MINUTES

Board/Committee	:	Governing Authority
Meeting	:	Meeting M25-8
Venue	:	AD1-45 & 46, Bernal Institute
Date	:	30 September 2025
Attendance:		June Arnold; Donal Donovan; Catherine Duffy; Síofra Foley: Ann Marie Kennedy; Shane Kilcommins; Brigid Laffan (Chair); Ann Ledwith; Edmond Magner; Aibhlín McCrann (MST); Mahdi Nohtani; Anne O'Connor; Sinéad O'Flanagan; Orlagh O'Regan; Bob Strunz
Apologies	:	Kevin Fleming: Mark Southern
In Attendance	:	John Field; Grainne Frain; Ciara Hogan; John Kelly; Pat O'Neill.

1. OPENING AND GOVERNANCE MATTERS

1.1 MEETING WITHOUT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

1.1 NOTED The Chancellor opened the discussion noting the critical relationship between the Executive Committee (EC) and the Governing Authority (GA) in shaping the UL's strategic direction. She acknowledged that in the past the relationship had been strained. She expressed thanks to EC for their dedication and contributions, and reaffirmed the mutual desire for openness, constructive challenge and the success of UL. She recognised the improved collaboration between EC, led by the Acting President and outlined the importance of both the internal and external expertise on the GA.

1.2 NOTED The Acting President noted that in the past, due to lack of trust, there was reluctance for open engagement. He agreed with the Chancellor's remarks about openness, transparency, and of the GA always having the full facts. He noted the importance of ensuring that the GA is informed, particularly if matters come to light which materially change any underlying assumptions on which decisions have been made, or if there is any change in information previously presented. Doing this ensures an opportunity to revisit a decision if necessary. He welcomed the opportunity that this engagement presented to further strengthen this important relationship.

1.3 NOTED The Acting President's overview also highlighted UL's strengths, including a global alumni network of 140,000, a student body of 20,000, and 2,200 staff. UL's 97% graduate employment rate, innovative curriculum, and co-op and internship model were noted as key differentiators. The University's regional impact and partnerships with companies such as Analog Devices, Eli Lilly, and Horizon were acknowledged. His briefing touched on the diverse student profile, flexible learning pathways, and access initiatives such as HEAR and DARE.

1.4 NOTED A number of key issues were discussed [redacted] and [redacted] There was agreement on the need to take a long-term view of CAO intake trends, demographic shifts, and the balance between growth and infrastructure. [redacted]

[redacted]. However, challenges remain in increasing non-EU undergraduate numbers due to limitations in the CAO system and timing of offers.

1.5 NOTED The student experience and accommodation pressures were highlighted as urgent issues. The growing number of international students brings unique challenges, including stress, accommodation scams, and pressure on student supports. Domestic students are also affected, with many first-years unable to secure housing or engage fully in campus life. Counselling services are under strain, with 35% of visits now from international students, underscoring the need for expanded support services.

1.6 NOTED Concerns were raised about the visibility of research outputs through current reporting structures. Within the Acting President's Report some members considered that faculty reports should be improved to address this. Suggested faculty-specific reporting twice yearly, that would better highlight achievements and challenges. Between reporting periods, Faculties should report only matters of which the Deans consider that the GA ought to be aware. Recent successes at UL such as ERC grants and the Athena Swan Silver Award were acknowledged. Members suggested the use of dashboards and high-level metrics in the Acting President's Report to provide clearer insights and more informative updates.

1.7 NOTED Strategic planning and collaboration were recurring themes. Members expressed a desire for clearer articulation of strategic priorities and more data-informed decision-making. A proposal was made to hold workshops aligning EC and GA on strategic pillars and sectoral competitiveness. It was noted that UL is not operating in a strategic vacuum, with frameworks such as the HEA Compact already in place.

1.8 NOTED There was consensus on the need to strategically grow postgraduate and international student numbers, ensure data-driven decision-making, and explore institutional models to evaluate resource requirements and predict strategic impacts.

1.9 AGREED A more focused reporting structure for faculties, increasing visibility of research and strategic achievements, operational reporting, enhancing collaboration between EC and GA through shared priorities and addressing accommodation and student support challenges. A template will be developed for the report which will guide content, including faculty submissions, as the Acting President considers appropriate.

1.2 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

1.2.1 NOTED The Corporate Secretary requested members to declare if they had a conflict of interest arising in relation to any matters on the agenda. The Chancellor will withdraw from the meeting for Agenda Item 1.4 Re-Appointment of External Member & Chancellor. In addition, for the Agenda Item 7.6 Review Committee Report, Professor Brigid Laffan, Dr Donal Donovan and Ms Anne O'Connor will withdraw from the meetings due to their involvement as members of the Review Committee.

1.3 CONDOLENCES

1.3.1 NOTED The Governing Authority expressed their condolences to Professor Kilcommins and his family on the recent death of his father.

1.3.2 AGREED That the condolences of the Governing Authority be conveyed to the following:

- Dorothy Kealy who works in main reception on the death of her husband, Brian.
- The family of Dr Thomas Fritz Waldmann, retired academic staff member, School of Engineering
- The family of Dr Majura Kaare, Clinical Tutor in the School of Medicine.

1.4 RE-APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL MEMBER & CHANCELLOR

1.4.1 NOTED Memorandum entitled "Voting Procedure for Proposed Re-appointment of Professor Laffan as Chancellor and External Member of the Governing Authority", dated 22 September 2025. Dr Donal Donovan assumed the Chair for this item and invited the Corporate Secretary, acting as Returning Officer, to outline the voting procedure. Mr Pat O'Neill, Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee, served as Scrutineer.

1.4.2 NOTED A secret ballot was conducted on the proposal to re-appoint Professor Brigid Laffan as Chancellor and External Member of the Governing Authority to the 30 June 2028. The outcome was unanimous, with all 17 members voting in favour of Professor Laffan's reappointment.

1.4.3 NOTED Members welcomed the Chancellor back to the meeting, congratulated her on her reappointment, and they expressed their appreciation for her commitment and work for the University.

1.5 MINUTES & ACTION ITEMS

1.5.1 AGREED Minutes of M25-7 3 July 2025 with several amendments proposed by Professor Edmond Magner and Dr Bob Strunz.

1.5.2 AGREED Proposed redline redactions of minutes of M25-7 3 July 2025 for publishing on the University website, as previously circulated.

1.5.3 NOTED Document entitled "Sixth Governing Authority Action Items to 30 September 2025 Meeting", previously circulated.

1.5.4 NOTED Memorandum from the Corporate Secretary entitled "Governing Authority Minutes", dated 22 September 2025, including attachments from Chartered Governance Institute (UK and Ireland) outlining best practice in the preparation of minutes.

1.5.5 AGREED Going forward, minutes will be more concise, capturing key points of discussion, any significant challenges or dissent, and clearly outlining decisions taken, actions agreed, and responsibilities assigned. They will provide sufficient context to ensure transparency, while avoiding unnecessary narrative or attribution of individual comments, except where specifically required.

1.5.6 AGREED The use of approved technology applications for future meetings was endorsed by the members. These tools will support more timely preparation of draft minutes. Once the draft minutes are approved recordings will not be retained.

2. ACTING PRESIDENT'S REPORT

2.1 NOTED Document entitled "Acting President's Report to GA, 3 July 2025. The Acting President provided a briefing covering the following key points:

- An update on the Renewal Plan, outlining project management initiatives in place to advance the recommendations agreed with the HEA.
- Development of the new Strategic Plan, centred on the University's core missions of Research, Learning & Teaching, and Engagement. The consultative and workshop phase is underway, with emphasis on aligning institutional growth with strategic priorities. The formal launch is anticipated in Q4 2026.
- Recommendations from the Protected Disclosures Review Report have been integrated into the Renewal Plan and will be actioned as a priority.
- Importance of nurturing a positive institutional culture, supported by Mazars, with a shared understanding promoted through mandatory Dignity & Respect training.
- Autumn Conferrings celebrated the achievements of 3,633 graduates, including 68 PhDs, and welcomed 10,000 guests, a significant milestone for the University community.
- UL's performance in global rankings: rising to 401 in QS (top 3% globally), ranking 76 out of 2,318 in THE, and placing second nationally for contributions to the UN Sustainable Development Goals.
- Co-op placements, internships, and student teacher volunteering continue to be distinctive strengths of the University.
- Five performance objectives have been outlined in the HEA Performance Agreement, accompanied by analysis, evaluation, and strategic reflection.
- The student timetable is addressed on the agenda. A key risk identified is the system's complexity, which now requires collective action to chart a path forward.

2.2 AGREED Following initial discussions at the start of the meeting with EC, future editions of the Acting President's Report will adopt a more strategic focus. Contributions from Deans will be streamlined to bi-annual to ensure greater impact. Further deliberation on a template to be undertaken by the Acting President, Chancellor and Corporate Secretary.

3. STUDENT RELATED REPORTS

3.1 Student Life Report

3.1.1 NOTED Document entitled the "Report of UL Student Life for the Governing Authority," authored by Síofra Foley and Orlagh O'Regan, 19 September 2025. Key updates included the internal audit which is now underway; move to new Student Centre; Orientation and Freshers week; National Lobbying efforts; student representation; Wellbeing Hub; accommodation and financial concerns; student-led initiatives including the Commuter Hub; and the Clubs and Societies Fair which saw 5,000 attendees in the UL Sports Arena.

3.1.2 NOTED Members welcomed that the new Student Centre is now fully operational.

3.2 Postgraduate Students' Union Report

3.2.1 NOTED Document entitled "Report from UL Postgraduate Students' Union to Governing Authority, 19 September 2025 – authored and presented by Mahadi Nohtani, President, ULPSU". The PSU President summarised key achievements, including: new PSU Officer Team; PSU Highlights: End of Year Bash Party, Welcome Back Party; Meeting with Minister Lawless; Speed Friending; Movie Night; Former Student Life Building; PSU concerns with regard to accommodation, financial support and health and wellbeing; expanded representation to include GEMS students; facilities, engagement and ongoing advocacy.

4. COMMITTEE REPORTS

4.1 Audit & Risk Committee (ARC)

4.1.1 NOTED Document entitled "Audit & Risk Committee, Chair's Report to the Governing Authority, 30 September 2025".

4.1.2 NOTED The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, briefed the GA on the following:

- Deputy Chair, ARC.
- ARC Terms of Reference – recommendation for approval.
- Anti-Fraud & Corruption Policy – recommendation for approval Item 7.4.
- Maher Report.
- Section 66 Review – recommendation for approval Item 5.6.
- Student Records Update: ATOM Project; Exam Board & Award Process Update; Student Timetabling.
- Internal Audit Update: ECKO Cyber Security Review; Special Review – Exam Board & Awards Process; ULSL Review; HEA Space Utilisation Review.
- Risk Management.
- Digital Governance Steering Committee & IT Developments.
- Critical Incident Management Plan.
- C&AG Management Letters 22/23 and 23/24.
- External Audit – PwC Fees.
- Revenue Intervention – UL VAT Group.
- [redacted]

4.1.3 AGREED On the recommendation of the ARC to approve the revised terms of reference as presented.

4.2 Nominating & Governance Committee (N&GC)

4.2.1 NOTED Document entitled "Nominating & Governance Committee, Chair's Report to the Governing Authority, 30 September 2025" and memo "Appointment of Mr Colum Ward to Finance, Strategy and Performance Committee", dated 30 September 2025.

4.2.2 NOTED The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, briefed the GA on the following:

- Reappointment of Chancellor – recommendation for approval Item 1.4.
- Governing Authority Self-Assessment.
- Ministerial Nominees and Skills Gaps.

- FSPC Vacancy – recommendation to Governing Authority.
- External Review of Governing Authority.
- Student Union representation on Committees.

4.2.3 AGREED On the recommendation of the N&GC to approve the appointment of Mr Colum Ward to the FSPC.

4.3 Finance, Strategy & Performance Committee (FSPC)

4.3.1 NOTED Document entitled "Finance, Strategy & Performance Committee, Chair's Report to the Governing Authority, 30 September 2025".

4.3.2 NOTED The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, briefed the GA on the following:

- Intellectual Property Policy.
- Cappavilla Phase 2 & 3.
- Property Acquisition Policy Applicability School of Medicine – New Build at Maternity Hospital, Limerick.
- Q3 Finance Report.
- Student Life Financial Oversight Measures.
- Budget Thresholds.
- Terms of Reference.
- HEA Compact Report – recommendation for approval Item 7.1.
- Workplan 2025/26.

4.3.3 NOTED The Chair briefed members on the FSPC's consideration of the proposed modular building at UHML. There is an outstanding concern about the extent (if any) to which the Policy for the Acquisition (including long term leasing) of Property should apply. The FSPC was satisfied with the process, but the CSO was concerned that the capital project may, by reason of the lease (which is for a nominal amount) may bring it within the ambit of the Policy. The FSPC agreed that the CFPO, CS, ACCO, and UL Solicitor would work together to prepare a compliance assurance note for review and approval by Executive Committee, prior to submission to the FSPC, with the final note to be then presented to the GA for approval. This is now under preparation.

4.3.4 NOTED Update on UL Student Life's financial situation, noting a request for an additional €150,000 advance to cover cash flow needs through September 2025. This would bring total support to €700,000, including €300,000 advanced against future capitation. It was noted that the EC endorsed measures including University representation at the Student Life Board, ongoing financial monitoring by UL staff, and an Internal Audit Review which is underway. Given what has occurred FSPC is of the view that stronger oversight of the Union's financial affairs is warranted, to ensure its financial sustainability. Student Life has accepted this. The nature of the advance will be reassessed as progress is made, and members will be updated.

4.3.5 NOTED It was suggested that, when a vacancy next arises, the FSPC, might consider appointing a member with expertise in information technology.

4.4 People & Culture Committee (PC&C)

4.4.1 NOTED Document entitled "People and Culture Committee, Chair's Report to Governing Authority, 30 September 2025".

4.4.2 NOTED The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, briefed the GA on the following:

- Final Report Co-Creating the Target Culture – Forviz Mazars – recommendation for approval Item 6.1.
- Reassignment Policy & Procedures – recommendation for approval Item 7.5.
- Terms of Reference - recommendation for approval.
- Human Resources Update.
- Workplan 2025/25.
- Annual P&CC Evaluation Review.

4.4.3 AGREED On the recommendation of the P&CC to approve the revised terms of reference.

4.5 Student Experience, Access & Equality Committee (SEAEC)

4.5.1 NOTED Document entitled "Student Experience, Access & Equality Committee, Chair's Report to Governing Authority, 30 September 2025".

4.5.2 NOTED The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, briefed the GA on the following:

- UL Student Health Centre Consultation Report – recommendation for approval.
- Section 64 Review – recommendation for approval Item 5.7.
- Terms of Reference – recommendation for approval.
- Student Voice in Current Review.
- Repeat Fees and I-Grades

4.5.3 AGREED On the recommendation of the SEAEC to approve UL Student Health Centre Consultation Report.

4.5.4 AGREED On the recommendation of the SEAEC to approve the revised terms of reference.

5. STRATEGIC MATTERS

5.1 RESEARCH

5.1.1 NOTED Professor Kevin Ryan, Vice President for Research & Innovation (VPRI) joined the meeting and opened the discussion by sharing personal experience as an active researcher, having secured €12 million in funding over two decades and authored over 100 research proposals. It was noted that research funding applications typically have a [redacted] success rate, requiring persistence and resilience. The motivation for researchers was outlined as the pursuit of groundbreaking ideas, securing peer-reviewed funding, building teams, mentoring PhD students, publishing, and gaining international recognition. Creating an environment that supports and encourages this cycle is essential to fostering a strong research culture. The Psychology Department was highlighted as a model of success, with regular research-

focused discussions contributing to strong European Research Council (ERC) performance. A recent third ERC award to Dr Paul Maher was noted.

5.1.2 NOTED Challenges in relation to attaining research income targets, although UL is ahead in European funding. The University achieved €50.5 million in research awards in 2023/24 – one of the highest to-date. Encouragingly, this success was not driven by the research centres, reflecting changes in the research landscape. Professor Ryan's presentation emphasised that research needs to be absolutely central to UL's mission and that there needs to be a sustained focus on the number of research-active academics as well as the quality and impact of research being undertaken. Proposed strategic actions include embedding a culture of research performance across departments/schools, establishing departmental research targets, developing a financial model to incentivise performance, supporting academic transformation, and launching a strategic recruitment fund ("UL Changemakers"). UL's culture must drive research intensity, academic transformation, and performance-based incentivisation. The item was flagged as highly important and requiring open, honest dialogue and further engagement to socialise proposed plans.

5.1.3 NOTED Detailed discussion included the following:

- Data is needed to better understand research award numbers. Are sufficient applications being made, or is it that too many applications are unsuccessful.
- Research grant applications should not be included as a KPI, as emphasis must be placed on quality, not just quantity.
- Lower than anticipated application rates may reflect insufficient skills, resources, supports or misalignment with research areas, early-career academics face high teaching loads.
- The Research Office provides support, but team environment and discipline-specific dynamics are key to success.
- Concerns raised about the threshold for being considered "research active"; with Professor Ryan noting that this is a nuanced issue.
- Recruitment processes must ensure prioritisation of candidates with strong research track records. Recruitment process should also take account of the needs of and should involve the research institutes
- Overhead from €50M research income is distributed across PI, faculty, institutes, and reserves - some funds remain unused and should be strategically allocated.
- WAM provides accountability for research time, but actual productivity must be assessed relative to allocated time, academics with lower research activity should carry higher teaching loads.
- UL must foster a culture of research engagement from recruitment through career progression.
- Leadership roles, especially Heads of Department, must be filled by research-active academics, who are passionate about instilling a strong research ethic. It was noted that in some faculties there is a reluctance by senior academics to step into leadership roles. It would be important to understand the underlying reasons why this is the case.
- Recruitment boards often prioritise teaching over research, this approach needs to be rebalanced.
- Workforce planning is essential, early activation of research careers is critical and requires very strong oversight. This is particularly so given that the tenure track system is no longer in place.

- The statistics on the number of Associate Professor B staff who are research active, is of concern and needs to be substantially improved.
- UL should define itself as striving towards becoming a research-intensive institution, not just research-led. Like all successful universities it must do this while also maintaining teaching as a core pillar.
- Research income is a key performance indicator, statistics were presented in relation to UL's performance against comparators in Ireland and it is clear that there is substantial work to be done.
- Any decline in research income poses both financial and reputational risks, and so the current year's performance has shown some encouraging signs.
- Governing Authority will pass a resolution supporting Professor Ryan, amplifying the supports that will be required in order for him to make progress during his tenure as VPRI, and reinforcing that all staff must play their part if UL is to succeed in its objective of becoming a research-intensive University.

5.2 REGISTRY

5.2.1 NOTED Memorandum from the Interim PDP regarding the timetable for Semester 1 AY 25/26 and a presentation entitled "Academic Transformation Operating Model, Academic Council Update, 15 September 2025".

5.2.2 NOTED The Interim PDP outlined that the timetabling challenge for Semester 1 stemmed from a convergence of recent staff departures, compounded by long-standing challenges, including rising student numbers, limited development of teaching spaces, and outdated systems and processes. Despite previous recommendations from the Timetabling Working Group (2016) and Deloitte Report (2015), little progress was made. The reasons appear to be in part due to competing priorities and underinvestment. The shift to online teaching during Covid-19 temporarily masked the urgency, but recent pressures have exposed the underlying and systemic weaknesses which were always present. To address this, a phased strategy is proposed: short-term actions focus on stabilising Semester 2 through increased staffing, better communication, and expanded room access; medium-term goals aim to enhance consistency and flexibility via staff training, improved data integrity, and a University-wide timetabling policy; and long-term objectives target system upgrades, cross-training, simplified course design, and improved teaching spaces. This comprehensive approach seeks to build a sustainable, scalable, and adaptive timetabling process.

5.2.3 NOTED The GA noted the persistence of timetabling and scheduling issues, noting that concerns which were apparent and raised in reports from 2008 and 2015 were not acted upon. Members expressed frustration that these issues were not prioritised when they first emerged. The Deloitte Report had recommended three actions, of which one was seemingly rejected and two were never initiated. Contributing factors included complex programme changes, part-time staffing, and margin scheduling. Academic Registry has faced significant pressure, particularly post-COVID, with staff turnover and limited expertise affecting timetable management. A decision was made to support local solutions, with 600 open calls now resolved. A working group has been established to oversee the three-stage strategy outlined, including the replacement of outdated timetable software.

5.2.4 NOTED Members emphasised the need for improved infrastructure, clearer analytics, and stronger governance. Concerns were raised about the scheduling implications of placing no limits on elective modules, the impact on student commuting and work schedules, and the absence of a stable core timetable. The importance of slowing program changes, enhancing staff capacity, and establishing a review board to manage modifications was agreed. A €25 million HSIF-funded teaching space project approved in 2023 was noted as critical to addressing space constraints. Members requested an update from Academic Registry before the end of the semester and stressed the need for ownership, accountability, and cultural change to prevent recurrence of these issues. Dr Bob Strunz requested an impact report providing a quantitative analysis of the consequences of the scheduling failure.

5.3 PROTECTED DISCLOSURES "MAHER REPORT"

5.3.1 NOTED Documents entitled "Review of Protected Disclosure Governance including Structures, Practices and Procedures at the University of Limerick", by Mr William Maher BL, dated 28 April 2025.

5.3.2 NOTED The Chancellor briefed members on correspondence with the former President. She also noted that as agreed, she had issued three letters of apology, copies of which have been provided for members information. The Acting President confirmed that the final report contained twelve recommendations, with a working group established to oversee their implementation. Key personnel changes have taken place, and significant progress has been made in strengthening governance, resetting the Executive Committee, and restoring UL's external reputation through engagement with UL's stakeholders. Several internal and legal processes have concluded, and [redacted]

5.3.3 NOTED There is now a need for the Governing Authority to formally close out the Maher Report and agree future actions.

5.3.4 Discussion including the following:

- Concerns were raised about systemic wrongdoing, including inappropriate disciplinary and investigatory processes being used to target whistleblowers, which was deemed inappropriate and harmful.
- Members discussed the need for individual explanations from those involved, with emphasis on accountability and the reputational impact on UL.
- The importance of setting a cultural example was emphasised, with calls for GA to acknowledge past issues, commit to improved governance practices and adopt a constructive, non-defensive tone.
- Specific governance failures were highlighted, including actions taken outside formal processes and GA members of sub-committee meeting outside of process. It was noted by some members that such actions were inappropriate, should not have occurred and must not reoccur.
- GA should consider issuing a statement affirming commitment to proper governance, transparency and protection for those raising concerns.
- The need for clarity on what "closing out" the Maher Report entails with suggestions to define a pathway forward and avoid further reputational risk.

- [redacted] It may be more constructive to focus on core priorities including the strategic plan, demographic challenges, complexity of systems, research income, institutional learning and cultural transformation.
- Members expressed consensus on the need for transparency, institution integrity, and collective responsibility and accountability.
- Members supported the idea of issuing a clear position statement on the various reports, together with a statement of future intent, to mark closure and enable progress in the best interests of UL.

5.3.5 AGREED That the "Review of Protected Disclosure Governance including Structures, Practices and Procedures at the University of Limerick" be published with the individual scenarios redacted.

5.3.6 AGREED A draft document / position statement as described above to be prepared, noting members' concerns and observations, before the Maher Report can be closed out.

5.3.7 NOTED The Chancellor, Acting President and PDP will address the University on 1 October 2025, and the Maher report will be discussed at this engagement.

5.4 PRESIDENTIAL RECRUITMENT PROCESS

5.4.1 NOTED Document entitled "UL Appointment of a new President - Process and Outline Timetable". The Chancellor briefed members on the proposed timeline, noting that the initial meeting of the Search Board with executive search consultants Forvis Mazars took place on 29 September. The Appointment Prospectus and Advertisement are nearing completion, with publication planned for mid-October. A longlist of candidates is expected by the end of 2025, followed by shortlisting and interviews in Q1 2026.

5.5 REVIEW OF THE PERFORMANCE OF THE PRESIDENT

5.5.1 NOTED Document entitled "S.18 Universities Act 1997 – Arrangements for the Annual Performance Review of the President – Approved by the Governing Authority 3 July 2025". In accordance with these arrangements, the Chancellor informed members that she had met with the Acting President to agree on his priorities for the year. Progress will be reviewed in December and March, with a final written report to be submitted in May 2026. This report will be evaluated by the Annual Review Panel, and a verbal update will be presented to the Governing Authority in June 2026. The Panel will consist of the Chair, the Chair of ARC, and one additional internal or external member of the Governing Authority.

5.5.2 AGREED To approve Professor Edmond Magner as the third member of the Annual Review Panel.

5.6 S64 REVIEW RECOVERY PLAN & IMPLEMENTATION

5.6.1 NOTED Memorandum from the RPMP entitled "HEA Report 2, Deloitte Reports Brief Governing Authority on Progress Made In Relation To The University's Renewal Plan

Since June 2025", dated 30 September 2025, HEA Progress Report Q2, Deloitte Q1 and Q2 Validation Reports, Deloitte Review of the 7-Step Tracking Process for implementation of the Renewal Plan, SOP and Tracker Toolkit.

5.6.2 NOTED The Acting President provided a comprehensive update on the progress of the University's Renewal Plan, Deloitte's and Internal Audit validation roles, highlighting developments across key structural components including the Steering Committee, Tracker System, and Transformation Office.

5.6.3 AGREED On the recommendation of the ARC to approve the HEA, Deloitte Validation Reports Q1 and Q2 and Tracker Process.

5.7 CONTINUATION OF SEAEC AS SUB-COMMITTEE

5.7.1 NOTED Memorandum from the Chancellor entitled "Whether the SEAEC should continue as a Committee of the Governing Authority: Section 64 Recommendation (No 28, Action 201 and 290)".

5.7.2 NOTED The Chair SEAEC briefed members on the committee's recent discussions and its conclusion that the current structure should remain unchanged. SEAEC is considered an appropriate and essential student committee within the University, continuing as a subcommittee of the GA.

5.7.3 NOTED Detailed discussion about the working of the Committee, the value that students place on its positioning as a sub-committee of the Governing Authority, the redrafting of the terms of reference such that the committee has a significantly different focus to its predecessor, the Access, Equality and Student Affairs Committee, the importance of student experience being seen as a strategically vital component of University governance.

5.7.4 NOTED The Acting President noted that although the Academic Council is focused on controlling the academic affairs of the University, such matters are also a central concern of students.

5.7.5 AGREED The SEAEC is a key oversight committee reporting to the Governing Authority and should remain in place. The Governing Authority while noting the S.64 recommendation that the matter should be reviewed, has concluded that the SEAEC should continue as a sub-committee of the Governing Authority.

6. STANDING ITEMS

6.1 PEOPLE & CULTURE

6.1.1 NOTED Document entitled "University of Limerick, Cultural Advisory Services 2025, Final Report". Ms Laura Magahy and Ms Rosanna Cassidy, Forvis Mazars joined the meeting, and Ms Magahy gave a brief presentation.

6.1.2 NOTED Discussion regarding the UL Cultural Framework was structured around its three phases: co-creating the target culture, living the culture, and monitoring and sharing the culture. Appreciation was expressed for the mixed methodology and the

work of the transformation team. There was strong endorsement of the values-driven approach, with emphasis on ensuring sustained commitment beyond initial rollout. It was affirmed that expectations are for long-term impact, with leadership from the President and active engagement across the three lines of defence. Phase 1 was acknowledged as particularly challenging, with concerns about lost institutional grip and the importance of community-led change. The 1,600 direct engagements were seen as critical to progress.

6.1.3 NOTED Phase 2 focuses on embedding the culture into everyday practice, supported by mechanisms such as PDRS, WAM, and devolved KPIs. Contributors highlighted the need for organic growth from within, and the importance of performance management, recruitment, and training under the HR pillar. Phase 3 emphasises systematic monitoring, with the role of satisfaction surveys and pulse checks noted, alongside the value of safe spaces for staff feedback. There was caution against repeating past failures where surveys lacked follow-through, underscoring the need for visible implementation and accountability at unit level.

6.1.4 NOTED The role of PC&C was recognised as central to tracking progress, with Mazars recommendations informing the monitoring framework. The importance of consistent leadership and cascading ownership throughout the decentralised University structure was reinforced. Next steps will include continued engagement with Deans and Executive Committees to ensure sustained progress. Appreciation was extended to all contributors for their collaboration and invaluable input throughout this process.

6.1.5 AGREED To approve the “University of Limerick, Cultural Advisory Services 2025, Final Report” as presented, including all three phases, (1) co-creating the target culture, (2) living and embedding the culture, and (3) monitoring and sharing the culture, as outlined in the Report.

6.2 FINANCE

6.2.1 NOTED The issue of Student Life finance was addressed in the FSPC Chairs Report under Item 4.2

6.3 RISK

6.3.1 AGREED In light of recent challenges associated with the timetable and following a request from a member, it was agreed that the Audit & Risk Committee will look at ensuring the fundamental risks call this out specifically and that the risk is set at an appropriately high level. The PDP will consider this further with the CS and the Risk Management Officer with a view to amending the register and putting in place the necessary controls and mitigations.

7. FOR APPROVAL

7.1 HEA PERFORMANCE AGREEMENT

7.1.1 NOTED Documents entitled “HEA UL Self-Evaluation Report 2025” approved by the Executive Committee and FSPC and a presentation entitled “UL-HEA Performance Agreement presentation from the Director, Strategic Planning.

7.1.2 AGREED To approve the Final HEA Agreement as submitted to the HEA 26 September subject to approval by the Governing Authority.

7.2 APPOINTMENTS

7.2.1 Academic Staff Appointments

7.2.2 AGREED In accordance with Section 25(1) of the Universities Act, 1997 to appoint:

- [redacted] as University Teacher – School of Allied Health
- Associate Professor [redacted] as Assistant Dean – Academic Affairs
- [redacted] as Associate Professor A in Nursing (General)
- [redacted] as Ollamh Cúnta san Oideolaíocht Teanga le Saineolas sa Ghaeilge
- [redacted] as Associate Teacher in Sport and Exercise Sciences
- [redacted] as Asso Prof A in Biomedical Science – Molecular Pathology
- [redacted] as Lead Practitioner – Executive Education
- [redacted] as Clinical Tutor in Paramedic Studies
- [redacted] as University Teacher – School of Nursing & Midwifery
- [redacted]nnell as University Teacher – School of Nursing & Midwifery
- [redacted] as Associate Teacher in Sport and Exercise Sciences
- [redacted] as Assistant Professor in Human Nutrition and Dietetics
- [redacted] as Assistant Professor of Education (Sociology Education).

7.2.3 Support Staff Appointments

7.2.4 AGREED In accordance with Section 25(1) of the Universities Act, 1997 to appoint:

- [redacted] as Executive Administrator
- [redacted] as Senior Administrator
- [redacted] as Executive Administrator
- [redacted] Collins as Senior Administrator
- [redacted] Project Coordinator EMERGE
- [redacted] as Research Governance Officer
- [redacted] as Senior Administrator
- [redacted] as Executive Administrator
- [redacted] as Senior Administrator
- [redacted] as Senior Data Analyst – Strategic Planning.

7.2.5 NOTED Memorandum from the Director, HR entitled “Notification of appointments”, dated 30 September 2025, which set out the appointments approved by the Governing Authority online since the last meeting on 3 July 2025.

7.2.6 NOTED Memorandum from the Director, HR entitled “Progression Across the Merit Bar”, dated 30 September 2025, which set out academic promotions approved by the President on the recommendation of the University’s Promotion Board.

7.2.7 NOTED Salary offer confirmations for June to August 2025.

7.2.8 NOTED Research funded contract appointments for September 2025.

7.3 GOVERNANCE HANDBOOK & STANDING ORDERS

7.3.1 AGREED To defer this item to the October meeting.

7.4 ANTI-FRAUD & CORRUPTION POLICY

7.4.1 NOTED Documents entitled “Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy”, clean and tracked versions.

7.4.2 AGREED On the recommendation of the Audit & Risk Committee to approve the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy as presented.

7.5 REASSIGNMENT POLICY & PROCEDURE

7.5.1 NOTED Memorandum from the Director, Human Resources entitled “Reassignment Policy and Procedure”, dated 8 September 2025. The Director, HR briefed members on the key revisions required to enhance effectiveness for reassigning employees in various circumstances.

7.5.2 AGREED On the recommendation of the People & Culture Committee to approve the Reassignment Policy and Procedure as presented.

7.6 REVIEW REQUEST – COMMITTEE REPORT

7.6.1 NOTED Document entitled “Governing Authority Review Committee Report to Governing Authority – Progression Review Request – Submitted to GA 30 Sept 25”. Professor Brigid Laffan, Dr Donal Donovan and Ms Anne O’Connor withdrew from the meetings due to their roles as members of the Review Committee. Professor Ann Ledwith also recused herself, as she had served as Chair of the University Review Committee which is the subject of the review.

7.6.2 AGREED To accept the Review Committee’s recommendation that the original decision of the University Review Committee not to recommend the Requester for promotion across the merit bar be upheld.

7.6.3 NOTED The GA has expressed a preference for reviews to be managed at operational level. An alternative procedure is under consideration by HR and members expressed a view that this should be prioritisied.

7.7 ACADEMIC COUNCIL – LINKED PROVIDER FRAMEWORK

7.7.1 NOTED Documents entitled “Academic Council Report to Governing Authority” and “University of Limerick Linked Provider Framework”.

7.7.2 AGREED To accept the recommendation of the Academic Council to approve the revised Linked Provider Framework as presented.

Board/Committee : Governing Authority
Meeting Number : M25-8

8. FOR NOTING

8.1 NOTED The following documents:

- Cappavilla Approval Email 25 August 2025
- C&AG Management Letters 2022/23 & 2023/24
- Final Stakeholder Map
- Governing Authority Workplan
- Note of Committee Chairs Meeting 2 July 2025
- [redacted]
- [redacted]
- Aviation Registries – HEA/UL correspondence 28 August 2025
- Governing Authority Expenditure April to September 2025
- [redacted]
- Letters of Apology from Chancellor to Dr Bob Strunz, Professor Shane Kilcommins, Mr Robert Reidy – 28 August 2025

8.2 NOTED The Chancellor thanked Professor Magner for hosting the meeting in the Bernal Institute.