



STRANMILLIS UNIVERSITY COLLEGE  
A College of Queen's University Belfast

## GOVERNING BODY STANDING ORDERS

September 2025

## Revision History

**Date of this Revision:** 24 September 2025

Revision date	Previous revision date	Summary of Changes	Changes marked
Sept 2024	Sept 2023	Minor amendments 3.2 to reflect the provisions of the Articles and Instrument of Government, and minor change to reflect secure provision of papers through a dedicated Governance SharePoint site.	Yes
Sept 2025	Sept 2024	Simplified the wording for convening and adjournment of meetings, added attendance by non-members, withdrawals and Cttees; Grouped 5 & 13 Quorum references; Added a provision for the election of the Vice-Chair & Staff Representatives; Reduced the provisions for order of business; Strengthened the declaration of interest reference; Changed the reference to minutes to reflect current practices; complete re-write to simplify reserved and unreserved business (including removing the appendix), and Motions and amendments and rules for debate	No

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Name	Date of Issue	Version
Governing Body	Sept 2025	2025

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

In accordance with the Articles of Government, the Governing Body has the authority to establish rules and standing orders concerning governance and conduct matters of the University College as it deems appropriate.

Standing Orders are a key aspect of governance, ensuring transparent and effective decision-making by regulating the proceedings, meetings and business of the Governing Body and its Committees.

These Standing Orders are subordinate to any overriding provisions of the Colleges of Education (NI) 2005 Order, the Articles and Instrument of Government agreed with the Department for the Economy and the Partnership Agreement. They should be read in conjunction with these documents, as well as the Governing Body's Operating Framework and Code of Conduct.

## **2. GOVERNING BODY COMPOSITION**

The Instrument of Government sets out how appointments to the Governing Body are made and its composition.

The Governing Body of Stranmillis University College currently comprises 12 Non-Executive Members, the Principal of the College, a Student and two Staff representatives. The maximum number of Members permitted by the Instrument of Government is 18.

## **3. MEETINGS**

Ordinary meetings of the Governing Body shall be held at least four times in an academic year, typically on a Wednesday.

All meetings shall be summoned by the Secretary, who shall send written notice to each Member at least seven calendar days in advance. The agenda and associated papers will be uploaded to a dedicated Governance SharePoint site.

Members wishing to place an item on the agenda must submit them to the Secretary not fewer than ten days before the meeting for consideration.

Only motions that are relevant to the Governing Body's powers or duties may be considered. If the subject falls under a Committee's jurisdiction, it will be referred to that Committee unless the Chair decides to handle it at the meeting.

The Chair of the Governing Body may call a special meeting at any time, or at the request in writing of any five Members. A special meeting may be called by the Internal and External Auditors where they wish to discuss the circumstances related to their removal or resignation.

Non-Executive Members may, when deemed necessary, and with the approval of the Chair, convene a meeting in the absence of Executive Members.

### **Attendance of Persons not being Members of the Governing Body**

A person who is not a Member of the Governing Body, the Secretary or senior staff member may attend a meeting of the Governing Body at the Chair's discretion, pending ratification by the Members.

## **Withdrawals from Meetings**

Withdrawals from meetings of the Governing Body are set out in Schedule 4 of the Instrument of Government.

## **Committees of the Governing Body**

The Governing Body shall appoint the following Committees to assist in the exercise of its responsibilities:

- Audit and Risk Assurance Committee
- Education Committee
- Finance and General Purposes Committee
- HR and Remuneration Committee

The Governing Body shall approve the Terms of Reference of each Committee as set out in the Operating Framework.

## **4. QUORUM**

No business shall be conducted at a Governing Body meeting unless at least seven Members are present, with at least five appointed under paragraph 2(1)(a) of Schedule 2 to the Order.

If the number or composition of Members assembled for a meeting does not meet quorum requirements, the meeting shall not be held. If, in the course of a meeting, the number or composition of Members ceases to represent a quorum, then the meeting shall be terminated.

Quorum requirements for Committee meetings are stipulated in the Articles and Operating Framework.

## **5. CHAIR OF MEETING**

At a meeting of the Governing Body, the Chair shall preside. If the Chair is absent, the Vice-Chair of the Governing Body, shall preside, if present.

If both the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body are absent, Members present shall choose a Member appointed under paragraph 2(1)(a) of Schedule 2 to the Colleges of Education (NI) Order 2005 to preside.

### **Vice-Chairperson**

The Governing Body shall elect a Vice-Chairperson from eligible Members at the beginning of each four-year term of office, or following a resignation. Expressions of interest will be sought from eligible Members, and selection will be by means of a secret ballot of eligible Members if necessary.

### **Staff Representatives on the Governing Body**

The procedure for the election of Staff representatives is defined in the Operating Framework.

## **6. ORDER OF BUSINESS**

The order of business at every meeting of the Governing Body shall be determined by the Chair in consultation with the Secretary and shall include introductions, apologies for absence, declarations of interest and approval of the minutes of the previous meeting.

The order of business may be altered or varied if, in the opinion of the majority of the Members present, it is expedient to do so. Any variation will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

At an ordinary meeting, with the agreement of the Chair, business items may be tabled of which notice has not been given on the agenda but which the Chair considers to be urgent.

At a special or an emergency meeting, only business included in the circulated agenda shall be transacted unless all Members present decide otherwise.

The Governing Body will formally adopt Committee minutes. Where a Committee has met since the last Governing Body meeting and its minutes have not been formally agreed, the Committee Chair or an authorised Member will provide an overview and raise any urgent business.

## **7. DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

A copy of the Register of Interests shall be given to Members at the first meeting of the Governing Body in the Autumn term for review and updating. At each subsequent meeting, Members will be invited to declare any interests in items to be discussed.

Where a Member has any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest, direct or indirect, in any matter under consideration, the Member must declare that interest, not take part in discussion, and shall withdraw from the meeting.

A familial relationship by blood or marriage shall be deemed to exist between a Member and a person if;

- they are husband and wife, or
- that person is a parent, grandparent, grandson or granddaughter, son or daughter, brother or sister, uncle or aunt, cousin, nephew or niece of the Member or of the husband or wife of the Member (either natural, step or foster);
- they are in a common law or civil partnership.

The Secretary to the Governing Body shall record the name of the Member and the nature of the interest in the minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body or Committee at which the interest was declared.

## **8. MINUTES**

Minutes shall be kept of the meetings of the Governing Body and any Committee. The minutes of the previous meeting shall be taken as an agenda item, and if agreed to be accurate, shall be signed by the Chair of that meeting.

The minutes of the meeting shall include a record of all withdrawals and re-entries as required under Part III of the Articles and Schedule 4 of the Instrument of Government.

Governing Body and Committee meeting agendas and minutes will be divided into unreserved and reserved business sections.

## **Reserved and Unreserved Business**

The University College must comply with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act), which grants public access to information held by UK public authorities. Staff must ensure information is available to the public when appropriate, applying exemptions as necessary to maintain proper conduct.

The University College will assess if withholding or releasing information serves the public interest. Public interest considerations include enhancing public debate, accountability, transparency and public safety.

The University College will evaluate if releasing information under a prejudice-based exemption would harm the purpose of that exemption.

### **Unreserved Business**

Items not exempt under the Act should be placed on the unreserved agenda and recorded in unreserved minutes.

### **Reserved Business**

Items likely to generate exempt information should be placed on the reserved agenda and recorded in the reserved minutes.

### **Final decisions on exemptions**

The final decision to release information is dependent on the circumstances at the time of a Freedom of Information request. The University College may release information previously determined as reserved if it is no longer sensitive or, if public interest favors release.

Certain reserved information may be exempt from release under Section 41 of the Freedom of Information Act.

## **10. URGENT BUSINESS**

The Chair of the Governing Body, or other Member nominated by the Chair, is authorised to handle any urgent business that arises on a day-to-day basis, following appropriate consultation. All such emergency decisions will be reported at the next meeting of the Governing Body.

## **11. MOTIONS**

Notices of motions must be given in writing by a Member and delivered to the Secretary at least 10 clear days before the next Governing Body meeting for consideration of inclusion in the meeting agenda.

## **12. RULES OF DEBATE**

The Chair is responsible for moderating debates to ensure that discussions remain productive and respectful. Adequate time must be allocated to ensure thorough discussion of pressing issues.

Members shall not be bound in their speaking or voting by mandates given to them by other bodies or persons. All Members should have an equal opportunity to contribute to ensure a diverse range of perspectives.

When multiple Members wish to speak, the Chair has the responsibility to decide who takes precedence.

A formal proposal put to the meeting shall require a proposer and a seconder.

If an amendment to a proposal (which may not be direct negatives of the proposal) is carried, the proposal, as amended, shall take the place of the original proposal and shall become the substantive proposal upon which any further amendment may be moved.

The ruling of the Chair on any point of order raised shall be final and not open to further discussion.

### **13. VOTING**

In the absence of unanimity on a particular consideration, the issue shall be decided by a majority of the Members present and voting thereon at a meeting of the Governing Body. No Member shall vote by proxy.

In the case of an equality of votes, the person presiding at the meeting shall have a second or casting vote. The mode of voting at meetings shall be by a show of hands. On the requisition of any Member, who is supported by at least one other Member, the voting on any question shall be recorded so as to show whether each Member present gave their vote for or against that question or abstained from voting.

All Members shall be entitled to have his or her name recorded as dissenting from a decision of the Governing Body.

The outcome of the vote shall be recorded in the minutes.

No resolution of the Governing Body may be rescinded or varied at a subsequent meeting unless consideration of the rescission or variation is a specific item of business on the agenda for the at meeting.

### **14. CONCERNS / COMPLAINTS IN RESPECT OF GOVERNING BODY MEMBERS**

Provisions for reporting concerns or complaints about Members of the Governing Body are contained within Annex 5 of the Partnership Agreement.

Arrangements for investigating concerns or complaints in respect of Governing Body Members will be determined upon receipt. The investigating officer shall be in a position of seniority to those the alleged concern or complaint refers to.

**These Standing Orders shall be reviewed every two years or sooner if required. Once agreed, these Standing Orders shall be altered only by the resolution of the Governing Body.**