



# STRANMILLIS UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

A College of Queen's University Belfast

## GOVERNING BODY SCHEME OF DELEGATION

Version No:	Reason for Update	Date of Update	Updated By
1	To document the key aspects of Delegated Authority within the University College between the Governing Body and the Principal	June - October 2022	Secretary to the Governing Body in consultation with:  Head of Finance, Principal, Corporate Planning Team  Reviewed and endorsed by F&GPC and ARAC Members
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Approved by the Governing Body on 29 November 2022

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The powers and functions of the Stranmillis University College (SUC) Governing Body are set out in the Colleges of Northern Ireland (NI) Order 2005 (the Order) and the associated Instrument and Articles of Government. Within that legislative framework, and the Management Statement and Financial Memorandum agreed with the Sponsor Department (currently the Department for the Economy (DfE)), this Scheme of Delegation sets out how SUC makes decisions, either through the Governing Body itself, through its Committee structure, or through a structure of delegations to the Principal who is also the Chief Executive and Accounting Officer. It also sets out how material decisions taken under that delegated decision-making structure are reported back to the Governing Body.

## **2. Why is this important?**

- 2.1 This Scheme of Delegation is important because it outlines how decisions are taken and which staff have the power to make the decision and thus are accountable for the decisions. It ensures that staff know what is expected of them, and if asked, that they can articulate the decision making process. Ensuring that there is clarity on decision making is an important aspect of the appropriate use of public funds and also the income generated by the University College.

## **3. Who has the authority to take decisions in SUC?**

### **The Governing Body**

- 3.1 The Governing Body is the prime decision maker within SUC. Subject to the requirements of the Order, the Governing Body is responsible for approving the mission and strategic vision of SUC and securing the effective and efficient management of the College's activities and property. The Governing Body is also responsible for developing mechanisms to ensure that the views of stakeholders with an interest in the University College's work are taken into account. It may, also, subject to paragraph 8 (see 3.2 below) of the Stranmillis University College Articles of Government, delegate to an appropriate Committee of the Governing Body or to the Principal such responsibilities as would be more expedient for the efficient organisation of the College business and activities.
- 3.2 Section 8 of the Articles of Government states that the Governing Body shall not delegate responsibility for the following:
- a) determining the mission of the College and the strategic oversight of its activities and for maintaining its general character;
  - b) the effective use of resources, the solvency of the College and for safeguarding its assets.
  - c) approving annual estimates of income and expenditure;
  - d) the appointment, discipline, conduct, grievance, suspension, dismissal and conditions of service of senior staff;

- e) approving a framework for the pay and conditions of staff, and arranging for the negotiation of such with recognised representatives of such staff;
- f) approving the arrangements for the appointment, promotion, discipline, conduct and grievances of staff, other than senior staff; and
- g) ensuring that there is an effective and efficient appraisal system operating in the College.

3.3 The Duties and Responsibilities of the Governing Body as set out in Section 7 of the Articles of Government are:

- (a) to ensure that funds from the Department for the Economy (DfE) are used only in accordance with the Financial Memorandum and any other conditions which DfE may from time to time establish. The current Financial Memorandum (approved in 2015) states that *the Governing Body is responsible for ensuring that funds from the Department are used only in accordance with Article 66 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 and the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1993, and shall not, without prior written Departmental approval, enter into any undertaking to incur any expenditure which falls outside the College's delegations or which is not provided for in the College's annual budget as approved by the Department;*
- (b) to ensure that the financial, planning and other management controls (including controls against fraud and theft) are appropriate and sufficient to safeguard public funds;
- (c) to secure the effective, efficient and economical management of all of the College's resources and expenditure, including: funds other than those provided by DfE; capital assets; equipment; and human resources, so that the investment of public funds in the College is not put at risk;
- (d) to ensure that financial considerations are taken into account at all stages in reaching decisions and in their execution; and
- (e) to require the Principal of the College (the Principal) to take responsibility for:
  - i. ensuring the proper and effective operation of the controls referred to above.
  - ii. giving effect to the Governing Body's policies for securing the effective, efficient and economical management of all the College's resources and expenditure.

3.4 A comprehensive list of decisions that are the responsibility of the Governing Body is included at **Appendix 1**.

## Committees of the Governing Body

3.5 To assist the Governing Body and the Principal in the exercise of their responsibilities, the Governing Body has established the following 4 Committees:

- **A Finance and General Purposes Committee** which reports to the Governing Body following each meeting and advises and makes recommendations to the Governing Body on:
  - Finances, including Policies relating to Finance, estimates and budgets and the presentation of the SUC Annual Audited Financial Statements and the Annual Report;
  - Procurement and Estates, including the annual review of the Estates Strategy;
  - Hospitality, Accommodation and Conferencing Services, including the annual review of Halls and Hospitality Pricing;
  - Digital and IT Services; and
  - Health and Safety.

The Committee also monitors, in line with the College annual business plan, the performance of the College in these areas as well as the associated risks.

- **An Audit and Risk Assurance Committee** which is authorised by the Governing Body to investigate any activity within its terms of reference as approved by the Governing Body. All staff and members of the Governing Body are required to co-operate with the Committee. The Committee recommends to the Governing Body, the appointment of the Internal and External Auditors, approves the Annual Audit Plans and provides a channel of communication to Governors for the College's Internal and External Auditors, which is not controlled by SUC management. In particular, the Committee ensures that the internal systems, including audit activities, of SUC are monitored actively, independently and objectively, in order to:
  - a) promote and ensure high standards of propriety, accountability and financial management within the University College;
  - b) provide assurance on the quality of financial reporting including by reviewing the annual financial statements on behalf of the Governing Body;
  - c) promote a climate of financial discipline and control which will help to reduce the opportunity for financial mismanagement;
  - d) ensure the improvement where necessary, of the effectiveness of the University College's internal controls and mechanisms for achieving value for

money and the extent to which these comply with requirements set down by the Sponsor Department;

- e) reinforce the independence and effectiveness of the Internal Audit function and to underpin the objectivity and independence of the External Auditors;
- f) obtaining assurance for the Governing Body on the reliability of the University College's information systems;
- g) provide a sounding board for University College management on issues of concern in relation to the College's internal control systems; and
- h) contribute to the maintenance or increasing of public confidence in the quality of SUC's corporate governance and management, including risk management.

The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee reports to the Governing Body after each meeting and prepares an annual report to the Governing Body. The annual report records the work of the Committee and includes a review of the activities of Internal and External Audit of the University College, together with any other audit related activities such as value for money investigations. Following approval, by the Governing Body, a copy of the annual report is submitted to the Department.

- **An Education Committee** to further the learning, teaching and research objectives of the University College and reports to the Governing Body following each meeting. The Committee is responsible for:
  - receiving and considering reports appropriate to the College's mainstream academic and research activities, including Quality Assurance Reports; External Examiners' Reports; results from the National Students Surveys; Degree examinations; Research Excellence Framework (REF) results, benchmarking data with other Higher Education Institutions; cost effectiveness when considering new substantive programmes; staff and research successes; and reviews of local, regional, national and international educational relationships and successes;
  - reviewing and recommending to the Governing Body, Policies and Strategies including those relating to new teaching provision/academic organisation;
  - reviewing student related statistics, including those relating to, admissions;
  - reviewing the development of the curriculum; and
  - receiving and acting on behalf of the Governing Body on issues arising at, and delegated from, the Governing Body meetings (and all such matters as may be deemed important from time to time) with recommendations for

consideration by the Principal and/or for action or further consideration by the Governing Body.

- **A Human Resource (HR) and Remuneration Committee** which reports to the Governing Body following each meeting and:
  - a) considers and reports to the Governing Body on planning for and retaining College human resources;
  - b) considers, reports and as appropriate makes recommendations to the Governing Body on College Human Resource Management policies, procedures and good practice;
  - c) considers Equality and Fair Employment Monitoring Reports;
  - d) monitors, in line with the University College's annual business plan, the Human Resource performance of the University College and associated risks;
  - e) monitors, in line with the annual business plan, staff training, organisational development and organisational health;
  - f) monitors the effectiveness of the College Staff Appraisal arrangements;
  - g) reviews a report from the Chair of the Governing Body on the annual performance appraisal of the College Principal and Directors;
  - h) approves the annual objectives and remuneration of the Principal and Directors;
  - i) undertakes such functions as determined by agreed University College employment policies and procedures e.g. the Discipline and Grievance Procedures; and
  - j) undertakes such other duties as may, from time to time, be determined and delegated by the Governing Body.

3.6 All of the above mentioned Committees receive, as appropriate, reports, advice and recommendations from the University College's Principal and other senior staff and in turn make recommendations to the Governing Body on any matter requiring a decision within the Governing Body's remit.

3.7 For example, the Finance and General Purposes Committee, which will report onwards to the Governing Body, will receive and consider the regular Finance and Estates reports outlining current year and / or upcoming year DfE Capital funding awarded / sought. The reports will include details of any potential project under / over spend, significant amendments to projects and any substitution of projects made to ensure that the University College maximises the benefits to be derived from DfE Capital funding allocated for any given financial year.

## **The Principal**

- 3.8 Subject to the Governing Body having overall responsibility, the Principal and Chief Executive of the University College is responsible for:
- a) making proposals to the Governing Body about the educational nature and mission of the University College and for ensuring that the decisions of the Governing Body in this and all other regards are implemented;
  - b) providing members of Governing Body with adequate information on all of the University College's affairs to enable them to comply fully and effectively with the requirements of their role;
  - c) the day-to-day organisation, direction and management of the University College and leadership of staff;
  - d) the quality and performance of the University College especially with regard to academic provision;
  - e) the arrangements for the admission, assessment and examination of students;
  - f) the development of the curriculum and programmes of staff development;
  - g) the arrangements, as necessary, for the appointment, appraisal, suspension and dismissal of staff, other than senior staff, within the framework set by the Governing Body and the terms set out in the Articles of Government;
  - h) the preparation of annual estimates of income and expenditure, for consideration and approval by the Governing Body, and for the overall management of the budget and other resources within the estimates approved by the Governing Body;
  - i) the maintenance of proper accounts and records subject to any guidance and instruction from the Department or requirements of statutory authorities, and the making available of such data as may be required to the Governing Body, the Department or other appropriate statutory body;
  - j) the maintenance of student discipline and, within procedures provided for within the Articles of Government, for the suspension and/or expulsion of students; and
  - k) such other duties as may be delegated by the Governing Body, subject to the exclusions listed in paragraph 8 of the Articles of Government as set out in paragraph 3.2 above.

- 3.9 Similarly, as Designated Accounting Officer for the University College, the Principal is personally responsible for:
- safeguarding the public funds for which he has charge;
  - ensuring propriety and regularity in the handling of those public funds; and
  - the day-to-day operations and management of the University College.

3.10 As Accounting Officer, the Principal shall exercise the following responsibilities:

On Planning and Monitoring, the Principal will:

- establish and present to the Governing Body and its relevant Committees, corporate and business plans, risk register and revenue and capital budgets, taking account of any conditions of grant and targets set by the Department. In this respect the Governing Body should be engaged in the early development of the corporate plans;
- inform the Governing Body and relevant Committees of progress towards achieving objectives and demonstrating how resources are being used to achieve these objectives;
- ensure that timely forecasts and monitoring information on performance and finance are provided to the Department, that the Department is notified promptly if overspends or underspends are likely and of any corrective action to be taken; and that any significant issues, whether financial or otherwise are notified to the Department in a timely fashion;
- ensure that adequate internal management and financial controls are maintained by the University College, including effective measures against fraud and theft; and
- maintain a comprehensive system of internal delegated authorities that are notified to all staff, together with a system of regularly reviewing the compliance with these delegations.

3.11 Although the Principal may delegate the exercise of his/her powers and responsibilities to other members of staff as he/she considers appropriate, the Principal will remain accountable to the Governing Body for the exercise of such powers and responsibilities. A comprehensive list of decisions which are within the remit of the Principal is included at **Appendix 2**.

### **Responsibilities of the Senior Leadership Team**

3.12 Working within the Delegated authority of the Principal, the University College's Senior Leadership Team, which includes the Principal, four Directors, the Head of Human



Resources and the Head of Finance, is responsible under the leadership of the Principal, for:

- the day-to-day management of the University College;
- developing and delivering strategic and operational plans; and
- ensuring that policies, strategies and procedures are developed, consulted upon and approved, as appropriate, by the Governing Body and are implemented and performance against plans etc. is monitored and managed.

### **Responsibilities Delegated to other Members of Staff**

3.13 The University College operates a devolved system whereby Budget Holders may approve non-staff expenditure within their area of responsibility. The expenditure must be provided for within the current approved budget for the project / cost centre or, where additional funding becomes available for specific purposes including if there has been a successful bid for additional expenditure approved by the Principal, in discussion with Corporate Planning Committee, as part of the annual budget reforecasting, or similar, exercise. Financial thresholds for approving expenditure are in place and the ability to approve spend is reflective of the Budget Holder's seniority. Guidance on Budget Holder responsibilities and on expenditure approval is contained in the University College's Budgetary Control and Procurement and Purchasing Procedures.

### **Supplementary Scheme of Delegations**

3.14 Delegations from the Principal to Directors, other staff and Operational level Committees will be set out in a separate document for ease of reference of staff.

### **Document Review Arrangements**

This Scheme will be reviewed every three years, or sooner if required.

Prof Jonathan Heggarty

Date 29 November 2022

Principal and Chief Executive

Review Date: 29 November 2025

For distribution to: All Staff and Governors

### Decisions Reserved for the Governing Body

The appointment, grading, assignment, suspension, dismissal and determination of the pay and conditions of service of the Principal, Directors and Secretary to the Governing Body.
The approval of salaries and severance payments of the Principal and senior staff.
The appraisal of the Principal by the Chair of the Governing Body and countersigning of the Principal's Directors', appraisals, by the Chair of the HR and Remuneration Committee including agreement of objectives and targets.
Setting a Policy framework for the pay and conditions of service for all members of staff and approving the staffing establishment of the University College.
The addition / removal of Permanent Posts to/from the University College staffing establishment.
The addition of Fixed-Term posts which are longer than 2 years in duration.
Extension of Fixed-Term Contracts which do extend beyond 2 years in duration.
Change of post from Fixed-Term to an established permanent post.
Departmental re-structuring resulting in the planned reallocation of FTEs between functional areas / Departments (excluding academic roles which may be split across functional areas depending on modules etc.).
Departmental Restructuring resulting in redundancies.
Approval of Redundancy / Voluntary Exit Policy and arrangements.
Approval of Redundancy Applications of Senior Staff.
The establishment of processes to monitor and evaluate the performance and effectiveness of the Governing Body.
Approval of the Governing Body Operating Framework, including the Terms of Reference of Governing Body Committees as set out in the Operating Framework.
Approval of the Governing Body's Code of Conduct.
Approval of the Governing Body's Standing Orders.
Approval of the Student's Union Constitution.
Approval and review of the University College's Academic Governance arrangements.
The determination of the University College's educational character and mission.
Approval of the University College's Corporate and Business Plans, including mission, vision and values.
Approval and monitoring of corporate level Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), ensuring that these meet the needs of stakeholders.
Approval of the University College's Annual Budget, the Annual Report and the Annual Accounts, including the Annual Assurance Statements to the Sponsor Department (currently the Department for the Economy) e.g. in respect of Quality Assurance and the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) Annual Report.
Approval of the College's Equality Scheme.
Where provided by the University College's Professional Advisors, the approval/ratification of Tender Reports and the recommended successful tenderer for Capital expenditure on discrete projects exceeding £500,000 in the case of building works and £250,000 in the case of other

Capital expenditure. Tender report ratification will be a matter for approval / ratification by the Governing Body. Where the timing of Governing Body meetings is not conducive to the timely signing of contracts, a meeting/or consideration by written procedure should take place, including the Governing Body Chair and the Chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee who will be responsible for considering and signing off the Tender Report under Chair's Action in order to facilitate the signing of the contract. Where either Chair is unavailable they will nominate another member of the Governing Body / Finance and General Purposes Committee to act on their behalf. Ratification of the decision taken will be sought at the next full meeting of the Governing Body.
The appointment of Internal and External Auditors on the recommendation of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC).
The approval of high level University College Policies and Strategies and significantly updated, University College Policies and Strategies.
Approval of Procedures relating to the suspension of staff, dismissal of the holder of a senior post, grievance and appeal handling for example.
Endorsement of Governing Body/Committee Minutes.
Agreement of Forward Work Plan / Cycle of Business.
Approval of the Corporate Risk Register.
Approval of the Students' Union Annual Financial Statements.
The final approval of all Financial Regulations.
Joint approval with the Principal of the MS/FM/Partnership Agreement with the Sponsor Department (currently the Department for the Economy (DfE)).
Approval of the Memorandum of Agreement with Queens' University (QUB).
Approval of Halls and Hospitality pricing.
The ratification of any decision taken through Chair's Action as permitted within the Governing Body Operating Framework.
Approval of the acquisition and disposal of property.
Approval of the Scheme of Delegated Authority.
Approval of senior management structure including senior management committee structures, membership and terms of reference.
Approval of Admissions Policies.
Approval of new substantive Courses or Programmes, including collaborative provision but excluding non-credit bearing courses.
Approval of withdrawal / suspension of degree programmes.
Appointment of University College Bankers.
Approval of putting in place an overdraft facility and of taking out loans / borrowing.
The review and approval of the annually updated University College Estates Strategy.

### Decisions within the Remit of the Principal

Decisions relating to the organisation, direction and management of the University College and leadership of the staff.
The determination, following consultation with staff, of the University College's academic activities and the determination of other activities.
Making proposals to the Governing Body about the educational character and mission, vision and values of the University College and for implementing the decisions of the Governing Body.
The approval of high level draft Policies and Strategies prior to their submission to the Governing Body.
The authorisation of expenditure included within the Annual Budget, including expenditure above OJEU thresholds, in line with the University College Procurement Procedure.
The approval of unbudgeted expenditure bids, including those following re-forecasting exercises, where the approved bids do not exceed the totality of savings identified and the impact of additional income generated by the University College.
The authorisation of Capital expenditure on discrete capital projects of up to £500,000 in the case of building works and £250,000 in the case of other Capital expenditure.
The approval of all Business Cases and Post Project Evaluations, including those for Capital Projects, as well as the approval of the regular updates to the Capital Projects Profile. The Principal may agree supplementary delegations.
The signing of any contracts whereby a formal signature is required e.g. the Form of Deed on a construction related contract, procurement contracts, research contracts. Non-construction related contracts do not always require a formal signature due to CPD's electronic tendering process.
Addition of Fixed-Term posts which are of no longer than 2 years in duration.
Extension of Fixed-Term Contracts which do not extend beyond 2 years in duration.
Temporary reductions in FTEs not resulting in claims for redundancies.
Signature of the Annual Assurance Report to the Sponsor Department on the quality of academic provision and the student experience.
Authorising the suspension of (all) classes.
Approval of senior staff operational plans.
Authorising Student Suspension or Student Exclusion.
Authorisation of outside work / consultancy by University College staff.
Appointment of senior staff.
Authorisation of secondments in / out.
Authorisation of Flexible Working Arrangements and / or Special Leave.
Approval of Annual Holidays / Closure Days.
Authorising dismissal of staff below senior management level.
Authorising staff suspension.
Approval of media releases.