



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

**COMMITTEE FOR EMPLOYMENT AND LEARNING
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

WEDNESDAY, 2 DECEMBER 2015

ROOM 29, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Present: Mr Robin Swann (Chairperson)
Mr Thomas Buchanan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Mr Sydney Anderson MLA
Mr David Hilditch MLA
Ms Anna Lo MLA
Mr Fra McCann MLA
Ms Bronwyn McGahan MLA

In Attendance: Mrs Cathie White (Assembly Clerk)
Mr Vincent Gribbin (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Ms Amy Barr (Legislative Studies & Practice Student)
Ms Sabra Wray (Clerical Officer)

Apologies: Mr Phil Flanagan MLA
Mr Pat Ramsey MLA
Ms Claire Sugden MLA

10:09 am The meeting opened in public session.

1. Apologies

Apologies are detailed above.

2. Chairperson's Business

- The Chairperson advised the Committee that he, the Deputy Chairperson and the Clerk had met with Unite the Union on 18 November 2015 to discuss cuts at the Ulster University.
- The Chairperson advised the Committee that the Deputy Chairperson and the Clerk had met with Professor John Gillespie of Ulster University to discuss the cuts to modern languages on 18 November 2015.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2015

Agreed: The minutes of the meeting on 18 November 2015 were agreed.

4. Matters arising

- The Committee noted a list of matters arising from the meeting on 18 November 2015.

5. Correspondence

The Committee considered the following items of correspondence:

- Departmental correspondence providing an analysis of the responses to the consultation on the Future Approaches to the quality Assessment of Higher Education.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Response from the Department for Education regarding the Special Educational Needs Inquiry.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the response and include in the Committee Inquiry Report.

- Correspondence from Gortilea Social Farm providing a copy of the presentation provided to the Committee during its visit to the Farm as part of its Inquiry.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence and include in the Committee Inquiry Report.

- Response from the Ulster University regarding points made in Committee correspondence of 13 November 2015.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the response and forward to Elisabeth Lillie for information.

- Response from the Department for Agriculture and Rural Development regarding the Special Educational Needs Inquiry.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the response and include in the Committee Inquiry Report.

- Response from the Department for Regional Development to Committee correspondence regarding the Special Educational Needs Inquiry.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the response and include in the Committee Inquiry Report.

- Response from the Ulster University providing a breakdown of Widening Access statistics.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the response.

- Correspondence from the NIA EU Affairs Manager regarding work permits for migrants from outside the European Economic Area.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Correspondence from the Chairpersons' Liaison Group providing notes of the meeting on 24 November 2015

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Response from the Department for Health, Social Services and Public Safety regarding the Special Educational Needs Inquiry.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the response and include in the Committee Inquiry Report.

- Correspondence from the Department of Finance and Personnel regarding the November Monitoring Round

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Response from the Ulster University on Humanities cuts at the Ulster University.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the response and forward to the Irish Humanities Alliance for information.

- Invitation from the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission to the Launch of the Annual Statement.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the invitation.

- Invitation from the Forum for Adult Learners Northern Ireland to their next meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the invitation.

6. Forward Work Programme

- The Committee noted the revised Forward Work Programme to 9 December 2015.

7. Employment Bill - Departmental Refresher Session

The Committee noted a draft timeline for the Committee Stage of the Employment Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Chairperson should consider the submissions to the Bill when received before Christmas and agree who to call to give evidence to the Committee on 6 January 2016.

The Committee considered a draft Motion to extend the Committee Stage of the Employment Bill until the 26 February 2016.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the Motion.

10:14 am The Departmental officials joined the meeting.

The Committee was briefed by Dr Alan Scott, Head of Employment Relations Policy and Legislation Branch, Mr John McKeown, Acting Assistant Director, Strategy, European & Employment Relations Division, and Ms Deirdre Walsh, Employment Relations Policy and Legislation.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

10:24 Mr Buchanan MLA joined the meeting.

10:39 Mr Anderson MLA joined the meeting.

Agreed: The Departmental officials agreed to provide the Committee with clarification on the corrections made under Clause 22 of the Bill.

Agreed: The Departmental officials agreed to raise, with careers colleagues, the issue of the use of “shall” rather than “may” in Clause 17 of the Bill referring to the Department’s role.

Agreed: The Departmental officials agreed to provide the Committee with the Keeling Schedule for the Bill.

10:56 am The Departmental officials left the meeting.

8. Briefing from Assembly Research and Information Service - European Issues

10:56 am The researcher joined the meeting.

The Committee was briefed by Mr Eoin Murphy, Northern Ireland Assembly Research and Information Service.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

Agreed: The researcher agreed to provide the Committee with further information.

9. Briefing from Assembly Research and Information Service - Higher Education Statistics

The Committee was briefed by Mr Eoin Murphy, Northern Ireland Assembly Research and Information Service.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

Agreed: The researcher agreed to provide the Committee with further information.

10. Briefing from Assembly Research and Information Service – Economic Impact of International Students on Northern Ireland

The Committee was briefed by Mr Eoin Murphy, Northern Ireland Assembly Research and Information Service.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Ulster University for information on:

- its degree course where Chinese students study one year in UU.
- its 8 week intensive course for Chinese students which is costly and which does not guarantee access on to a degree course.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to Queens University Belfast for information on how it will increase its number of international students by 2020.

11:31 am The researcher left the meeting.

11. Any other business

None.

12. Date, time and place of next meeting

The Committee noted that the next meeting should be held on Wednesday, 9 December 2015 at 10.00 am in Room 29, Parliament Buildings.

11:32 am *The Chairperson adjourned the meeting.*

Mr Robin Swann MLA
Chairperson, Committee for Employment & Learning

9 December 2015