

BoS 12 November 2025

Wednesday, 12th November 2025 2:15pm

Teams | Faculty of Science Board of Studies

Attendees

Attended

Zoe Burke (ZB)
Andy Burrows [AD(E)]
Thomas Cottrell
Duncan Craig (Chair)
Susan Crennell
Sergey Dolgov
Marguerite Hallett (Secretary)
Momna Hejmadi
Matthew Jones
Christina Keating
Amanda Mackenzie (AM)
Eamonn O'Neill (EO'N)
Fei Qin
Philip Rogers (PR)
Tim Rogers (TR)
Gan Shermer (GS)
Dmitry Skryabin
David Tsang
Ventsislav Valev
Carolin Villforth (CV)
Arya Wood (AW)
Rhod Woodhouse

Did Not Attend

Florin Bisset

Sumukh Chaluvaraju

Charlotte Dodson

Amanda Harper

Penn Mackintosh

Charareh Pourzand

Michael Wilson

1.0 Welcome and Quorum (7817)

The Chair welcomed members, noted apologies and observed that the meeting was quorate. The Chair welcomed new member Arya Wood, Undergraduate student representative [MChem (Hons) Chemistry with Professional Placement, Year 2].

2.0 Declarations of Interest (7818)

There were no declarations of any potential conflicts of interest.

3.0 Minutes of the Previous Meeting (7819)

The Board approved the minutes of the previous meeting held on 17 September 2025 (Paper 45A) and decision made by correspondence (Paper 45B).

4.0 Matters Arising (7820)

There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.

5.0 Chair's Business (7821)

The Chair highlighted some of the discussion that took place at 5 Nov Senate. There had been discussion about NSS and PTES; there is a drive to improve the timeliness of assessment feedback. The Chair had raised at Senate:

i) The trials in Chemistry and Physics of releasing Semester 1 results early, which resulted in an upswing in the positive responses to questions relating to assessment and feedback from those students. It also resulted in a noticeable improvement, particularly in Chemistry, in responses to NSS Qu 24 "How clear is it that students' feedback on the course is acted on?". Chemistry had made it clear to students that the early release of results was done in direct response to student feedback, i.e. "you said, we did". The Chair highlighted the importance of ensuring that students understand and recognise changes brought about through consultation with students. It was suggested that the Associate PVC (Student Experience - Student Voice) be invited to an FLTQC meeting to share good practice on closing the feedback loop. The AD(E) reported that, at its last meeting, FLTQC had reviewed analysis of the NSS results which showed mixed performance across the Faculty on the student voice questions, with some departments performing very well (and having improved significantly over the last couple of years) while

others still had room for improvement. The FLTQC had spent some time sharing good practice relating to student voice.

Secretary's note: the Associate PVC (Student Experience - Student Voice) has agreed to discuss this with FLTQC on 26 November.

The AD(E) has been talking to the other AD(E)s and to the PVC(E) about rolling early release of Semester 1 marks out more broadly; E&D have expressed a particular interest. The Director of Academic Registry had offered assistance and Senate members were supportive. The AD(E) emphasised that central support would be necessary to support a wider roll out, particularly to Natural Sciences since this would require a more joined-up, automated approach. Maths are also keen to release Semester 1 results early this year. The Chair noted that adopting a consistent approach to early release across departments would be preferable, to avoid dissatisfaction resulting from some students receiving their results later than others. The AD(E) reported that some students had expressed concern that early release of 'provisional' results could mean that marks might change when released on SAMIS. In response, it had been made clear to students that it was unlikely marks would change between the Exam Board and release on SAMIS, and that marks released on SAMIS in Semester 1 are 'provisional' in any case.

ii) A tool developed by the Department of Computer Science to track assessment timeliness for Moodle based coursework. The CLT tool for monitoring assessment timeliness is currently not fit-for-purpose, as it was designed for users with roles within SAMIS (i.e. Unit Convenors and DoSs) rather than for managerial users such as HoDs and DoTs. The CLT is working to address this limitation.

6.0 Membership of Boards of Examiners for Units (BEU) and Courses (BEC) for 2025/26 (7822)

The Board approved the proposed BEU and BEC membership for the following departments:

Department of Life Sciences (Paper 46).

Department of Chemistry (Paper 47).

Department of Computer Science (Paper 48).

Department of Mathematical Sciences (Paper 49).

Department of Physics (Paper 50).

A query was raised as to why, in some departments, there were two or three internal examiners listed per unit. CV explained that in Physics this reflects shared teaching on units, and includes the moderator. The AD(E) encouraged HoDs who will not be chairing BEUs to ensure they remain fully informed about scaling and any other issues that arise, so they can brief the BoS as required.

7.0 Staff Student Liaison Committee (SSLC) Terms of Reference and Membership for 2025/26 (7823)

The Board approved the SSLC terms of reference and membership for the following departments:

Department of Life Sciences:

Biology and Biochemistry Undergraduate programmes (Paper 51).

Pharmacy and Pharmacology Undergraduate programmes (Paper 52).

Biology and Biochemistry PGT programmes (Paper 53).

Pharmacy and Pharmacology PGT programmes: MSc Drug Discovery (Paper 54).

Pharmacy and Pharmacology PGT programmes: AP3T (Paper 55).

Department of Chemistry:

Chemistry Undergraduate and PGT programmes (Paper 56).

Natural Sciences Undergraduate programmes (Paper 57).

Department of Computer Science:

Undergraduate programmes (Paper 58).

PGT programmes (Paper 59).

MSc degree apprenticeship (Paper 60).

MSc online programmes (Paper 61).

Department of Mathematical Sciences:

Undergraduate and PGT programmes (Paper 62).

Department of Physics:

Undergraduate programmes (Paper 63).

The AD(E) encouraged departments with SSLCs chaired by a first year student to provide those less experienced student chairs with additional support as needed.

8.0 Faculty Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee (7824)

The Board note the minutes of the meeting held on 15 October 2025 (Paper 64).

The AD(E) asked HoDs to encourage their teaching teams to ensure that Education Action Plans are kept up-to-date.

9.0 Faculty Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee (7825)

The Board noted the minutes of the meeting held on 13 October 2025 (Paper 65).

10.0 Faculty Executive Committee (7826)

The Board noted the minutes of the meeting held on 14 October 2025 (Paper 66).

11.0 Faculty Doctoral Studies Committee (7827)

The Board noted the minutes of the meeting held on 10 September 2025 (Paper 67).

The AD(E) noted the closure of the Nanofabrication Facility, after closure of the Biosciences Services Unit (BSU), i.e. Animal House. The Chair flagged that closure is the default position at the moment unless an alternative can be found. The Chair asked members if there was anything they thought he should bring to the attention of the senior team in terms of student experience and educational implications, e.g. effects on PhD students and Final Year Project students.

AM reported that the impact on the Department of Life Sciences was significant. There is concern regarding the Pharmacology degrees, but plans are being submitted, relating to a holding room for the teaching facilities, to be able to continue with that teaching for first, second and final year projects. All the relevant stakeholders have been involved in developing these plans. There are a number of PhD students that may be affected, but the Department is looking at options to support them and the University is looking at options to support affected Research Groups.

CV reported that the Department of Physics has been significantly affected by the pending closure of the Nanofabrication Facility, particularly in relation to research activity, as several PhD students are impacted. Two PhD students who are heavy users of the Facility now need to make alternative arrangements for their work. Many stakeholders indicated there had been

limited consultation regarding the closure, leaving little time to plan and resulting in a relatively sudden impact. Uncertainty about the exact closure date has further disrupted ongoing PhD research. While undergraduate use of the Nanofabrication Facility has historically been limited, partly due to its cost, CV emphasised the importance of enabling undergraduate projects where students can work alongside PhD researchers on cutting-edge research, supported by appropriate facilities. The Department intends to retain and house some of the Nanofabrication equipment to ensure future accessibility, particularly for undergraduate teaching and research. The Chair reported that he is working with the affected departments to develop a structured approach to identify the necessary mitigations and support required.

12.0 University Board of Studies (Doctoral) (7828)

The Board noted the minutes of the meeting held on 10 September 2025 (Paper 68).

13.0 Staff Student Liaison Committee meetings (7829)

The Board noted the minutes of the meetings held on:

Department of Life Sciences: Biology and Biochemistry: 22 October 2025 (Paper 69).

Department of Mathematical Sciences: 22 October 2025 (Paper 71).

Natural Sciences: 29 October 2025 (Paper 72).

Department of Life Sciences: Pharmacy and Pharmacology: 9 July 2025 (AP3T) (Paper 73).

Department of Physics: 29 October 2025 (Paper 74):

GS noted the statements in the Department of Physics SSLC minutes that "It is a post-CT rule across the entire University that exams for units will now be a total of 30 marks" and "It was noted all 30 mark written exams this year have been scheduled to have an extra 1 hour of time (120 minutes in total)". GS questioned whether there is a University directive that all 2 hour long exams must have 30 marks.

Secretary's note: Following the meeting, the DoT confirmed that it was a Department-level decision, in order to reduce overassessment, to assess all 5 credit units with 30 mark exams instead of 6 credit ones with 60 marks. The minutes will be corrected to reflect this.

A query was raised as to how SSLC discussions are communicated back to the wider cohort. AW explained that Academic Reps are responsible for informing their cohorts of decisions made at SSLC, e.g. via email bulletins. There is also a new role, the Department Rep, which acts as the liaison between the SSLC and Faculty Reps. SSLC minutes are posted on Moodle and "You said, we did" updates are given at the beginning of lectures, as appropriate. GS reported that she has raised with the SU that Academic Reps are only able to email, with updates, students in their year group on the same course, but it would be helpful if they could email the entire year group / cohort. The AD(E) agreed to raise this matter with the Associate PVC (Student Experience - Student Voice).

Action: BoS to check progress on this at its next meeting.

PR reported that he had met with the SU President recently to discuss student vaccination costs.

14.0 Any Other Business (7830)

There was none.