Academic Assembly
22 October 2025 / Teams
MEETING MINUTES

UNIVERSITY OF BATH

828 Welcome and Quorum

REPORTED

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting. It was noted that the meeting was opening without a quorum. Quorum was confirmed at 13:36.

829 Declarations of Interest

REPORTED

No declarations of interest were made.

830 Minutes of the Previous Meeting - AA25/26 - 01

DECISION

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 April 2025 were approved as an accurate record.

831 Membership and Terms of Reference

REPORTED

It was noted that the membership and Terms of Reference of the Assembly could be found on the University's webpages.

832 Actions and Matters Arising - AA25/26 - 02

REPORTED

The Action Log was noted.

The Chair welcomed the incoming Chair of Council to the meeting. They would take up their role on 1 November 2025. They had been an undergraduate at the University and involved in various ways since they graduated, including through the Gold Scholars programme. Their professional background was primarily in accountancy and strategy within the commercial sector and had sat on a number of boards over the past decade. For the past seven years they had been a Councillor at the University of Cambridge in which they helped to drive the modernisation of how they thought about finance. They expressed their excitement to be re-joining the University, noting it was a great institution and placed well for the current challenges within the Higher Education Sector. They were looking forward to meeting many academic colleagues in attendance over their term.

833 Relevant Decisions of Senate

REPORTED

The following Senate approvals were brought to the attention of members:

JUNE

Recommendation of the Degree Outcomes Statement 2023/24 to Council (Subsequently approved on 10 July 2025).

Approval of recommendations related to the Postgraduate Taught Degree Outcomes 2023/24 report.

Approval of updates to the Student Regulations for 2025/26 including the introduction of a new Regulation (Regulation 19) looking at academic misconduct.

Approval of changes to the Academic Frameworks for course and assessment design and course delivery.

The establishment of a working group on Intended Learning Outcomes.

Approved the proposed policy and procedure for the approval, monitoring and renewal of progression and articulation arrangements.

Approved a proposed framework for anticipatory adjustments in teaching and assessment and policy development work to support implementation of the framework.

Approved the updated Principles of Responsible Research Assessment.

Recommended the Annual Statement on Research Integrity to Council (Subsequently approved on 10 July 2025).

Approved a number of courses including BSc Finance, MSc Financial Mathematics with Data Science with Professional Placement and MSc Marketing and MSc Finance.

Approved the academic year chart for 2026/27.

SEPTEMBER

Approved changes to the Senate Standing Orders.

Approved the delegation of authority to CPAC for the final approval of new undergraduate and postgraduate taught courses, continuing to refer to Senate where appropriate.

Approved changes to Regulation 15.

Recommended to Council the disestablishment of I-SEE.

Approved amendments to the Terms of Reference of various Senate sub-committees.

DISCUSSION

It was noted that the changes to the Senate Standing Orders were relatively small but they still needed to be updated on the Governance webpages.

The delegation of certain responsibilities was important to ensure the efficiency of Senate but oversight would continue to sit with Senate as the overarching academic authority of the University.

834 Chair of Council Update

REPORTED

The outgoing Chair of Council presented an overview of the work of Council over the past academic year. 2024/25 had been the first year with the current Vice-Chancellor in post and it had therefore been a priority to establish a strong working relationship, clearly delineating between the responsibilities of the Executive and Council. The Chair had overseen the simplification of the University's Statutes and Ordinances which would allow the University to be more agile within its decision making. These had been published on the University's webpages at the beginning of September. Alongside this the elections and appointments framework had been developed and published however there was still some work to be done in relation to the Scheme of Delegation. The Council had decreased in size as a result of the review, down to 15 members. Within these 15 there were eight lay members, two of which had academic backgrounds, five staff members including the Chair of the Assembly and two student representatives. This smaller size would allow for the Council to work more effectively with the Executive. The Council had recently had their Autumn away day which had better allowed them to discuss and understand their respective roles. Over their tenure the outgoing Chair had also worked to improve the relationship between Council and Senate, allowing for a better understanding of each body. There had been some changes to the Governance Committee structure, with the introduction of the People and Culture Committee, which would look more closely at the University's strategy in relation to its culture, and the Infrastructure Working Group, which would take an in depth look at the University's Capital Projects and advise Finance Committee and Council as to the strategic suitability of the plans.

The Higher Education sector was in a challenging period and while the University was in a good position currently it was important to avoid complacency. The Outgoing Chair noted some of the successes of the University in recent years including the increase in its research standing and the implementation of the Curriculum Transformation project. Council had been working with the Vice-Chancellor on the next chapter of the University Strategy, looking at the KPIs to ensure that the University was performing as well as they could. The University was currently in good standing not only financially but within the local community and in the rankings.

The Chair of Academic Assembly thanked the outgoing Chair of Council for their work over their tenure, particularly their tenacity in completing the review of Statutes and Ordinances.

The outgoing Chair noted their gratitude at being part of the University's journey, noting that Bath's success was about the people involved.

835 Deputy Vice-Chancellor Introduction

REPORTED

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor provided the Assembly with an update, reflecting on their first six months within the role. They had attended the Assembly a couple of times during these six months in the context of the Academic Promotion Criteria consultation.

In starting in the role the Deputy Vice-Chancellor's main area of responsibility was the University Strategy. Before they joined the institution the Vice-Chancellor had identified three pillars and work was now being undertaken to full develop the strategy, noting that adjustments would be needed as it developed. Planning also sat under the Deputy Vice-Chancellor's area of responsibility as well as delivery of the strategy and the University culture. It was noted that the University culture was important in order to get the most out of the overarching strategy. Part of looking at the University culture included looking at the existing committee structure, bringing about more clarity around decision making and developing a sense of agency within the structure, allowing for more delegation of authority where appropriate.

The Higher Education sector was in a time of change and it was important that the University did not become complacent. Institutionally they were well placed as a young university who were able to make agile changes while still being established enough to make an impact in the sector with these changes.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor noted they had enjoyed their first six months in the role however they felt that it was more important to know how the University was responding to them and invited the Assembly to share the challenges they felt were at play and feel comfortable having difficult conversations with them when necessary.

Looking forward they intended to remain agile and course correct as necessary. Often within universities there was a slow cycle of work, sometimes taking several years to fully see the impact and as such there were plans to create an underpinning five-year plan to the Strategy which could be reviewed annually to allow for flexibility. This would be accompanied by a reporting framework to indicate whether the University was moving in the right direction with their activities.

DISCUSSION

It was queried what systems had been put in place to ensure that the feedback being received by the Executive was representative to what was felt within the community. One of the first things the Deputy Vice-Chancellor had done in their role was meet directly with the academic Heads of Department, getting to know them and making it clear they could come to them directly if they had issues. Additionally they had started working across the University in various spaces, blocking out time so that they were available and approachable for anyone in the University community. They noted that it was very easy to remain in an office so they were keen to be out in the community so that direct discussions could be had.

An incident at a recent careers fair on campus was flagged for which the Deputy Vice-Chancellor confirmed they would investigate and report back to the relevant individuals outside of the meeting.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor was asked to reflect on what they believed were the University's strengths and weaknesses compared to the sector. They noted that the University had performed very well but that it was important to avoid complacency, what may have served the institution in the past may not in perpetuity. A real strength of the University was the collegiality and they noted that despite the challenges they had faced over the past six months they had enjoyed every day because of the atmosphere on the campus. There were areas for the University to evolve, there was a general lack of agency and confidence at times and they would encourage the confidence to do more as an institution. It was noted that if a strategy was to be successful then the community needed the necessary agency and initiative to act to deliver it.

It was queried how the University was approaching its branding. While it was highly regarded nationally it was still underappreciated internationally. It was important to be clear what the University wanted to be known for. The Global Voice and Reputation project which was currently in progress had provided important information for how the University was seen both internally and externally. One main area which had presented was sport which was seen as an area the University was particularly distinct. The challenge was determining a clear mission statement of who Bath was that was distinctive as many universities could end up with similar statements. The work was ongoing but there had been positive progress.

836 Elections - AA25/26 - 03

REPORTED

The Assembly noted the paper outlining the elections due to be run in the 2025/26 cycle.

DISCUSSION

It was noted that the majority of Senate members were not in attendance of the Assembly meeting. It was felt that it was a reasonable expectation that Senators attended meetings of the Assembly as it would given members the confidence that they were being listened to at Senate.

837 Programme of Meetings for 2025/26

REPORTED

The programme of meetings for 2025/26 was noted. While there was only one further formal meeting scheduled for the year there may be a number of extraordinary meetings planned for focused business.

838 Any Other Business

REPORTED

There was no further business to discuss.

Attendees

Attended

Sabina Gheduzzi, Chair

Marcus Munafò

And 29 others

In Attendance

Katie Anderton, Governance Partner

Laura Andrews

Pam Chesters

Sharon Flood

Hannah South

Katrin Roberts