HEA | An tÚdarás um Ard-Oideachas
The Higher Education Authority

Higher Education Authority
Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of the HEA held on 2nd December 2025
10am, HEA Offices

Present: Prof Mark Rogers, Chairperson (agenda items 1-12)
Dr Fiona Killard-Lynch via MS Teams (agenda items 1-12)
Dr Rosemary Day (agenda items 1-12)
Ms Paula Fyans (agenda items 1-12)
Mr Dermot McCarthy (agenda items 1-12)
Ms Nessa McEniff (agenda items 1-12)
Dr Niall Connors (agenda items 1-12)
Dr Rory O'Sullivan (agenda items 1-12)

Apologies: Prof Anne Scott
Mr Bryan O'Mahony

In attendance: Dr Alan Wall, CEO (agenda items 1-12)
Ms Orla Nugent, Deputy CEO (agenda items 1-11)
Mr Trevor Purtill, Board Secretary & Head of Corporate Affairs (agenda items 1-11)
Ms Éilis Noonan, Deputy Board Secretary, Corporate Affairs (agenda items 1-11)
Mr Tim Conlon, Head of Policy & Strategic Planning (agenda items 1-11)
Dr Vivienne Patterson, Head of Statistics, Skills & Engagement (agenda items 1-11)
Ms Orla Christle, Head of System Governance (agenda item 1-11)
Ms Pearl Cunningham, Head of Finance (agenda items 1-11)
Ms Caitríona Ryan, Head of Research Policy (agenda items 1-11)
Ms Sheena Duffy, Head of International, Communications and EDI (agenda items 1-11)
Dr Louise Callinan, Head of Access Policy (agenda items 1-11)

Quorum

The quorum for HEA Board meetings, six members, was met.

1. Conflicts of Interests

No conflicts of interest were declared.

2. Minutes of meeting held 4th November

The Chair confirmed that the amended July and September minutes were in the Supporting Folder for review.

Decision: The minutes of the November Board meeting were approved.

3. Matters Arising

3.1 Confirmation of Chairperson

The Chair confirmed that following a written submission his nomination as Chairperson of the HEA has been approved by the Joint Committee on Education, Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (correspondence from the Committee dated 14/11/25).

3.2 Meeting with Research Ireland

The Chair and CEO of the HEA met their counterparts in Research Ireland on Wednesday 19th November. The meeting was constructive and positively received by all parties. The proposal for a joint meeting of both boards was welcomed and will be scheduled once RI has formulated its strategic agenda.

3.3 Meeting with Minister for FHERIS

The Chair and CEO of the HEA also met with the Minister for FHERIS on 19th November. Items discussed were ongoing Section 64 processes, Capital Projects, EOIs regarding health and social care courses, and Research (the INSPIRE programme).

3.4 CPU Recruitment

The Chair confirmed that interviews for the Head of the Capital Programmes Unit position had taken place and an offer has been issued to a candidate.

3.5 DKIT/Queens University Belfast

The CEO provided an update on recent developments with DKIT and Queens University Belfast.

3.6 Apprenticeships

The CEO and the Head of Statistics, Skills & Engagement provided an update on discussions on apprenticeships between HEA, DFHERIS, Solas and QQI.

4. Report of the Student Engagement, Teaching & Learning Committee Meeting 20th November

Professor Clarke presented this item.

4.1 HEA Teaching &Learning Strategy

The Strategy document which was subject to widespread national consultation was recommended to the Board for approval.

Decision: The Board approved the Strategy.

4.2 Gen AI Policy

The Committee recommended the publication of the 'Generative AI in Higher Education Teaching & Learning: Policy Framework and Principles for Ethical Adoption' to the Board for approval.

Decision: The Board approved the publication of the policy framework.

The Board noted the Committee's report.

5. Report of the System Funding and Oversight Committee 25th November

Dr O'Sullivan presented this report.

5.1 Proposed approach to finalisation of 2025 grant

The Committee recommended approval of the approach to the finalisation of the 2025 grant allocation and noted it follows last year's approach.

Decision: The Board approved the proposed approach.

5.2 Proposed approach to the allocation of 2026 grant

The Committee recommended approval of the proposed approach to the 2026 grant allocation including an increase in the grant allocation for AHEAD to €490,000

Decision: The Board approved the proposed approach including increased allocation to AHEAD.

The Board noted the report of the Committee.

6. Report of the Research Committee Meeting 25th November

Dr Day presented the report of this Committee.

6.1 C4 Research Subhead Funding Allocations

The Committee recommended the proposed allocations of €6,167,434 under this subhead.

Decision: The Board approved the proposed allocations.

6.2 Proposed Approach for Updating the HEA Principles of Good Practice in Research within Irish Higher Education Institutions

The Committee recommended the proposed approach of continuing to review and revise the HEA Principles of Good Practice in Research within Irish Higher Education Institutions.

Decision: The Board approved this approach.

6.3 Launch of INSPIRE

The Head of Research Policy provided an update on the launch of this programme, which took place on 26th November. The aim and structure of the

programme was discussed. Members noted the major requirement for existing research infrastructure to be upgraded. It was queried whether the programme would solely focus on infrastructure or whether research programmes including staffing would also come under the programme. It was confirmed that the part of the programme that will be managed by Research Ireland is expected to include provision for this.

The Board noted the Committee's report.

7. Report of System Development Committee Meeting 26th November

Dr Connors presented this item.

7.1 2025 Key Facts and Figures Interactive Report
The Committee noted the findings of this Report.

7.2 Report on Review of the Student Records System
The Committee noted the update provided on the Review of the Student Record System.

7.3 Technological University Research and Innovation Supporting Enterprise (TU RISE)
The Committee noted the information update and system audit report for TU RISE.

The Board noted the Committee's report.

8. Memo 46/25 Update on Future Funding Model Group

Dr O'Sullivan presented this item. The Board was requested to approve two replacement DFHERIS nominees for membership of the Future Funding Model Working Group as the current members can no longer participate.

Decision: The Board approved the appointment of the two replacement members to the group.

Following a discussion on the composition of the group, the Chair confirmed that no additional members are required.

The next meeting of the group will be an in-person workshop scheduled for mid-February.

9. Memo 47/25 Proposed Approach to Board Self-Evaluation

The Deputy Board Secretary presented this Memo. The Board was requested to approve the proposed approach to the Board Self-Assessment questionnaire, following the template provided by the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies.

Members welcomed the addition of a section on the Board's Standing Committees. Members agreed that the questionnaire should also include a function that would allow Members an opportunity to comment on the effectiveness of all Standing Committees, regardless of membership.

Decision: The Board approved the proposed approach to the self-evaluation.

10. Corporate Risk Register

The Deputy Board Secretary presented the Risk Register and noted that the reviews of the risk registers were ongoing at present and will be presented at the next meeting of the Audit, Risk and Finance Committee (17/12/25).

The Board discussed whether the Corporate Risk Register should remain as a standing item on each Board agenda, given that it is reported on comprehensively by the ARFC. Members agreed that it is not necessary to have it remain as a standing item on each Board agenda.

The Board noted the Corporate Risk Register.

11. Memo 48/25 Executive Report

The CEO provided an update on TU Dublin. Ongoing work in the area of Irish Language Policy was discussed, and the recent "Mo Thráchtas as Gaeilge" event held by the HEA was noted. A query arose on the use of public-private-partnerships. It was confirmed that this model was used primarily in the technological sector as universities were able to borrow in order to fund capital projects.

The Board commended the work completed by the Executive during the year.

Members noted the Executive Report.

12. **Members only session**

Next Meeting: The date of the next meeting was agreed as Tuesday 27th January 2026.

Chairperson Date