

Minutes of the Belfast Metropolitan College Governing Body Meeting held 2:30 Wednesday 26 November 2025 Titanic Quarter Boardroom and via MS Teams

Governing Body Members: Jacqui Dixon (Chair); Tom Hesketh; Lauren McAteer; Janis Leaden; Michael McKernan; Sheena McKinney; Bill Montgomery; Yvonne Murphy; Michael Mearns; Lioni Delgado; Damian Duffy (Interim Principal and Chief Executive (IPCE); Sinead Sharpe; Maurice Keady; and William Buckley

Management: Aidan Sloane, Chief Operating Officer (COO); Fiona Dempsey, Interim Director of Curriculum and Learner Success (IDCLS); Siobhan Lyons, Interim Director of Development and Partnerships (IDDP) and Paula Graham, Director of People and Culture (DPC)

In attendance: Sam Dempster for item GB25 25-26

Secretary to the Governing Body: Jim Woods

GB22 25-26

Quorum, Apologies, Welcome, Conflicts of Interest, Notice of AOB and Leadership Culture

Quorum: The meeting is quorate under the terms of Section 7 of the Standing Orders for the Governing Body V5 approved December 2024 (6 members, of which 3 must be appointed under Part II Paragraph 5a of the Instrument of Government).

Apologies: Recorded for M Corkey, R Byrne and S McGoran

Welcome: J Dixon welcomed two new members to their first meeting William Buckley and Lioni Delgado.

Conflicts of Interest: Participants reported no perceived, potential, or actual conflicts of interest under the terms of Section 8.1 of the Belfast Metropolitan College Governing Body Standing Orders V5 approved by the Governing Body 11 December 2024.

Gifts and Hospitality: All participants must report the accepting / rejecting of Gifts and Hospitality in line with the Financial Management Policy for Belfast Met. GB10 24/25 18 Sept 2024.

AOB: None notified.

Leadership Culture: Chair noted our commitment to Governing Body Leadership Culture

Creative and Courageous Conversation in an 'atmosphere' OR 'culture' of challenge and respect in line with our Code of Conduct

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Minute	Detail
GB23 25-26	<p>Minutes of the meeting held on 24 September 2025</p> <p>Decision: The Governing Body approved both the open and closed minutes of the meetings held on 24 September 2025, noting that an attendee was incorrectly recorded in the closed meeting.</p> <p>Further Action: The Governing Body also approved the publication of the approved minutes on the College website. This task is to be actioned by the Secretary to the Governing Body.</p>
GB24 25-26	<p>Matters arising from the minutes of the meeting held on 24 September 2025</p> <p>There were no matters arising which did not feature on the agenda of this governance meeting.</p>
<p align="center">At 2:45 At 2:50</p>	<p>Mr Sam Dempster Department of Education for NI joined the meeting online. William Buckley joined the meeting.</p>
GB25 25-26	<p>DE presentation on 16-18 legislation</p> <p>Presentation: Sam Dempster delivered a short presentation, explaining that he and his colleague are attending governance meetings across all six colleges. He outlined the aim of the project:</p> <p><i>“To ensure that all young people are equipped with the knowledge, skills and experiences necessary to thrive in adult life by mandating continued participation in education or training until the age of 18.”</i></p> <p>He advised that the legislation is scheduled to go before the Assembly in March 2026, with an active date of April 2027. Communication with young people has been reasonably positive, with 63% agreeing with the aim of the legislation.</p> <p>The Governing Body noted the presentation and welcomed the commitment to joined up thinking</p>
<p align="center">At 15:05</p>	<p>Sam Dempster left the meeting, and the Chair asked those present to introduce themselves.</p>
GB26 25-26	<p>Governance Information and Guidance</p> <p>Confirmation of Mr Lioni Delgado’s appointment had been received from DfE.</p> <p>Mandatory training on Safeguarding and Audit is being organised for those Governors whose training is not current and there is an obligation to update the training every 3 years. Exec team members have also indicated an interest in participating in this update training</p>

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	<p>The Governing Body noted the information provided by the Secretary.</p>
<p>GB27 25-26</p>	<p>Notification of change to the internal control environment an updated code of conduct has been presented.</p> <p>The Department for the Economy (DfE) has moved a step closer to aligning college accounting years with the financial year.</p> <p>As a result of a sector wide tender exercise Henderson Loggie have been appointed as the internal auditors.</p> <p>The Governing Body noted the proposed change to the Colleges financial year and the appointment of new Internal Auditors.</p>
<p>GB28 25-26</p>	<p>Chair’s Business</p> <p>The Chair provided updates on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Belfast Met hosted an excellent Graduation Ceremony, which was appreciated by students, their families, and staff alike. (b) The Honorary recipients, John McGrillen and Kathleen O’Hare, added to the occasion. (c) The ESOL unit opening, attended by the Minister, was excellent. (d) DfE engagement regarding the budget, has been ongoing with some improved outcomes in securing additional resources in year. (e) A forthcoming meeting between Chairs of Colleges and DfE. (f) A tour of the Springvale facilities undertaken by the Chair. (g) CEF continues to make good progress. (h) The sector-wide leadership programme for senior staff is taking shape. (i) Governors appointed to the three College project boards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sustainability – S McGoran - Mexit transfer from PFI – T Hesketh - Castlereagh Redevelopment (now whole College Optimal Reconfiguration Programme(CORP)) – B Montgomery <p>The Governing Body noted the information provided by the Chair.</p>

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<p>GB29 25-26</p>	<p>Interim Principal and Chief Executive’s Report</p> <p>The Governing Body thanked the IPCE for the report detailing the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Pay and Industrial Relations (b) FE Sector Transformation (c) Strategic Plan (d) Queens University Memorandum of Intent (e) SEN Evaluation of MLDD / SLDD provision (f) FE Leadership Development Programme (g) Belfast Met Learning and Development Programme (h) Cross Border Partnership Programme C-Case (i) Centre for Digital Innovation and Technology Award (j) NIPS Service Level Agreement (k) Digital by Design (l) FE Sector Sustainability (m) College Financial Position (n) College Optimal Configuration Project (o) Sustainability and Climate Reporting <p>The Governing Body noted the comprehensive update.</p>
<p>GB30 25-26</p>	<p>Updated Strategic Plan 2025-29</p> <p>The main change to the Strategic Plan was the change in the end date year to facilitate alignment with Departmental timelines. The plan will now last from 2025-29. College will await formal confirmation from DfE that the plan has received Ministerial approval.</p> <p>The Governing Body approved the strategic plan 2025-29.</p>
<p>GB31 25-26</p>	<p>Belfast Metropolitan College Draft Financial Statements 2024-25</p> <p>COO and Chair of the Audit Committee reported that Committee had met the previous evening and heard from NIAO who will certify the 2024-25 financial statements with an unqualified audit opinion without modification. The Audit Committee wished to record its thanks to the finance team in particular Laura Allen and Hadessa McCusker. NIAO had remarked that the very collaborative approach has made for a very professional relationship and in part the reason for concluding their work.</p> <p>The Governing Body approved the 2024-25 accounts.</p>

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<p>GB32 25-26</p>	<p>KPI Report: CDP Planning Activity Monitoring</p> <p>IDCLS reported that the CDP is a statutory requirement under Article 20 of the Fe Order 1997. It was explained that the report had been considered at CQE Committee. In summing the report which provide detail on 13 KPIs. As of November, the College in on track to achieve 11 of the 13 KPIs. Of the remaining 2 on I depended upon outcomes and the other one involving training on sustainability does not commence until Spring 2026.</p> <p>The Governing Body noted the content of the report and the actions pertaining to meeting the targets.</p>
<p>GB33 25-26</p>	<p>Estates and Sustainability Update</p> <p>This report prepared by the Chief Operating Officer (COO) detailed that the Estates & Sustainability update provided the Governing Body with information on key estates projects and sustainability initiatives, including the Castlereagh SOC, Millfield PFI expiry and Climate Reporting. COO welcomed the involvement of Governors in the project boards and looked forward to their input.</p> <p>The Governing Body noted the information provided and progress on delivery.</p>
<p>GB34 25-26</p>	<p>Fees and Charges 2026-27</p> <p>COO presented the item on Fees and Charges which had been considered and recommended by the Resources Committee. The list will be updated with HE fees when set by QUB.</p> <p>The Governing Body approved the fees and charges for 2026-27.</p>
<p>GB35 25-26</p>	<p>2025-26 Composite ICS Report</p> <p>The composite report for the sector has been agreed. A copy was issued with the papers and is presented to the meeting today to allow the report to be released to DfE.</p> <p>The Governing Body approved the release of the Composite ICS report to DFE.</p>
<p>GB36 25-26</p>	<p>Updated Risk Register</p> <p>A cover, the risk register and detailed papers had been issued as part of the meeting pack. Members were advised that the risk register had been presented to the ARAC where the COO explained that the previous years risk register has been considered by the ELT and SLT and as a result two risks had been closed out. Three new risks have been identified in relation to opportunities in relation to AI, climate reporting and quality outcomes.</p> <p>The Governing Body approved the Corporate Risk Register Q1 2025-26</p>

Minute	Detail
<p>GB37 25-26</p>	<p>Quality Improvement Plan</p> <p>Members were advised that the papers had been presented in detail to CQE Committee where they had been scrutinised. A deep dive had been carried out into Essential Skills and ESOL. IDCLS explained that the annual report aligned to the CDP. The college will be agreeing their next QIP.</p> <p>The Governing Body noted the information provided by management.</p>
<p>GB38 25-26</p>	<p>Reports from Secretary and Chairs of Committees</p> <p>(i) Secretary’s Report The Secretary provided an update on the Conflict of Interest which had been completed by members. The mandatory training on policies was not registering as completed which may be down to how it is recorded on the system. The secretary agreed to provide an update and reach out to members who have not completed the policy training.</p> <p>The Governing Body noted progress on the conflict of interest and mandated training on 6 policies.</p> <p>(ii) ARAC - draft minutes presented.</p> <p>BM, as an interim chair for this meeting, reported that the normal business was conducted in relation to assurance business and Internal Audit activities. The main business from the meeting yesterday centred around the approval and recommendation of the accounts GB31 25-26 above refers. David Archibald of Henderson Loggie had presented his 3-year audit which had been approved but was subject to some flexibility to include other items as they arise. The committee will review the plan at their next meeting. The compliance and risk report has also formed a substantive item on today’s agenda. Compliance was strong and a drill down into data breaches has been presented. The term of reference for ARAC had been approved with details updated on membership and the new internal auditors.</p> <p>The Governing Body noted draft minutes and the report from the ARAC committee and approved the TOR.</p> <p>(iii) CQE Committee – draft minutes presented.</p>

Minute	Detail
	<p>TH, as chair, provided a detailed summary of the strategic matters that had been addressed at the committee including the CDP KPIs and QIP which appeared on today's agenda. The committee had examined the KPI's and how they aligned to the 4 key pillars used by DfE. In a deep dive into results the Committee focused in granular detail on outcomes in relation to ESOL, ES, GCSE Maths and traineeships. The committee noted that the concerns were matched to substantive actions which should bring about and improvement. The terms of reference were updated with the new cycle for meeting updates in the appendices.</p> <p>The Governing Body noted draft minutes and the report from the CQE committee.</p> <p>(iv) Human Resources Committee – draft minutes presented</p> <p>LMcA, as chair, provided a summary of the Human Resources Committee business. Information on the activities of the sectoral group are now a standing item of business at each meeting. The Committee noted that the new approach has resulted in improvements engagement with TU. A member of the HR team has presented information on informatics relating to strategic indicators, which was appended to today's report. An executive summary of HR Performance was also included with the minutes for members information.</p> <p>The Governing Body noted draft minutes and the report from the Human Resources committee.</p> <p>(v) Resources Committee – draft minutes presented</p> <p>In the absence of the Chair of Resources, COO presented the minutes to the Governing Body. The half year performance was very strong, and report considered at the meeting had been appended to the minutes. COO reported that since the last meeting the college have been informed that a bid for additional finance has been successful. He informed members that a robust expenditure plan was in place.</p> <p>The Governing Body noted draft minutes and the report from the Resources Committee.</p> <p>(v1) Approval to release the approved minutes of Committee</p> <p>The Governing Body approved the release and publication of the minutes on the Web from the September series of meetings.</p>

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GB39 25-26	<p>Meeting Feedback</p> <p>Governing Body members were asked to reflect on their own contribution to the meeting through preparation and constructive challenge. The Chair established that the conduct of this governance meeting provided evidence of the Governing Body’s commitments as set out at GB22 25-26 above.</p>
GB4025-26	<p>Time and date of next meeting</p> <p>The next meeting will be</p> <p>Strategic meeting 4 February 2026 – all day in Castlereagh</p> <p>Normal business cycle at 2:30 on Wednesday 25 March 2026</p>

The Meeting ended at 16:25

Members attendance in person	Members attendance Via teams
Jacqui Dixon	Lauren McAteer
William Buckley	Michael McKernan
Lioni Delgado	Damian Duffy
Mauriece Keady	
Tom Hesketh	
Janis Leaden	
Sheena McKinney	
Bill Montgomery	
Michael Mearns	
Yvonne Murphy	
Sinead Sharpe	

Action List

GB23 25-26	Minutes of 24 September to be forwarded to DfE and published on the web site.	JW
GB26 25-26	Confirm compliance with policy training and communicate deadline 31 December 2025	JW
GB26 25-26	Secretary to follow up on mandatory policy training completion	JW
GB28 25-26	ICS Governance Effectiveness approved and consent to be released to DfE forwarded.	JD

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GB28 25-26	i) Governors appointed to the three project boards: Arrange briefing meeting to outline what is expected.	COO
GB3825-26	Approved minutes of Committees to be published on the college website	JW