BoS 14 January 2026

Wednesday, 14th January 2026 2:15pm

Teams | Faculty of Science Board of Studies

Attendees

Attended

Zoe Burke

Andy Burrows (AB)

Thomas Cottrell

Duncan Craig (Chair)

Susan Crennell (SC)

Sergey Dolgov (SD)

Marguerite Hallett (Secretary)

Amanda Harper (AH)

Momna Hejmadi

Matthew Jones (MJ)

Christina Keating (CK)

Amanda Mackenzie (AM)

Penn Mackintosh (PM)

Eamonn O'Neill (EO'N)

Charareh Pourzand

Tim Rogers (TR)

Gan Shermer (GS)

Dmitry Skryabin

David Tsang

Ventsislav Valev

Carolin Villforth (CV)

Michael Wilson

Arya Wood

Rhod Woodhouse (RW)

Did Not Attend

Florin Bisset

Sumukh Chaluvaraju

Charlotte Dodson

Fei Qin

1.0 Welcome and Quorum (7841)

The Chair welcomed members, noted apologies and observed that the meeting was quorate.

2.0 Declarations of Interest (7842)

There were no declarations of any potential conflicts of interest.

3.0 Minutes of the Previous Meeting (7843)

The Board approved the minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 November 2025 (Paper 96).

4.0 Matters Arising (7844)

M7829 Staff Student Liaison Committee meetings:
The Board noted that the Associate PVC (Student Experience - Student Voice) had attended FLTQC on 26 November to discuss student voice and closing the feedback loop (Paper 99). The Board noted that the new Department Reps have access to mailing lists for all students within a department, which provides an effective way to share feedback following an SSLC.

5.0 Chair's Business (7845)

AH announced the appointment of Dr Enrico Da Como as Faculty Director of Doctoral Studies, succeeding Dr Richard James. Expressions of interest had been invited from across the Faculty and Dr Da Como had been appointed following a competitive selection process chaired by the Associate Dean (Research), involving a strong field of candidates. The Chair thanked Dr James for his valuable contribution in the role, and encouraged HoDs to support colleagues in applying for such roles, where appropriate, as a means of career development.

6.0 Online MSc Computer Science and MSc Artificial Intelligence major programme change: new PGCert and PGDip entry awards (7846)

CK and EO'N presented this item.

The Board considered the following documentation:

- Cover paper (Paper 97A).
- PG Certificate Computer Science course specification (Paper 97B).
- PG Diploma Computer Science course specification (Paper 97C).
- PG Certificate Artificial Intelligence course specification (Paper 97D).
- PG Diploma Artificial Intelligence course specification (Paper 97E).

CK explained that the proposal concerned the Department's distance-learning provision delivered in partnership with Risepoint, namely the MSc Computer Science and MSc Artificial Intelligence courses. Students enrolled on these courses are based worldwide, study part-time, and typically take approximately 2.5-3 years to complete the MSc, subject to any study breaks. The Department is proposing the introduction of PG Certificate and PG Diploma awards aligned with the MSc courses, to which students could be directly recruited. This would provide a more flexible and potentially attractive option for students wishing to study online with Bath but who do not necessarily wish to commit to a full MSc. The proposal requires minimal additional work, as the PG Certificate and PG Diploma already exist as exit awards; the intention is to establish these as stand-alone pathways.

The proposal would also give the Department greater flexibility in exploring recruitment and marketing strategies, e.g. by allowing students to enrol initially on a PG Certificate with the option to progress to the MSc. The Department will work with Risepoint to explore how this route could be effectively marketed to prospective students.

EO'N added that the intention of the proposal is to increase student numbers and revenue by diversifying entry routes. RW reported that the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences runs PG Diploma and MSc Sport and Exercise Medicine courses that operate in a similar way to the model being proposed. Both courses remain relatively popular, with smaller numbers enrolled on the Diploma than on the MSc, and some Diploma students subsequently progressing to the MSc. The Diploma route has proven to be a valuable income stream, and their experience suggests that this approach is likely to attract students who would not otherwise enrol on, or be accepted onto, a full MSc. The Chair noted that Risepoint have been supportive of this approach for some time and has a strong understanding of market demand and what is likely to be successful.

The Chair enquired about the predicted growth in student numbers. EO'N stated that he would seek advice from Risepoint, who have conducted extensive market research. He noted, however, that the Department could manage enrolment by setting caps if necessary. The Chair added that indicative numbers might be requested as part of the approval process, so it would be helpful to have an estimate available.

The Board agreed Stage 1 Initial Approval (prior to consideration by APC by correspondence January-February 2026) of the proposal to introduce PGCert and PGDip entry awards, as part of a major programme change to the online MSc Computer Science and MSc Artificial Intelligence courses, for 2026/27.

7.0 Centre of Excellence in Science Education (7847)

The Board noted the establishment of a Centre of Excellence in Science Education for 3 years from 5 January 2026 (Paper 98).

AB reported that the Centre was formally launched at an event held the previous day, which was well attended and demonstrated cross-departmental support. The Centre offers a valuable opportunity to share good practice and pedagogic research, and to support the career

development of teaching-focussed staff.

GS, Centre Lead, outlined the Centre's three core aims: i) to develop pedagogic research in strategic areas, particularly in relation to shared challenges in teaching ii) to support and develop education-focussed staff, and iii) to recognise and reward excellent teaching. At the launch event, a sign-up form was circulated to invite staff to join the Centre. Representatives from each department are also being sought to form a Steering Group that will lead activities and ensure Faculty-wide representation. In addition, an email will shortly be circulated to Faculty staff inviting them to subscribe to updates and information about future events.

The Chair praised the initiative and asked that any opportunities identified by GS to enhance staff or student experience through the Centre be fed into Faculty Executive, so that appropriate support can be provided to help the Centre achieve its objectives. The Chair also requested that GS provide an update on the Centre's progress at a future Board meeting.

8.0 Faculty Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee (7848)

The Board noted the minutes of the meeting held on 26 November 2025 (Paper 99).

9.0 Faculty Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee (7849)

The Board notes the minutes of the meetings held on 10 November (Paper 100A) and 2 December (Paper 100B) 2025.

10.0 Faculty Executive Committee (7850)

The Board noted the minutes of the meetings held on 18 November (Paper 101A) and 9 December (Paper 101B) 2025.

11.0 Faculty Doctoral Studies Committee (7851)

The Board noted the minutes of the meetings held on 29 October (Paper 102A) and 3 December (Paper 102B) 2025.

12.0 University Board of Studies (Doctoral) (7852)

The Board noted the minutes of the meetings held on 8 October (Paper 103A) and 12 November (Paper 103B) 2025.

13.0 Staff Student Liaison Committee meetings (7853)

The Board noted the minutes of the meetings held on:
Department of Life Sciences: Biology and Biochemistry: 19 November (UG) (Paper 104A) and 3 December (PGT) (Paper 104B) 2025.
Department of Chemistry: 5 November (Paper 105A) and 3 December (Paper 105B) 2025.
Department of Computer Science: 29 October 2025 (Paper 106).

Department of Mathematical Sciences: 26 November 2025 (Paper 107).
Natural Sciences: 3 December 2025 (Paper 108).
Department of Life Sciences: Pharmacy and Pharmacology: September (AP3T) (Paper 109A), 29 October (UG) (Paper 109B), 26 November (UG) (Paper 109C) and 27 November (PGT) (Paper 109D).
Department of Physics: 10 December 2025 (Paper 110).
PM noted positively that Physics students were pleased with the study space, which enhances the sense of academic community. CV reported that the Department of Physics has a dedicated student area, informally known as Physics Square, which provides study spaces, laptop docking facilities, and areas for group work. There has also been discussion about installing additional whiteboards to further support collaborative problem-solving. The space is popular, with students using it as intended to work together, and has been a positive development in fostering community and providing a shared study environment. The Chair added that other departments are also exploring the development of student study spaces, and that it is pleasing to note how well this initiative has been received.

14.0 Any Other Business (7854)

The Chair thanked the student representatives for attending despite the busy time of year and encouraged them to continue to attend future meetings.