Breslin.

MMcN thanked Felim McNeela, Michael Geoghegan & Brian McCann for their contribution to Governing Body over the past number of years.

GB 23.01 Declaration of Conflicts of Interests

There were no conflicts of interest declared at the meeting.

GB 23.02 Approval of Governing Body Minutes

The following updates were requested to the February meeting minutes:

- Record attendance of DF, attended online
- Update section GB 0022.07.2 CAO Recruitment 2024 to include "concern" in the last sentence, now reads "*Members expressed their concern and disappointment at the numbers.....*".
- Section 0022.05.31. Amend action to read "*Seek clarification from QAET that QQI has confirmed the appropriate title to be used for an honorary doctorate*".

Decision: The minutes of 19th February with requested additions listed above were approved on the proposal of BMcC and seconded by FMcN.

GB 23.03 Matters Arising & Correspondence

GB 0023.03.01 Governing Body Log of Action Items

The log of actions items was reviewed. Action 1 - JF advised that DFHERIS has sought legal advice, when received they will revert to ATU. Action 80 – Update to read – "*Seek clarification from QAET that QQI has confirmed the appropriate title to be used for an honorary doctorate*".

GB 0023.03.02 Letter from HEA re PPP Buildings at Letterkenny & Galway City

The letter from the HEA has been circulated to Governing Body members for their information and the meeting was advised that ATU has replied with the requested confirmations. The meeting noted the letter states "The renewed application will update existing documentation to reflect changes in regulatory, legislative or site specific information only" and "no end user changes to the design, whether material or spatial, can be incorporated as part of the renewed applications." Clarification to be sought from HEA on who bears the cost associated with resubmitting the planning application.

GB 0023.03.03 Oversight Agreement 2024

This document was circulated to Governing Body members for their information.

GB 0023.03.04 Membership of Central Applications Office (CAO)

Update to discussion at the February meeting. OF advised that ATU would be seeking Ministerial approval to proceed with membership of the Central Applications Office.

Decision: ATU membership of the Central Application Office was approved on the proposal of DF and seconded by JD.

Decision: Billy Bennett, in the position of ATU Registrar & VP with responsibility for Academic Affairs, to continue to represent ATU on the Board of the Central Applications Office on the proposal of DF and seconded by JD.

Action: Secretary to Governing Body to write to DFHERIS seeking approval for ATU to proceed with membership of the Central Applications Office.

Matters Arising

1. In response to a question about the ATU Dignity at Work policy, OF reminded members that an action was assigned at the February meeting & a schedule for the development of HR policies, including the Dignity at Work Policy, will be presented at the June meeting.
2. In response to a question about the General-Purpose Committee of Academic Council and approval of their decisions, OF advised members that this committee can be convened if the full

council is not available to meet, this situation has not arisen to date; the TOR for this committee will be circulated to members for information.

3. There was a discussion about the time allocated on the Agenda to review of minutes from the previous meeting. It was agreed that more time would be allocated for the consideration of minutes of the previous meeting.
4. Members asked for clarification of the status of the Chair for the meeting and the process for appointing a new Chair. JF advised that the current term of MMcN ends on 31st March and outlined the process for electing a Chair at the next Governing Body meeting.
5. OF responded to a question about the plan for development of sub plans to the Strategic Plan by advising that she will address these in her presentation later in the meeting.
6. The following update was requested to the February meeting minutes – section GB 0022.07.1 Academic Council Meeting Minutes add *“it was clarified that the approval of academic policies and procedures is the role of the Academic Council”*.

Action: Circulate TOR for General Purpose Committee of Academic Council to Governing Body members.

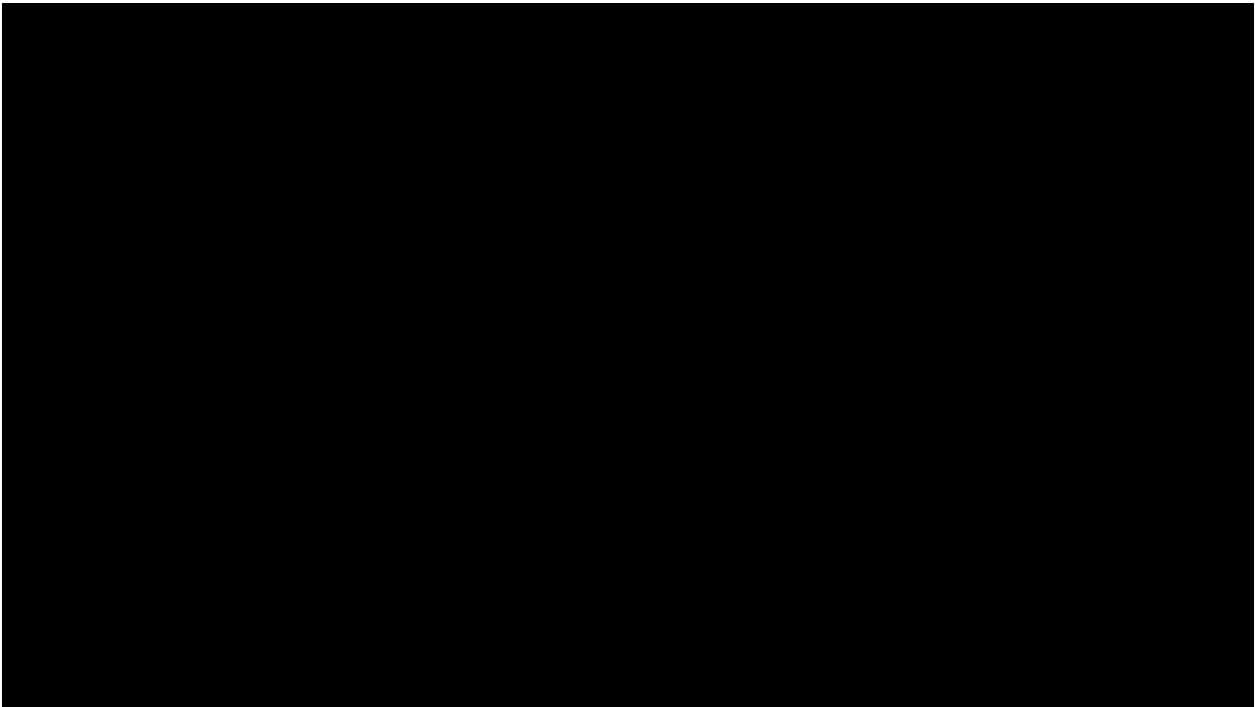
Action: Letter to Minister Harris thanking him for his support of the Higher Education Sector, and ATU in particular, during his time as Minister for the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science.

GB 23.04.1 Code of Conduct for Governing Body Members

The meeting agreed that this document be referred to ARC for review. All feedback received from Governing Body members will be forwarded to ARC for their consideration. Once reviewed, ARC will give their recommendation to Governing Body.

GB 23.04.2 Staff Appointments

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



GB 23.04.3 Appointment of External Member to Honorary Doctorate Committee

DF has agreed to serve on the Honorary Doctorate Committee.

Decision: FMcN proposed DF as the external member to the Honorary Doctorate Committee until 31st March 2028. This was seconded by MMcN.

GB 23.04.4 Appointment of Trustee

JC has agreed to be a Trustee.

Decision: JC appointed as Trustee on the proposal of MG and seconded by DF.

GB 23.04.5 Appointment of Staff Member to Governing Body

MR was re-elected as the Donegal staff representative to Governing Body for a second term, from 1st April 2024 to 31st October 2027.

Decision: MR appointed to Governing Body as a staff representative on the proposal of MMcN and seconded by BdS.

GB 23.05.1 Report from Joint Audit Committee & Risk & Finance Subcommittee (15th March)

FMcN presented the report from the joint Audit & Risk Committee (ARC) and Finance Subcommittee (FSC) meeting on 15th March at which the Financial Statements for 17 months ended 31st August 2023, Corporate Governance Statement and Statement on Systems of Internal Control were reviewed. The joint meeting recommended that the draft Financial Statements and related documents be submitted to C&AG audit and the HEA. FMcN advised that other items discussed at the meeting, which will be on the agendas for future ARC and FSC meetings, included the Terms of Reference, ATU Finance organisation design, and the plan to address any improvements and weaknesses in reporting processes identified by the Finance function when compiling the Financial Statements.

GB 23.05.1.1 Financial Statements for 17 months ended 31st August

EMcC & EO'C presented the Financial Statements for 17 months ended 31st August 2023, and outlined some of the challenges experienced when compiling the Financial Statements.

GB 23.05.1.2 Corporate Governance Statement and Statement on Systems of Internal Control

MHen brought members attention to the information in the Corporate Governance Statement relating to Commercially Significant Developments affecting the University.

JF advised that the Financial Statements will be subject to audit by the C&AG during the summer following which they will be reviewed again by ARC and FSC and recommended for approval by the Governing Body in Semester 1 2024/25.

Members complimented the finance team on the documents being submitted to the C&AG for auditing. In response to a query about staffing and recruitment, OF reminded members that, at their request, HR has been asked to submit a report each semester summarising new appointments to ATU, this report will include information about where the new hires are based and their funding source. Members discussed the availability of information about the student experience from sources such as the national student survey and the possibility that the Students Unions may also conduct local surveys within ATU. In response to a question about approval of the organisation structure, OF advised that that, while Governing Body members have been advised of progress via the Presidents Report at each meeting, and any input and feedback is welcome, the organisation structure is an executive matter and is not a reserved function of the Governing Body.

GB 23.05.2 Report from Finance Subcommittee (6th March and 15th March 2024)

FMcN presented the report to Governing Body from the Finance Subcommittee meetings on 6th and 15th March.

GB 23.05.2.1 Finance Outturn for year ended 31 December 2023

EMcC presented the Finance Outturn for the year ended 31st December 2023 and summarised the main contributors to the surplus being reported.

GB 23.05.2.2 University Budget 2024

EMcC presented the proposed University Budget for 2024 and summarised the financial assumptions underpinning the budget including a high-level review of funding sources and pay costs. OF advised that the budget reflects an increase in income from increased apprenticeship enrolments and that this expansion in apprenticeship activity will require significant investment in University buildings & infrastructure.

Members commended FMcN, the FSC and the Finance team on the work done to produce the Finance outturn 2023 and Budget 2024. While pleased to see a surplus being reported in the Finance Outturn, members highlighted a number of items which could impact the budget in the future including student numbers, planned capital works and the need to prioritise planned capital works to make the best use of available funds. It was suggested that the FSC could consider working with Finance to report on KPIs or a log of key actions, e.g. identifying controllable and non-controllable items. OF advised the meeting that decisions about the prioritisation of capital projects would be reported to Governing Body through the Strategic Development Subcommittee. Annual maintenance work would continue to be the remit of local Building & Estates departments and funded through the annual recurrent budget.

Decision: The University Budget 2024 was approved on the proposal of DF and seconded by JD.

Action: Members requested that a regular budget update be provided to the Governing Body.

GB 23.05.2.3 Staffing Headcount Report (ECF)

EMcC presented the December Staffing Headcount (ECF) Report – these figures are reported to HEA every 4 months. OF advised the meeting that the University is still working off three separate CORE instances, this means that a considerable effort was taken to compile this report and the Budget. The Core integration is underway, and this will cause some disruption to any activities reliant on the Core system (e.g. pay adjustments, recruitment) in Sep / Oct.

There was some discussion about the staffing trends shown in the report, how these are financed, and how they could best be documented in the report. In response to a request for recruitment information, OF reminded members of the HR recruitment report which will be presented in May.

GB 23.05.2.4 Terms of Reference of Finance Subcommittee V1.2

FMcN summarised the changes proposed in the update to the Finance Subcommittee TOR.

Decision: Terms of Reference of Finance Subcommittee V1.2 was approved on the proposal of FMcN and seconded by MMcN.

GB 23.05.2.5 Appointment of Finance Subcommittee Members

FMcN reported on FSC membership.

Decision: Larissa Feeney, Joe Gannon, Paul Shelly & Conor Murphy, external members of FSC, were appointed on the proposal of FMcN and seconded by MMcN.

Decision: JD appointed 'staff or student member' of Governing Body on the proposal of MG and seconded by DF.

Action: SH asked to consider serving as Chair / external Governing Body member of FSC.

GB 23.05.2.6 Contract for Commercial Cleaning Services at 5 ATU Galway-Mayo campuses

FMcN advised that this contract is being recommended by the FSC to the Governing Body for approval.

Decision: A commercial cleaning contract of €1.267 million excluding VAT for a 36-month period with the option to extend by 12 months (4 years in total) to Bidvest Noonan for five Galway-Mayo locations - Wellpark campus, iHub Building Galway City campus, Mayo Campus incl iHub Building, Connemara Campus, Letterfrack, Co Galway was approved on the proposal of FMcN and seconded by MG.

GB 23.05.2.7 Energy Efficiency and Decarbonisation Pathfinder Programme (EEDPP) 2023: Heating Decarbonisation & Energy Retrofit Block (G) & (P) Sligo Campus

FMcN advised that this contract is being recommend by the FSC to the Governing Body for approval.

Decision: The awarding of a contract for Block G and P buildings (Sligo campus) to Joseph Mc Menamin & Sons Ltd in the sum of € 3.574m excluding VAT of which the ATU contribution will be €1,666,500 was approved on the proposal of FMcN and seconded by MMcN.

GB 23.05.2.8 Proposed Land Acquisition Ardaghowen Sligo

FMcN advised the release of €2.1m from the Capital Development Reserve for the purchase of 6.615 hectares of land at Ardaghowen, Sligo is being recommend by the FSC to the Governing Body for approval.

Decision: €2.1m to be released from the Capital Development Reserves (CDR) for the purchase of 6.615 hectares of land at Ardaghowen, Sligo on the proposal of MS, and seconded by DF.

GB 23.05.2.9 Fee Schedule 2024/2025

FMcN advised the Fee Schedule is being recommend by FSC to the Governing Body for approval subject to some minor changes to the document since it was reviewed by the FSC, these were listed in a paper uploaded to the Governing Body SharePoint site.

Decision: The fee schedule 2024/2025 subject to the minor changes was approved on the proposal of FMcN and seconded by MMcN.

GB 23.05.3.1 External Members

The External Nominations Committee met on 13th of March. All five external members have indicated that they are available and willing to serve a second term from 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2028.

Decision: Seamus Hughes, Dara Foyne, Michael Gilvarry, David Minton and Rachel Ashworth were approved to serve a second term as external members of the ATU Governing Body on the proposal of MMcN and seconded by BdS.

Action: Letters of Appointment to be sent to external members

GB 23.05.3.2 Ministerial Nominations

Minister Simon Harris has nominated Maura McNally and Oonagh Monahan to serve a second term.

Decision: On the proposal of BdS and seconded by DF, Maura McNally and Oonagh Monahan were approved as Ministerial Nominees from 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2028.

Action: Letters of Appointment to be sent to Ministerial Nominees.

Action: Secretary to Governing Body to contact the Minister to request a date for the appointment of a third ministerial nominee.

GB 23.05.4.1 Report from EDI Subcommittee Meeting

JMcC presented the report to Governing Body from the EDI Subcommittee Meeting.

GB 23.05.4.2 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

JMcC presented the draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy. Members welcomed the development of the policy. Following a discussion, it was agreed that paragraph 2 of Section 4.6.1 would be amended to include the phrase "as far as reasonably practicable" and will now read "*All students, staff and others engaging with the University have a responsibility to comply with and promote this policy, including, as far as is reasonably practicable, challenging unacceptable behaviours and upholding the anti-racist and anti- all forms of discrimination principles of the university*". The meeting was advised that all policies are subject to regular review and updated if required.

Decision: The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy with agreed amendment was approved on the proposal of JD and seconded by DF.

GB 23.05.4.3 Gender Identity and Expression Policy

JMcC presented the draft Gender Identity and Expression Policy. Members welcomed the development of the policy. Concerns were raised about the use of a student's preferred name on their University ID. It was agreed that the last bullet point of section 4.5 on Page 7 would be updated to read "*endeavour to support, as far as is reasonably practicable, student and staff members in the use of "preferred names" on designated ATU systems*".

Decision: The Gender Identity and Expression Policy with agreed amendment was approved on the proposal of MMcN and seconded by DF.

GB 23.05.4.4 Gender Balance of Decision-Making Bodies

The EDI Subcommittee considered a report on the gender balance of decision-making bodies in the University, a copy of which had been circulated to the meeting. The EDI subcommittee recommended that a clause to provide for gender balance be included in the Terms of Reference (ToR) of each decision-making body. The meeting agreed to include a clause as stated in Paragraph 12(5)(b) of the TU Act 2018 as amended by the HEA Act 2022 “*The University will strive in the first instance to constitute a broad and diverse group in line with the characteristics set out in the Equal Status Acts 2000-2018. In addition, the University shall have regard to the objective that at least 40 per cent of members of its committees shall be women and at least 40 per cent shall be men*”.

Decision: On the proposal of MMcN and seconded by JB it was agreed to insert a clause in the ToR of each decision-making body consistent with paragraph 12(5)(b) of the TU Act 2018 as amended by the HEA Act 2022.on the proposal of MMcN and seconded by JB.

Action: This decision to be communicated to ATU decision-making bodies for inclusion in their TOR.

GB 23.05.4.5 Appointment of EDI Subcommittee Members

JMcC presented a slide on the membership of the EDI Subcommittee.

Decision: EDI Subcommittee membership was approved on the proposal of FMcN and seconded by DF. EDI Subcommittee members are:

	Name	Term
External Member	Prof Owen Barr	1 st April 2024 – 31 st March 2028
	Tonye Benson Olatunde	1 st April 2024 – 31 st March 2028
Governing Body members	Maura McNally (EDI Subcommittee Chairperson),	1 st April 2024 – 31 st March 2028
	Orla Flynn	1 st April 2024 – 31 st March 2028
	Regina Daly	1 st April 2024 – 31 st October 2027
	John Daffy	1 st April 2024 – 31 st October 2027
	Sarah Mohan	1 st April 2024 – 30 th June 2024
VP with responsibility for EDI	Dr Jacqueline McCormack	1 st April 2024 – 31 st March 2028

Action: Review Terms of Reference (TOR) to ensure it allows for the current two staff representatives to Governing Body to be members, or alternatively amend the committee membership to ensure the committee is constituted in line with its existing approved TOR.

GB 23.05.5 Appointment of Audit & Risk Committee Members

JF presented ARC members for approval and advised that there is currently one vacancy, an external member with legal skills.

Decision: David Minton (Term 1st April 2024 – 31st March 2028) & Joanne Grehan (term 1st April 2024 – 31st October 2027) approved as external Governing Body members and Lee-Ann McGinley (Term 1st April 2024 – 31st March 2028) approved as an external member on the proposal of MMcN, this was seconded by JD.

GB 23.06 Meeting of External Members of Governing Body

Meeting deferred.

Action: Schedule meeting on TEAMS in April.

GB 23.07.1 President's Update to Governing Body

The President's report was circulated in advance of the meeting and was taken as read. OF presented relevant aspects of the draft business case for the proposed organisation structure, which has been provided to DFHERIS. A summary of work to be completed on the strategic plan and the HEA compact was also presented, including an indication of the detailed metrics and reporting mechanisms. Information on activities being carried out over a number of campuses and the expansion of programmes, e.g. apprenticeships, was welcomed by members. Members discussed the lack of student accommodation and options currently available to the University and requested that this be included in the Strategic Plan.

GB 23.07.4 EU Green Alliance

FL presented the information circulated to members in advance of the meeting including the funding available to the University for its participation in the Alliance. OF advised that, in addition to other universities across the EU, ATU has a number of associate partners in the Alliance, these include Údarás na Gaeltachta, the Northern and Western Regional Assembly, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Creative Enterprise West (CREW).

GB 23.08.1 CINNTE Review – Institutional Profile

M Han gave a summary of the information circulated to the meeting including the background to the review, timelines and approval requirements. The information included in the Institutional Profile will be available to staff & students for inclusion in funding applications, reports, etc. Members commended the group on the report.

GB 23.09.1 Report on activity around iHub/Enterprise Centres

The report was circulated in advance of the meeting and was taken as read.

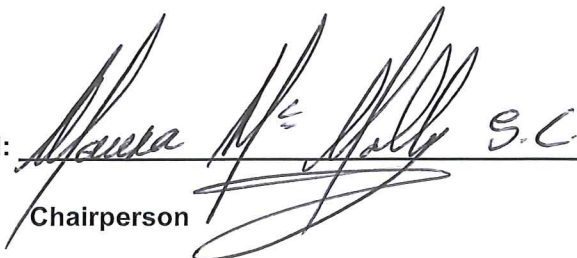
AOB

1. In response to a query about the number of Governing Body meetings per year, JF advised that the Governing Body had decided to hold four meetings per semester, with additional meetings to be scheduled if required.
2. MMcN asked members to send any comments on papers circulated for review to the Corporate Governance team in advance of Governing Body meetings.

Outgoing members FMcN, MG and BMcC commended the Governing Body and ATU staff on the work completed since 1st April 2022 and wished them well for the future.

MMcN advised that the next meeting will be on 13th May in Galway, the final meeting of the 2024/20234 academic year will be on 24th June in Killybegs.

Signed:


Chairperson

Date:

