

# BoS 20 May 2026

Wednesday, 20th May 2026 2:15pm

Teams | Faculty of Science Board of Studies

## Attendees

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### Attended

Zoe Burke

Andy Burrows [AD(E)]

Thomas Cottrell

Duncan Craig (Chair)

Susan Crennell

Sergey Dolgov

James Doughty

Marguerite Hallett (Secretary)

Amanda Harper

Christina Keating

Zack Lyons (ZL)

Amanda Mackenzie

Tim Rogers

Gan Shermer (GS)

Dmitry Skryabin

David Tsang

Ventsislav Valev

Carolin Villforth

Arya Wood (AW)

Rhod Woodhouse

## **Did Not Attend**

Florin Bisset  
Sumukh Chaluvvaraju  
Charlotte Dodson  
Momna Hejmadi  
Matthew Jones  
Eamonn O'Neill  
Charareh Pourzand  
Fei Qin  
Michael Wilson

## **Partial Attendance**

Penn Mackintosh

## **1.0 Welcome and Quorum (7885)**

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

## **2.0 Declarations of Interest (7886)**

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There were no declarations of any potential conflicts of interest.

## **3.0 Minutes of the Previous Meeting (7887)**

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The Board approved the minutes of the previous meeting held on 25 February 2026 (Paper 146).

## **4.0 Matters Arising (7888)**

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There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.

## **5.0 Semester 1 Scaling Report and Errors in Examination Papers (7889)**

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The Board considered scaling of unit marks (Paper 147A) and errors in examination papers (Paper 147B) in Semester 1 2025/26. The Chair welcomed the decreasing trend in the volume of scaling and errors in examination papers over recent years. The Board noted that there had been 3 instances of scaling in Semester 1 this year, compared to 2 in Semester 1 last year. 1 unit was scaled in the Department of Computer Science (downwards), 1 in the Department of Mathematical Sciences (upwards) and 1 in the Department of Physics (upwards). The Physics unit mean was in the typical range before scaling. There were 58 instances of means that were atypical but not scaled, compared to 46 in Semester 1

last year. The Department of Computer Science had the highest number of units in the atypical range with 23. 15 of these units (65%) belong to the online MScs. Of the 24 online MSc units included in the report, 16 were in the atypical range (1 of which was scaled) (67%). The AD(E) noted that, although a relatively large number of units appeared to have mean marks in the atypical range, many of these units had small cohort sizes. The key consideration is the distribution of marks and whether the marks awarded accurately reflect the standards achieved.

ZL commented that it is not unusual for online MSc units to have mean marks in the atypical range, as students enrolled on these courses are typically mature learners who are in employment and tend to work consistently to achieve higher marks.

There had been 7 units with errors in examination papers in Semester 1 this year, compared to 11 in Semester 1 last year. The only 2 examination papers that contained errors, yet had been both internally and externally moderated, were from the Department of Physics.

## **6.0 Report on the Use of Student Teaching Assistants 2025/26 (7890)**

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The Board monitored the involvement of, and arrangements for, students undertaking teaching activities, for reporting to EQSC in June:

**Department of Life Sciences** (Paper 148).

**Department of Chemistry** (Paper 149).

**Department of Computer Science** (Paper 150).

**Department of Mathematical Sciences** (Paper 151).

**Department of Physics** (Paper 152).

AW noted that the Chemistry report stated that approximately 20 PGR students had undertaken marking of summative assessments contributing to final degree classification, and asked whether the exact number was available. GS responded that it would be possible to determine the precise number, although doing so would require additional time to identify which of the 20 PGR students eligible to undertake marking had actually been assigned marking duties and completed the work.

## **7.0 Proposed changes to Individual Schemes of Study and Assessment policy (7891)**

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The Board considered the proposed changes to policy and process for Individual Schemes of Study and Assessment (ISSAs) (currently referred to in the Faculty as Special Programmes of Study / Special Assessment Arrangements) (Paper 153).

The Board noted that the key purposes of the proposed changes were to ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010, align with wider work on inclusive education, promote greater consistency across the Faculties and School, and ensure that no student was disadvantaged. The changes are also intended to provide clearer guidance on eligibility for an ISSA and the support that an ISSA may provide.

The Board noted that the principal changes to the process were that ISSAs must now be approved by BoS, rather than through delegated authority to FLTQC. The full BoS, and not solely the Chair, may reject an ISSA. Where an ISSA is rejected, the BoS Chair must provide the student with a written explanation of the reasons for the decision. In addition, the BoS Secretary will be required to submit an annual monitoring report on ISSAs to the Board.

After lengthy discussion, the Board agreed to provide the following feedback to Registry on the proposed new policy:

- Further guidance is required on the distinction between submitting an IMC request and implementing an ISSA to defer assessments. For example, a final-year student who has passed 40 credits may not be eligible for deferred assessment despite having approved

IMC. Similarly, in progression years, a student with IMC may be required to repeat the year rather than complete deferred assessment, whereas an ISSA providing for deferred assessment would guarantee the opportunity to undertake deferred assessment.

- On p.15, section 3.7, the term 'disability' should be replaced with 'protected characteristics'.
- In relation to 'changing units in a course', guidance is required on how to proceed where a student wishes to replace an MPU.
- The Board considered that the case studies were, in some respects, more unhelpful than helpful in establishing precedent, particularly if viewed by students, as several examples were unrealistic or overly specific. For example, allowing a student 48 hours to produce written answers instead of undertaking a viva would not assess the same learning outcomes and could confer an unfair advantage. Another example referred to the DoS 'constructing a new timetable of assessment', although DoSs do not control examination timetables. In the example involving Sula, the Board considered that a more proportionate adjustment would be to allow the presentation to be delivered to a smaller audience, which could be accommodated through the DAP rather than requiring an ISSA.
- Clarification is required on whether an ISSA may be granted to students with sporting commitments who are not on the breakthrough programme.
- Clarification is also required that responsibility for submitting the ISSA request rests with the DoS of the course on which the student is enrolled.
- It was further suggested, in comments received outside the meeting, that there should be greater departmental oversight of ISSAs, rather than proposals being made solely by the DoS, in order to support continuity and consistency of practice.

With regard to the ISSA form, the Board recommended the following amendments:

- Section 3 should include an 'Other' option for students wishing to request an adjustment that cannot be approved through an ISSA and would therefore need referral to EQSC, e.g. where an ISSA may affect accreditation requirements or require the creation of a bespoke unit.
- In Section 5, the phrase 'where appropriate' should be added after 'please include an updated CILO map', as this would not be necessary for all ISSA requests.
- On p.39, the form should be amended to allow for more than 3 units to be listed.

*Secretary's note: Following the meeting, in addition to the Board's feedback set out above, the Secretary forwarded to Registry a copy of the proposed new policy annotated by the Board's UG student reps. Some of the suggestions were actioned and Registry will respond to others.*

## **8.0 Faculty Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee (7892)**

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The Board noted the minutes of the meetings held on 4 March (Paper 154A) and 29 April (Paper 154B) 2026.

The AD(E) highlighted that the minutes of 29 April contain detailed discussion of the planned changes to the new course approval process, which will formalise the role of DLTQCs and may therefore be of particular interest to DLTQC members.

## **9.0 Faculty Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee (7893)**

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The Board noted the minutes of the meeting held on 9 March 2026 (Paper 155).

## 10.0 Faculty Executive Committee (7894)

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The Board noted the minutes of the meetings held on 24 February (Paper 156A) and 24 March (Paper 156B) 2026.

AW asked whether the Faculty of Science SharePoint Hub would be accessible to students.  
*Secretary's note: Following the meeting, the Faculty Operations Coordinator shared the SharePoint link with the Board's UG student reps.*

## 11.0 Faculty Doctoral Studies Committee (7895)

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The Board noted the minutes of the meetings held on 4 March (Paper 157A) and 29 April (Paper 157B) 2026.

## 12.0 University Board of Studies (Doctoral) (7896)

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The Board noted the minutes of the meetings held on 18 February (Paper 158A) and 25 March (Paper 158B) 2026.

## 13.0 Staff Student Liaison Committee meetings (7897)

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The Board noted the minutes of the meetings held on:

**Department of Life Sciences: Biology and Biochemistry:** 4 March (Paper 159A), 5 March (PGT) (Paper 159B) and 15 April (Paper 159C) 2026.

**Department of Chemistry:** 18 March (Paper 160A) and 22 April (Paper 160B) 2026.

**Department of Computer Science:** 11 February (Paper 161A) and 25 March (Paper 161B) 2026.

**Department of Mathematical Sciences:** 18 February (Paper 162A) and 15 April (Paper 162B) 2026.

**Natural Sciences:** 18 February (Paper 163A) and 25 March (Paper 163B) 2026.

**Department of Life Sciences: Pharmacy and Pharmacology:** January (AP3T) (Paper 164A), 19 February (PGT) (Paper 164B), 25 February (Paper 164C), 25 March (Paper 164D) and 26 March (PGT) (Paper 164E) 2026.

**Department of Physics:** 18 February (Paper 165A) and 22 April (Paper 165B) 2026.

AW highlighted as an example of good practice that Biomedical Sciences had achieved recruitment of peer mentors at 120% of target. AW welcomed the willingness of students to support those in earlier years of study, noting that the Department's target had been 20 peer mentors and that 24 had already been trained and were ready to begin the role. AW also reported that the Board's UG student reps had been working with Department Representatives to strengthen academic community and engagement, including through initiatives such as revision cafés and course group chats, with the aim of improving NSS outcomes.

## 14.0 Any Other Business (7898)

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There was none.