

Faculty of Engineering & Design Board of Studies

Unreserved - Confirmed

Wednesday, 14th January 2026 2:15 pm 2 East 3.4

Attendees

Attended

Tareq Assaf

Chris Bowen

Ricardo Codinhoto

Jos Darling (via TEAMS)

Mirella Di Lorenzo

Tina Düren

Adrian Evans

Jonathan Graham-Harper-Cater

David Hassell (via TEAMS)

Andrew Heath

Tim Ibell (CHAIR)

Patrick Keogh

Benjamin Metcalfe

Despina Moschou

Emma Emanuelsson Patterson

Will Roberts

Jana Sajdakova (via TEAMS for agenda item 2690)

Eleni Sikou

David Stacey

Rachel Summers (Secretary)

Did Not Attend

Kamal Asadi

John Chew

Jeffrey Gavin

Marion Harney

Tristan Kershaw

Omid Maghazei

Zach Yebuah

2685 Welcome and Quorum

The Chair welcomed members and apologies were noted.

2686 Declarations of Interest

The Chair asked for any declarations of potential conflicts of interest which were not going to be declared during subsequent discussions - there were none.

2687 Minutes of the Previous meeting - ED2025-26/049

The unreserved minutes of the meeting of the Board of Studies held on 12 November 2025 (ED2025-26/049) were approved as a correct record of the proceedings.

2688 Actions and Matters Arising

The Board noted actions completed since the previous meeting,

Minute 2664 New course proposals (Stage one Strategic Consideration) - new suite of UG Architecture courses. Submitted to APC and Chair's Action on behalf of APC subsequently taken to grant full strategic approval to the proposal. Proposal to be reviewed next by the Courses and Partnerships Committee. **Action complete.**

Minute 2665 PGR Research Student Reports. Doctoral College was asked to provide data on PhD registrations over time. This report has been provided along with the 1 December 'snapshot' reports (see paper ED2025-26/054). **Action complete.**

Minute 2666 SSLC - DLTQCS to received SSLC action logs. Action in hand.

Minute 2667 Graduate Teaching Assistants. EE Dept to share good practice; all Depts to consider appointing a dedicated GTA lead. **Action complete.**

Minute 2668 Arch & Civil asked to review its BEC UG core membership. **Action complete.**

Minute 2669 Request for analysis of IMC data held in SAMIS passed to the IMCs/ Additional Considerations 2025/26 workstream. **Action complete.**

There were no matters arising.

2689 Chairs Business & Actions ED2025-26/050

The Chair informed Board members that he would be standing down from the Dean position in July having completed five years in the role (as per the agreed tenure for his appointment). He said what a privilege it had been and thanked colleagues for their support and contribution to the Faculty's success. The Chair noted that the University is ever vigilant to explore opportunities particularly within the local region and University Executive Board UEB had recently met informally with colleagues from UWE to

share ideas and discuss potential opportunities to work more closely. Scanning the education horizon the Faculty is preparing for the huge challenges that lie ahead in terms of new modes of course delivery e.g. online course delivery, TNE (dual degrees), diversification of PGT education.

2690 New Course Proposal: Stage One Strategic Consideration ED2025-26/051

The Board considered the Stage 1 approval for a new PGT award as a complementary stand alone variant of the MSc Engineering Business Management (online)

- PG Diploma

The Chair welcomed Miss Jana Sajdakova, Director of Studies for the MSc EBM online (Department of Mechanical Engineering), who introduced paper ED2025-26/051.

The proposed course will be created from the existing PG Diploma exit award but will allow for direct entry to a PG Dip which Risepoint (the online delivery partner) anticipates will boost recruitment. Students will complete the 12 taught units (Phase 1) and complete the PG Diploma and finish before the Dissertation stage (Phase 2 of the full MSc course).

Board Feedback and Discussion

- Credit Framework: Members queried the CATS credit structure as being out of line with the ECTS framework which applies to all other courses in the Faculty. Miss Sajdakova advised the the online courses were governed by a different set of academic regulations. The Board asked for further clarity around the credit framework.

Secretary's post meeting note: The Learning Partnership Office has clarified that all the Online courses use the CATS credit system. This goes back to the original set up and first online course approvals around 2017/8. In developing Online MScs the University was looking ahead to align these with what was being initially proposed for Curriculum Transformation which was to move to CATS credits. Ultimately the decision was to stay with ECTS and the Online courses have remained with CATS.

- Progression to MSc: Are students eligible to transfer and continue to the full MSc course at the end of the taught Phase. Miss Sajdakova confirmed that this would be possible
- Development of a stand alone PG Cert: The Board queried whether the Course Team had explored the simultaneous introduction of a stand alone PG Certificate. The 'carousel' delivery and enrolment structure for the online course inhibited the development of a PG Cert as it was not possible for students to complete a prescribed pattern of units for a named PG Cert award and there is also no exit award at PG Cert.
- Additional Course Resource Costs: The Board asked whether there would be any additional costs associated with the recruitment of students to the PG Cert. Miss Sajdakova explained that Risepoint would be responsible for supporting the admissions process but the applicant numbers were expected to be low with only 1-2 envisaged when the Diploma starts in 2027.

The Board recommended the Stage 1 proposal to Academic Programmes Committee (APC) subject to clarification of the credit framework (see above).

2691 Annual Report: Monitoring of Standards (Scaling) 2024-25 ED2025-26/052

The Board received the annual monitoring report on units with mean marks in the atypical range during 2024/25. The Board noted that there had been 31 units with mean marks in the atypical range compared to 19 units in 2023/24, a 68% increase. Boards of Examiners for Units decided in 13 cases to scale (adjust) unit marks, 12 of which had atypical unit means and one unit in the Dept. of Architecture & Civil Engineering which was not in the atypical range but was scaled down by the BEU. The scaling of 13 units represented 4.1% of all units considered by BEUs in 2024/25 - seven units had been scaled upwards (low atypical means), six had been scaled down.

The Board noted the commentary provided by Departments in respect of units with repeated atypical means which had been scaled in 2024/25 and also on at least one previous occasion in the preceding 3 years (three units EE12002, ME50391 & ME50392). Appropriate remedial actions were being taken.

Members of the Board commented that the report indicated that BEUs reached different scaling decisions across the Faculty's four academic departments. The Board noted that variation in approach was an understandable consequence of the remit and role of BEU's in assessment decision making processes. The Board noted that in 2024/25 EQSC had established a Task & Finish Working group to review University scaling policy and that its report and proposals had been submitted to the October 2025 meeting of EQSC. The Board had no knowledge of the status of the T&F group's proposals following consideration by EQSC - no new guidance had been communicated.

A Board member commented that students' choice of optional units may be influenced by units with low atypical unit means - Dept's needed to be mindful of this.

The Board was satisfied on the evidence provided in the report that Boards of Examiners had reached their decisions in accordance with the guidance and procedures detailed in QA35 Assessment Procedures to Taught Courses.

2692 Exam Paper Errors 2024-25 ED2025-26/053

The Board received the report on exam paper errors covering the semester two and supplementary assessment periods for 2024/25 and the overview summary of exam errors across the year. Two hundred exams had been held across the year of which five exams had reported errors (2.5%).

The Board noted one exam taken in the semester two assessment period which had a reported paper error (for unit CE10233 Principles of Chemical Engineering) and the actions taken by the Dept. to address the matter in the marking of the exam.

The Board noted the range of issues detailed in the report relating to the conduct of and arrangements for in-person exams, which may have had a bigger impact on students' exam experiences and affected more students compared to papers with exam errors e.g. exam venue disruptions, varying quality of invigilation and inconsistencies in advice provided in exam venues, incomplete exam materials etc, The Board asked that these matters be raised with the Exams Office.

2693 PGR Reports ED2025-26/054

The Board received and considered the reports provided by the Doctoral College,

- 1) Doctoral students current registration status (snapshot data as at 12 December 25)
- 2) Doctoral student (FT) submission rates (snapshot data as at 1 June 25)
- 3) New PhD starters from 2014/15 to 2024/25 (taken from UDSC admissions report Oct 25)

At the previous Board meeting members had requested data from the Doctoral College regarding year on year PhD registrations as there was concern that numbers may be in decline. The figures provided for PGR starters as of October (with the UDSC admissions report for full year registrations in brackets) were,

2023/24: 41 (65)

2024/25: 56 (73)

2025/26: 44 (n/a)

Professor Bowen noted that the figures for the full year were about 20 higher (or 30 to 55% higher) than the October figures, so we can probably expect about 60 to 65 starters in total in 2025/26. The trend over the last 7 years or so has been disappointingly flat, and with the closure of some CDTs we may expect a further slight drop.

Completion within four years: rate for 2021-22 starters has increased to over 80%, which exceeds the KPI target of 80%. and hopefully this can be sustained. Reasons for this improvement:

- i) This cohort was not affected so much by Covid;
- ii) This cohort was not given the automatic 3 month Covid extension;
- iii) Mandatory supervision training, "planning for completion" workshops for students, and targeted intervention are all now in place and being driven by the Research Centres.

The Board agreed that achieving an uplift in PhD registrations will be challenging in the current economic and geopolitical climate.

2694 Annual Report: Operation of Boards of Examiners 2024-25 ED2025-26/055

The Board received the annual report on the Operation of Boards of Examiners for 2024/25 and noted the summary of feedback from External Examiners. Faculty Assistant Registrars with support from the Faculty's Programmes Manager had prioritised attendance of meetings of Pre-BEUs and Pre-BECs to provide regulatory advice and had provided input to between 40 - 50 pre-Boards. Feedback from external examiners on exam board processes was overwhelmingly positive although in some Depts externals felt that a clearer explanation of the University's IMC procedures would have been helpful (noting that external examiners in other Departments commended the information that had been provided).

The Board noted the volume of supplementary assessments (83 exams) which exceeded those scheduled in either semesters one or two and which placed considerable strain on both programme administrators and academic staff in terms of exam paper setting & checking, marking, mark checking, SAMIS processing and BEU / BEC preparations.

Members of the Board requested that BECs be provided with longitudinal data on degree classifications awarded so that the BEC might actively monitor any degree inflation.

2695 Research Activity Report ED2025-26/056

The Board received and noted the first quarter Research Activity report for 2025-26.

2696 Reports from Ex Officio members ED2025-26/057

The Board received the update reports from ex officio and academic leadership members of the Board as detailed in paper ED2025-26/057.

Dr Codinhoto (Director of PGT Studies) apologised to the Board for not having provided an update but he had been fully focussed on his work on the PGT Strategic Review Phase 3 report.

The Dean noted that co-location discussions with Buro Happold were progressing well. To coincide with the 50th anniversary of Buro Happold and to recognise the role of Ted Happold (the founder of Buro Happold) in launching the interdisciplinary ethos of the teaching of civil and architecture students in the Dept of Architecture & Civil Engineering the University is exploring co-location of the research activities of both parties.

2697 Library Matters

Mr Stacey provided an update on Library matters,

The normal student support arrangements are being provided by the Library during the semester one exam / assessment period. The submissions deadline for the 2026 green Library Spark competition is 23 February. Students are invited to put forward low cost ideas to make library services, facilities or resources more environmentally sustainable. A prize of £500 is on offer for the best proposal. The database trials of the ASTM Digital Library & MCX (MaterialConneXion) had seen low usage and future investment in subscriptions to the services were considered to not be good value for money.

2698 Report from Student representatives and/or Students' Union Officer

The student representative reported that the groundwork in relation to the Students' Union's Top10 priorities for 2025/26 was well underway and that a report on progress would hopefully be available soon. The student representative commented that he was a member of the SU's Sustainability Forum which is working closely with the University's sustainability team.

2699 Sub-Committee Minutes ED2025-26/058-60

The Board received the minutes of the following Committee meetings

- 1) Faculty Executive - meeting of 27 October 2025 ED2025-26/058
- 2) Faculty Learning Teaching & Quality Committee - meeting of 3 December 2025 ED2025-26/059
- 3) Faculty Research & Knowledge Exchange Committee - meeting of 1 October 2025 ED2025-26/060

2700 Committee Minutes (SSLC, DBoS, FDSC) ED2025-26/061-62

The Board received and noted the minutes of the following Committees.

- 1) Doctoral Board of Studies - meetings of 8 October & 12 November 2025 ED2025-26/061
- 2) Faculty Doctoral Studies Committee (FDSC) - meeting of 18 November 2025 ED2025-26/062

2701 Any Other Business

Dr Codinhoto (Director of PGT Studies) commented that Degree Scheme Reviews were being re-introduced and rolled out across the University. The Board noted that the Dept of Chemical Engineering would be carrying a DSR of its UG courses this year as part of the 'pilot' of the new DSR process. The Board noted that no additional resource had been identified to support DSR activities and that this was yet another activity which would fall to Directors of Teaching / Directors of Studies to pick up.

A member of the Board asked for an update on UG UCAS applications for 2026 entry. The Chair noted that applications from UK students were up 20% on last year and Overseas applications were up 37%. This was encouraging but conversion of applications, especially for overseas students continued to be challenging.

2702 Date of next meeting

The Board noted the date of the next meeting Wednesday 25 February 2026 at 2.15 p.m.