STATUTORY RULES OF NORTHERN IRELAND

2026 No. 3

EDUCATION

The Further Education (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2026

Made - - - -	*8th January 2026*
Coming into operation	*27th February 2026*

The Department for the Economy makes the following Order in exercise of the powers conferred by Articles 19(7) and 24(6) of the Further Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1997(**a**) and now vested in it(**b**).

Citation and commencement

1. This Order may be cited as the Further Education (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2026 and comes into operation on 27th February 2026.

Interpretation

2. In this Order, the references to the 1997 Order are to the Further Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1997.

Financial year for institutions of further education

3. In Article 19(6) of the 1997 Order for "31st July" substitute "31st March".

Transitional provisions

4.—(1) The period starting with 1st August 2025 for a statement of accounts required under Article 19 of the 1997 Order ends on 31st March 2026 (and any annual amounts in the statement of accounts are to be pro rated accordingly).

(2) A development plan submitted under Article 20(1) of the 1997 Order before the coming into operation of Article 3 of this Order, in respect of a period ending in a year after 2025, need not be revised in consequence of the amendment in Article 3.

(**a**) S.I. 1997/1772 (N.I. 15); Article 19 was substituted by Article 2(2) of the Institutions of Further Education (Public Sector Audit) Order (Northern Ireland) 2008 S.R. 2008 No 511.

(**b**) The functions of the Department of Education under the Further Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 were transferred to the Department of Higher and Further Education, Training and Employment by Article 5(b) of, and Schedule 3, Part 2 to, the Departments (Transfer and Assignment of Functions) Order (Northern Ireland) 1999 (S.R. 1999 No. 481). The Department of Higher and Further Education, Training and Employment was renamed the Department for Employment and Learning by section 1(1) of the Department for Employment and Learning Act (Northern Ireland) 2001 c.15 (N.I.), and following the dissolution of that department by section 1(10) of the Departments Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 c.5 (N.I.), its functions under the Further Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 were transferred to the Department for the Economy by Article 6(1)(c) of the Departments (Transfer of Functions) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016 (S.R. 2016 No. 76).

Sealed with the Official Seal of the Department for the Economy on 8th January 2026.

L.S.

Kathryn McCamley
A senior officer of the Department for the Economy

EXPLANATORY NOTE

(This note is not part of the Order)

This is the first time that the enabling power under 19(7) has been used to amend the Further Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 to change the financial year of the Further Education Colleges.

Article 3 amends Article 19(6) to change the ending of the financial year from the period of 12 months ending on 31st July to the period of 12 months ending on 31st March, the same as the financial year of the Department for the Economy.

Article 4 provides the transitional provisions for the requirements relating to the statement of accounts and the development plan.

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