Senate

Wednesday, 28th January 2026 2:15 pm

Council Chamber | Senate

Attendees

Members Attended

Sarah Bailey (Online)

Manuel Barcia

Teslim Bukoye

Zoe Burke

Ian Crawford

James Davenport

Adrian Evans

Huw Ford

Maria Garcia

Sabina Gheduzzi

Nathalia Gjersoe

Sarah Hainsworth

Marion Harney

Sophia Hatzisavvidou

Alan Hayes

Momna Hejmadi

Jo Hyde

Tim Ibell

Sanya Jethwani

Nigel Johnston

Richard Kamm

Peter Lambert

Sandhya Moise

Marcus Munafo (Online)

Benjamin Orford Thompson

Fei Qin

Ben Ralph

Kate Robinson

Paul Shepherd

Helen Slater

Phil Taylor, *Chair*

John Troyer

Cassie Wilson

Deborah Wilson

Jun Zang

In Attendance

Sascha Athey, Head of Academic Quality & Standards

Christopher Bonfield, Director of CLT

Sam Kilgour, Head of Student Voice & Academic Engagement

Kully Rennie, Deputy Director, Student Policy & Safeguarding *(For Item 15698.0 Annual Student Casework Report & Item 15699.0 Precautionary Measures Regulation Review)*

Rachel Sheer, Director of Academic Registry

Lizzie Tilley, Policy & Projects Manager *(For Item 15699.0 Precautionary Measures Regulation Review)*

Filipa Vance, Director of Research Policy, Governance & Integrity

Secretariat

Ian Blenkharn, University Secretary and Registrar – *Secretary to Senate*

Elisabeth Day, Interim Head of Governance

Apologies

Steve Brammer

Julian Chaudhuri

Duncan Craig

Frances Laughton

15691.0 Welcome and Quorum

Purpose - For Information

REPORTED

The Chair welcomed members and attendees to the meeting and confirmed that quorum had been maintained. A formal note of attendance had been taken.

The Chair welcomed Professor Richard Kamm, a new member of Senate for whom this had been his first meeting.

Apologies had been received from Professor Steve Brammer, Professor Julian Chaudhuri, Professor Duncan Craig and Dr Fran Laughton.

15692.0 Declarations of Interest

Purpose - For Information

REPORTED

No conflicts of interest had been declared.

15693.0 Minutes of the Previous Meeting - S25/26 - 43

Purpose - For Approval

DECISION

Senate **approved** the minutes of the previous meeting of Senate held on 5 November 2025.

Senate members were thanked for the increasing number of members utilising the voting function within Decision Time to vote in advance of meetings.

15694.0 Actions and Matters Arising - S25/26 - 44

Purpose - For Noting

REPORTED

It was reported that the final wording of the Undergraduate Assessment Regulations (UGAR) had been delegated to the Director of Academic Registry at the November 2025 meeting. The Director had confirmed the wording back to Senate under the action agreed. The action was complete.

It was reported that the further paper on graduation procedures for research degree participants had been delayed to allow sufficient time for reflection and to ensure the proposal was fully developed, while still progressing work ahead of the summer ceremonies. The item would return to the April meeting.

It was reported that the paper on the deadline for feedback on summative assessment, had been requested by the proposer to be deferred to a later meeting of Senate.

It was reported that all other actions were not yet due.

DISCUSSED

Senate **noted** the updates and agreed that the revised timing for the outstanding papers would be appropriate.

Senate agreed there were no further matters arising.

15695.0 Institutional update - S25/26 - 45

Purpose - For Noting

REPORTED

The Vice-Chancellor introduced the Institutional Update, which had been taken as read, and highlighted key matters for Senate's attention.

The Vice-Chancellor drew attention to the University's performance in recent sustainability rankings and noted that the University was in the process of making a decision on future electricity procurement, which would improve sustainability performance. An announcement would be made in due course.

Staff changes were highlighted. It was reported that Professor Emma Carmel had taken up the role of Interim Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) and was delivering significant value in the position. As a result of the move to PVC-Research role, Professor Jon Hunt, Executive Director of Innovation, would lead the innovation and enterprise aspects of the previous portfolio and would join the University Executive Board (UEB). Lydia Lee had also joined UEB, with a focus on strengthening integration of advancement activity as well as having early insight into institutional initiatives.

The Vice-Chancellor reported that the University had recently welcomed a Fellow from Palestine and three post-graduate taught students through the British Council's Higher Education Scholarships for Palestinians (HESPAL) initiative, noting this as an important and valued commitment.

Senate received an update on the Global Voice and Reputation project, which had engaged more than 3,000 participants. Display materials were available in the Claverton Rooms as part of the next phase of engagement, and members were encouraged to participate.

Recruitment and admissions data were highlighted. The Vice-Chancellor reported increased undergraduate applications, attributed to work on marketing and scholarships, particularly in the international domain, which remained strategically and financially important. The focus would now shift to conversion activity, and Senate members might be asked to support this. A member suggested that personalised messages to applicants, used by other universities, might be beneficial; the Vice-Chancellor agreed to explore this.

Senate was encouraged to engage with The SU Impact Report.

The Vice-Chancellor noted that the University Teaching Awards were now open, with seven categories available, and encouraged members to consider nominations.

Senate received an update on innovation activity, including deepening partnerships with Buro Happold and regional hospitals. These partnerships were described as strong and strategically valuable.

It was noted that the decision for the UK to rejoin Erasmus+ had been welcomed. The University had also joined the Young European Research Universities Network, which was expected to strengthen research and education partnerships and support the University's ability to influence EU policy. The Vice-Chancellor and the Director of International Relations had been scheduled to attend the next General Assembly in March.

The University Secretary & Registrar provided an update on the Foundation Partner. The University remained committed to working with Study Group as a partner and was close to finalising contractual arrangements. Foundation students would be Study Group students, while pre-sessional provision would remain delivered under the University's UKVI Sponsor Licence; detailed consideration of delivery mode would continue. A member raised concerns regarding the reliability of remotely delivered pre-sessional English provision in the context of potential AI interference. It was reported that this would be taken into account as options were explored, recognising UKVI requirements and the possibility of a pragmatic interim approach for 2026.

DISCUSSED

A member asked how the content of the Institutional Update could be shared more widely, particularly for colleagues considering standing for Senate. It was suggested that the structure and content of future institutional updates might be reviewed to support wider dissemination, subject to confidentiality considerations, with publication alongside minutes considered as an option.

A member commended the University's increasing national presence. The Vice-Chancellor agreed that raising the University's profile was of strategic importance and encouraged colleagues to take opportunities to contribute.

A clarification was requested on the £98.2 million credit reported in the USS pension line of the annual accounts. It was noted that this reflected a sector-wide accounting valuation movement, not a cash figure, and represented a notional future upside rather than an operational resource.

Senate noted the institutional update.

ACTION

Assigned to – Elisabeth Day **| Due by –** 15 April 2026

Sharing of the Institutional Update

To explore the sharing of the institutional update from each meeting, alongside the published minutes. VCO office to work with Head of Governance.

15696.0 Curriculum Transformation (CT) Evaluation Report - S25/26 - 46a

Purpose - For Discussion

REPORTED

The Associate Dean (Education) introduced the Curriculum Transformation (CT) Evaluation Report, which had been considered by the Education Advisory Board prior to submission to Senate.

The evaluation provided a retrospective overview of the 2024/25 academic year, during which the second year of Curriculum Transformation implementation had taken place. Most undergraduate second-year cohorts and the majority of post-graduate taught programmes were now live. The evaluation showed that implementation was progressing well, with early benefits emerging in curriculum coherence and inclusive practice.

It was reported that challenges remained around the operation of year-long units, assessment load, and aspects of data configuration. Assessment and feedback continued to be pressure points. Student mental health also remained a recurring theme in feedback, although inclusive education practice had improved considerably.

The evidence base was still maturing, and limitations in available datasets meant that several assumptions had been required in the analysis. Early adopter data suggested a positive impact on student outcomes, although findings were indicative rather than trend-based. Continued annual evaluation would support refinement as the final year of the undergraduate roll-out progressed in 2025/26.

Two structural areas were highlighted:

- Optionality: Work in the School of Management had addressed several optionality-related issues.

- Operational constraints: Adjustments had been required to year-long units, and had occasionally proved problematic. Returning placement students had experienced some friction, but a transition checklist had since been introduced. Challenges regarding space, timetabling and staffing continued to be noted.

Overall, it was reported that Curriculum Transformation was broadly working as intended.

DISCUSSED

A member raised concerns regarding the reliability of the data informing the evaluation. It was agreed that the data would be reviewed further, and follow-up would be undertaken with the relevant colleague regarding the specific dataset.

A member commented that evaluating progress against the original baseline had been difficult due to wider factors such as the increasing assessment burden, the Covid-19 pause to the project, and the evolving scope of the implementation. Members noted nevertheless that implementation had been completed and was generally progressing well.

It was agreed that follow-up would be undertaken with the Assistant Registrar (Student Data & Statutory Reporting) regarding the lifecycle of student data dashboard.

Senate recorded its thanks to the Associate Dean (Education) for her leadership of Curriculum Transformation.

ACTION

Assigned to – Julian Chaudhuri **| Due by –** 3 June 2026

Curriculum Transformation Data Validity

It was agreed that follow-up would be undertaken with the Assistant Registrar (Student Data & Statutory Reporting) regarding the lifecycle of student data dashboard.

15696.a Curriculum Transformation (CT) Update: Semester

1, 2025/26 - S25/26 - 46b

Purpose - For Discussion

REPORTED

Senate **noted** the key risks, mitigations, and priorities outlined in the Curriculum Transformation (Semester 1) update.

15697.0 Academic Assembly - Resolution to Senate - S25/26 - 47a

Purpose - For Discussion

REPORTED

The Vice-Chancellor, in his capacity as Chair of Senate, introduced the item and noted his dual role as Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive. Senate acknowledged this constitutional position and the need to distinguish between the Chairing role and the Executive's responsibility for operational decisions.

Senate received the resolution approved by the Academic Assembly at its extraordinary meeting on 10 December 2025, concerning recent changes to research facility costings under TRAC and the closure of the Biosciences Services Unit (BSU) and Nanofabrication Facility (Nanofab). It was noted that AA members had expressed strong concern about the financial and research implications of these changes, and had requested clarity, transparency and an institutional response.

The Vice-Chancellor reported that he and other members of UEB had met with Academic Assembly representatives to listen to their concerns and had provided clarification on actions taken, including the introduction of an interim measure enabling applicants to request institutional support where TRAC costings risked making grant proposals uncompetitive. He confirmed that TRAC costings would be reviewed at institutional level, with clearer communication of the underlying methodology and rules.

He reiterated that colleagues who believed TRAC was materially disadvantaging their competitiveness could make a case for subsidised support, which would be considered by relevant Executive members.

DISCUSSED

Senate discussed the resolution and the themes raised at Academic Assembly. Members welcomed the fact that those who felt affected had been able to hear directly from senior leaders and that the strength of feeling had been acknowledged.

Members of the Executive emphasised that:

- TRAC rules were not ambiguous; the University implemented the required changes immediately, whereas some institutions had delayed. From February 2026 all institutions would be required to comply, which may reduce current disparities.

- The University remained confident in the costings used to inform decisions on BSU and Nanofab, noting that departmental-level facilities, space costs and depreciation created complexity when benchmarking. Work was underway setting up the TRAC facilities Task and Finish Group, work from which would result in greater transparency on how these calculations were derived.

- The decision to close BSU and Nanofab had been subject to structured processes, external review in the case of BSU, and engagement with users. Mitigations were being put in place, including access to facility provision in Bristol and arrangements to share essential equipment across the University.

A member queried whether the financial basis for facility closures had been revisited in light of questions raised about the underpinning numbers. The Executive confirmed that the rationale had been re-examined and that the conclusions remained robust, acknowledging the need to improve visibility of the data used and to communicate the modelling more clearly.

Concerns were raised about broader financial and reputational impacts, including lost grant income, disruption to researchers (particularly early career staff), and effects on recruitment. It was noted that while some mitigations were being developed, the full transparency requested by Academic Assembly regarding modelling and long-term financial implications had not yet been fully addressed. The Executive committed to reviewing what additional information could be shared.

Members reflected on the significance of Academic Assembly passing a formal resolution, noting that this was an uncommon step and indicative of substantial concern within the academic community. It was further observed that the high attendance at the extraordinary meeting could be interpreted in multiple ways: while it signalled the strength of feeling associated with the issue, the Vice-Chancellor also suggested that it may in part reflect that this was the first time in some years that the University had taken difficult operational decisions of this nature.

DECISION

Senate considered the resolution submitted by Academic Assembly and voted by a show of hands on whether the resolution should be noted, endorsed or referred back.

With 24 votes in favour, Senate **agreed to recommend to Council that the resolution be endorsed**, and that Council be invited to consider the points raised alongside the ongoing institutional work on TRAC costings, facility support arrangements, and communication of financial modelling.

Council will now consider the resolution, together with Senate's recommendation, and determine the institutional response to be reported back to Academic Assembly.

15697.a Academic Assembly Summary Report - S25/26 - 47b

Purpose - For Noting

REPORTED

Senate **noted** the summary report of the Academic Assembly from its meetings on 22 October

2025 and 10 December 2025.

15698.0 Annual Student Casework Report - S25/26 - 48

Purpose - For Discussion

REPORTED

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience & Sport) introduced the paper and the Deputy Director, Student Policy & Safeguarding joined the meeting for the item.

It was reported that Senate had been asked to discuss the annual report on Health, Wellbeing and Support for Study (HWSS), Student Discipline, Student Complaints, Fitness to Practise, Precautionary Measures and Casework Appeals. The paper was presented for annual assurance and institutional learning, in line with Senate's responsibility for the regulations governing these areas.

Student Discipline: Case volumes had remained steady. Reports of more serious misconduct had increased, attributed to greater confidence in reporting rather than increased incidence. Timeliness remained on track, with continued monitoring to ensure processes remained fair, transparent and proportionate.

Student Complaints: Informal complaints had risen, and it was reported that resource levels would need to remain under review. Financial exposure from remedies persisted, though early intervention continued to mitigate risk. Annual figures would be reported through the usual governance routes.

HWSS and Student Support: Demand for HWSS and mental-health-related referrals had increased, placing pressure on specialist capacity. HWSS continued to provide strong assurance through early intervention and risk management.

Harassment and Sexual Misconduct: Completion of the student NeverOK induction modules had risen significantly, with staff pastoral training coverage also improving. Key policies had been revised for full Office for Students (OfS) Condition E6 compliance.

The report included student appeals, as well as notable increases in precautionary measures and HWSS cases, reflecting growing confidence in departmental reporting.

Priorities identified for the coming period included embedding Condition E6 implementation, co-creation activity linked to the Race Equality Charter plan, policy and regulatory updates, and a forthcoming review of the HWSS procedure, including consideration of Senate's role in panels. Members wishing to contribute to the consultation were invited to express interest.

DISCUSSED

A member queried whether the number of drug-related cases indicated a wider issue. It was reported that case numbers had not increased and that the University's approach aligned with the Universities UK harm-reduction framework, with greater use of supportive rather than purely disciplinary routes.

Members commended the comprehensive nature of the report and the collaborative practices underpinning casework management.

A member asked whether demographic data on respondents and reporting parties (noting the predominance of male respondents and female reporting parties) could be compared with overall student population and international student demographics; this would be explored in future reporting.

Clarification was provided that the report covered formal cases only; informal cases were captured in the annual Support & Report dataset, which did not come to Senate but did go to the Student Experience Advisory Board.

A member reflected positively on the progress of casework governance in recent years. In response to a question about forward challenges, it was reported that reducing reporting barriers remained central, and that increased reporting reflected improving trust. Areas requiring continued focus included harassment and sexual violence, domestic abuse and racial harassment, alongside ensuring adequate resource to respond effectively.

Assurance was given that established routes existed for raising concerns around resourcing, and staff in the department were encouraged to do so where needed.

A member raised concern about the completion rate for mandatory pastoral/safeguarding training among academic advisors and doctoral supervisors (69%). It was agreed that improving uptake remained a priority and that actions would be taken to increase completion rates.

It was noted that sector benchmarking was limited, but that the University's student training uptake was understood to be favourable compared with peers.

ACTION

Assigned to – Kully Rennie **| Due by –** 3 June 2026

Staff Pastoral Care Training

Explore ideas on how to increase staff training completion for Staff Pastoral Care training and report back to Senate.

15699.0 Precautionary Measures Regulation Review - S25/26 - 49

Purpose - For Approval

REPORTED

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience & Sport) introduced the paper; the Deputy Director, Student Policy & Safeguarding and the Policy & Projects Manager joined the meeting for the item.

Senate had been asked to approve the revised versions of the Student Precautionary Measures Policy and Procedure for both the Regulations for Students and the Regulations for Student Apprentices. Senate had also been asked to approve implementation of the revised policy from the start of Semester 2 (2 February 2026).

It was reported that the revised Precautionary Measures Policy and Procedure improved clarity, accessibility and alignment with the Student Policy & Safeguarding framework. The revisions reinforced that precautionary measures were supportive and protective, rather than punitive.

Most changes formalised existing practice. The only substantive procedural change was the introduction of a more robust panel structure to support consistent and transparent decision-making.

Implementing the revised policy from Semester 2 would require an in-year regulatory amendment. It was reported that this had been judged appropriate, as the revisions benefited students and strengthened alignment with sector good practice and regulatory expectations.

Broad consultation had been undertaken, and no equality, diversity or inclusion issues or resource implications had been identified. The revised policy strengthened compliance with Office for Students Condition E6 and sector guidance on safeguarding and student protection.

A member raised a point regarding the review stage, noting that a student could request a review via email. It was suggested that a sense-check be added to the review stage to address a minor process gap. The comment would be shared with the proposer for consideration.

DISCUSSED

Senate agreed that the revised policy and procedure improved clarity and assurance and supported continued regulatory alignment.

DECISION

Senate **approved** the revised Precautionary Measures Policy and Procedure for both the Regulations for Students and the Regulations for Student Apprentices; and implementation of the revised policy and procedure from the start of Semester 2 (2 February 2026).

15700.0 New Undergraduate Assessment Regulations - S25/26 - 50

Purpose - For Discussion

REPORTED

Senate had been asked to endorse the proposed direction for consultation on new undergraduate assessment regulations. The item was introduced by the Head of Academic Quality & Standards, who emphasised that the proposals represented the start of a structured and University-wide consultation, rather than a final or fixed position. It was noted that consultation would be comprehensive and would engage colleagues across the institution.

The Head of Academic Quality & Standards observed that the current Undergraduate Assessment Regulations (UGAR) were overly complex. Although previously rewritten for improved clarity, the underlying rules themselves remained intricate, requiring extensive flowcharts and guidance. It was reported that this complexity created barriers for staff and students and diverted effort from more beneficial activity.

Structural barriers were highlighted, including the operation of the individual mitigating circumstances (IMC)/mitigation framework. Members were reminded that the University should avoid requiring students to undertake additional assessment unnecessarily, while still ensuring appropriate scrutiny of progression for students experiencing broader difficulties. It was also noted that the Office for Students (OfS) had begun to intervene directly in sector practice around degree classification, and elements of the current UGAR would not align with future regulatory requirements.

It was reported that the impact of the proposals would vary across student groups and departments. The intention remained to develop one coherent set of assessment regulations applicable across the University. It was noted that there might be potential financial benefits associated with simplification, although these would need detailed modelling and were not the primary purpose of the paper.

It was clarified that the paper was not a proposal on examination deferrals, although it referenced the space for such considerations within future regulatory design.

The SU expressed strong support for the direction of travel, highlighting its importance for improving student experience and supporting student success.

A member asked whether the proposals implied major reorganisation of programme structures. It was reported that large-scale curriculum redesign was not envisaged; the intention was to improve assessment regulation rather than reopen curriculum transformation. The relationship between fit-to-sit, IMCs and deferral processes would be considered, but as a linked rather than separate project.

A member welcomed the paper's identification of long-standing institutional practices and emphasised the value of reassessing these. The discussion noted that greater flexibility in credit accumulation required increasingly sophisticated systems. It was reported that wider work on education infrastructure, future assessment strategy, and regulatory changes linked to the Lifelong Learning Entitlement would be undertaken across 2026/27.

A member commended the section in the paper relating to Boards of Examiners, emphasising the need to design Board structures concurrently with regulatory reform to avoid mismatches during implementation. It was reported that appropriate protections would need to be put in place for students who had entered under existing UGAR provisions.

The degree classification section of the proposals was discussed. Members noted that the OfS guidance referenced a maximum 2% uplift and raised questions about borderline classifications and multiple algorithm approaches. It was reported that the sector had received similar notifications and that the issue would be considered further by the Education Quality and Standards Committee (EQSC).

Members were invited to submit further comments outside the meeting.

DISCUSSED

Senate endorsed the proposed direction of travel for consultation on new undergraduate assessment regulations and agreed that comprehensive consultation across the University would be essential as the work progressed.

15701.0 The Library's Annual Report to Senate 2024-25 - S25/26 - 51

Purpose - For Discussion

REPORTED

The University Librarian introduced the Library's Annual Report for discussion. The report provided assurance on the Library's contribution to teaching, learning and research, and highlighted its continued provision of core academic support.

Activity during 2024/25 had strengthened the Library's role in equality, diversity and inclusion, wellbeing and sustainability. This had included extensive campaign support, the development of more inclusive services, new wellbeing initiatives, and sector-leading sustainability work.

It was reported that the annual report reflected both a retrospective view of the past academic year and forward-looking considerations. Four external reviewers were due to visit in April to advise on the Library's future contribution to the University strategy.

DISCUSSED

Members commended the Library for its extensive support for students and staff.

A member raised the experience of online MSc students, noting that graduation was often the only time such students visited campus, and that a sizeable proportion lived in the South West. It was suggested that joint communications work could be undertaken to ensure these students were supported and aware of Library services, including access to Library cards.

15702.0 Proposed Joint Institute between University of Bath and an overseas institution - S25/26 - 52

Purpose - For Discussion

REPORTED

Senate received an early-stage outline of a proposed Joint Institute between the University of Bath and an overseas institution in China. It was noted that this was a high-level indication of emerging transnational activity, and that any formal proposal would follow the standard governance route for strategic and academic approval, including the requirement for Senate approval of the partner institution and any proposed programmes.

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Global) highlighted the broader strategic context. International recruitment trends were shifting rapidly, with the number of students seeking to study overseas now exceeding those travelling to the UK, and the University, like the wider sector, was exploring diversification of its international portfolio. The University had limited capacity to expand student numbers on campus, making transnational pathways an important strand for future growth. Legislative changes in China had also created new opportunities for establishing Joint Institutes.

Senate received an overview of the early concept, which focused on identifying a suitable partner, beginning with a small number of programmes, and building future capacity to support transnational delivery. A working group was being established to develop the framework, with indicative timescales including an initial framework paper to Senate in April and potential partnership approvals aligned to Chinese Ministry of Education timelines in 2026.

DISCUSSED

Senate welcomed the early engagement and expressed broad support for the direction of travel. Members noted that Joint Institutes were a well-established form of international partnership across the UK sector, and that the University already held relevant internal experience. Senators were invited to contribute insights to the developing proposal and to contact the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Global) and project leads directly; interest was expressed in ensuring appropriate expertise and SU representation on the working group.

Members raised considerations relating to regulatory requirements, award structures, and operational challenges, including language of instruction, dual-award arrangements and ensuring academic quality. It was noted that these would require detailed development through the governance and assurance processes. Members emphasised the importance of focusing on quality rather than scale at this stage.

Senate **noted** that further work would be undertaken and that a more detailed proposal would be brought forward for consideration.

15703.0 Strategy Development - S25/26 - 53

Purpose - For Discussion

REPORTED

The Deputy-Vice-Chancellor introduced the item, with Senate asked to discuss elements of the University Strategy 2026-36, together with the next steps that would bring the strategy to full completion.

The paper summarised progress to date and the significant programme of work that sat behind the strategy, including activity to translate strategic ambitions into delivery. It was reported that the strategy was considered to be approximately 80% complete, with ongoing internal and external engagement planned to test and refine the remaining elements. Final approval was expected in July, ahead of a launch in the autumn.

The strategy was described as an overarching framework designed to position the University for long-term success, providing direction while retaining flexibility for variation across Faculties and the School. The strategic approach was intended to be enabling, allowing academic areas to plug into the overarching goals in ways appropriate to their context.

A member noted the importance of mapping high-quality research and suggested collaboration between the strategic sprint team and the Responsible Research group. This would be noted and taken forward. It was reported that the Interim Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) was already working with the Deans on responsible research assessment.

A member welcomed the distinction in the paper between strategic goals and strategic implementation. Questions were raised regarding the internationalisation key performance indictor (KPI), which proposed an increase from 29% to 35%. It was asked whether this target was fixed, aspirational or both. It was reported that goal ownership had been assigned, and that KPIs were intended to be stretching but not immutable; as part of a 10-year strategy, targets would evolve, informed by continued monitoring, lead indicators and planned actions. It was noted that the percentages currently reflected HESA data, and that a shift towards absolute numbers was being explored to improve clarity, particularly for international activity that included online provision.

A member emphasised the need to balance ambition with realism and cautioned that targets that were too flexible could risk losing focus. The need for appropriately calibrated KPIs was noted.

A member asked about accountability arrangements. It was reported that goal owners would be held accountable for delivery, with the Chair of Council and Council holding the Vice-Chancellor accountable for overall progress.

A member raised concerns regarding the University's management systems and highlighted the absence of a commitment to ensuring that SAMIS was fit for purpose. It was reported that digital and infrastructure improvements formed part of the broader strategic ambition under the Foundations for the Future priority, which included work on digital systems and organisational infrastructure.

A member reflected that the all-staff survey had indicated varying levels of engagement with strategic development. It was reported that plans for launch and ongoing engagement would aim to ensure all staff understood how they contributed to the strategy prior to its implementation and once implemented. A member noted that, in the longer term, the strategic priorities could provide a framework within which different approaches to ways of working might be considered, including models such as a four-day working week.

Senate members noted the extensive work underway and were invited to provide comments, critiques and questions at any time as development continued.

DISCUSSED

Senate **discussed** the progress and next steps for the University Strategy and **noted** the planned programme of engagement and refinement. Senate thanked colleagues involved in the work.

15704.0 Senate Forward Plan - S25/26 - 54

Purpose - For Discussion

REPORTED

Senate received the draft Forward Plan for 2025/26 and noted that a request would be issued to members ahead of the June meeting to propose items for future agendas. It was noted that the aim for the coming year was to retain greater flexibility within agendas to enable early sight of developing issues and provide space for pragmatic discussion.

Members were invited to submit suggestions for potential discussion items. It was noted that the Library Review may be brought forward for consideration.

DISCUSSED

Senate discussed the importance of shaping agendas around strategic priorities and welcomed the opportunity to propose topics of interest for future meetings.

15705.0 Discussion Item: Research Culture

Purpose - For Discussion

The Interim Pro-Vice-Chancellor (PVC) (Research) presented a discussion piece on the University's work to strengthen research culture. She emphasised that research culture is reflected in the everyday practices, interactions and behaviours that shape projects, departments and careers, and that a thriving culture depends on shared responsibility to enable colleagues to undertake their best research.

The PVC (Research) outlined the six established pillars of research culture - career development, collegiality, open research, research design, integrity and ethics, and recognition - highlighting that these informed the University's Research Culture Action Plan launched in December 2024 following extensive consultation. Senate noted the positive staff feedback received during the Plan's development.

The PVC (Research) reported strong early progress across the Action Plan, including work on the Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA) and Responsible Research Assessment (RRA) principles, authorship and acknowledgement guidance, open research training, expanded support for returning parents, enhancements to doctoral provision, and recognition initiatives such as the #TechTeamBath campaign. Four spaces on campus had also received funding to support bottom-up collegiality initiatives. A summary of completed, ongoing and planned actions was presented.

She noted the increasing importance of research culture in REF, with the new Strategy, People and Research Environment (SPRE) element forming 20% of the submission, including a 12% institutional statement. Senate noted the greater specificity required, particularly in evidencing and embedding activity at Unit of Assessment level.

The PVC (Research) outlined next steps, including strengthening research governance and due diligence; improving processes, resourcing and guidance across the project lifecycle; advancing open research beyond open access; supporting enabling and technical staff careers; and aligning research activity with net-zero ambitions. Potential areas of future development included embedding researcher development across career stages, supporting high-quality translational health research, and integrating responsible research and innovation and metascience into transdisciplinary work.

DISCUSSED

Senate welcomed the update and reflected on the importance of embedding research culture throughout academic and professional practice. Members noted the value of ensuring the University's new Strategy articulates a coherent and comprehensive framework for researcher development and mandatory training, enabling all staff who contribute to research to be recognised and supported. Additionally, members emphasised the importance of ensuring that research culture initiatives are inclusive of all staff who contribute to research, not solely those traditionally defined as “research active” through activities such as securing grant funding.

A member raised concerns regarding the time taken for ethics approvals. The PVC (Research) acknowledged operational challenges but highlighted the need to maintain robust oversight and the progress made in engaging a wider range of colleagues in the process. She agreed that further discussion outside the meeting would be helpful and emphasised the importance of clarifying what the University seeks to achieve through its processes, particularly given the complexity of international research.

Members discussed opportunities for collaborative research, including through transnational education partnerships, and reflected on the need to ensure alignment with institutional strengths and industry engagement. The interrelationship between teaching and research was also noted, with comments on the importance of recognising inherent tensions and developing a more coordinated approach.

Senate noted that further updates would be brought forward and welcomed continued engagement as this work progresses.

15706.0 Doctoral Project Closure Report - S25/26 - 55

Purpose - For Noting

REPORTED

Senate noted that the Doctoral End-to-End Process Project had been closed by the University Executive Board, resulting in the Senate-approved Doctoral Academic Milestones Proposal (January 2025) not progressing to implementation at this stage. The closure reflected the withdrawal of central resourcing, with limited scope to advance the project locally. The Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Doctoral) is continuing to explore options for future delivery.

It was reported that Academic Assembly members had expressed surprise at the closure given the positive outcomes associated with the project to date and had sought clarification on the reasons for the decision.

The Interim Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) explained that the project had always comprised two phases: an initial phase focused on enhancing supervision quality and introducing developmental doctoral milestones, which had been successfully completed, and a second phase intended to translate this work into the University's software systems. Given the scale and urgency of other major institutional projects requiring digital development, UEB had agreed that the second phase should be paused, and the project treated as closed for now. This decision did not indicate any failure of systems or of the project itself.

DISCUSSED

Senate discussed Academic Assembly's concerns and welcomed the clarification that the project had delivered positive outcomes in its first phase, particularly in strengthening supervisory practice and embedding a developmental approach to doctoral progression. Members noted that the second phase may be revisited when capacity permits.

15707.0 Academic Year Dates 2027/28 - S25/26 - 56

Purpose - For Approval

DECISION

Senate **approved** the academic year chart for 2027/28, noting that the proposed dates had been developed with reference to anticipated school term dates across the local region and UK bank holidays.

A member noted that the MSc Online provision operates to a different annual structure with multiple entry points and commented that it might be helpful, in future, for Senate to have visibility of how such provision aligns with the standard academic calendar. It was recognised that the purposes of Senate approval relate specifically to the on-campus academic year and that different forms of provision may require different forms of oversight.

ACTION

Assigned to – Rachel Sheer **| Due by –** 27 Jan 2027

Academic Year Dates - varying provision

Academic Registry were asked to reflect on how Senate might most appropriately receive information on non-standard academic calendars in future, and to consider whether any additional visibility would support Senate’s responsibilities.

15708.0 Courses & Partnerships Approval Committee - S25/26 - 57

Purpose - For Decision

REPORTED

It was reported that CPAC had approved a range of exchange proposals, accreditation submissions, and operational updates between October 2025 and January 2026, and Senate was asked to note these decisions. Senate **noted** [without discussion] the summary report of the Courses and Partnerships Approval Committee meetings held on 22 October 2025 (by correspondence), 3 December 2025, and 14 January 2026.

Senate **agreed to recommend** to Council an enabling amendment to Ordinance 18 to add the new Doctor of Forensic Psychology Practice (DForenPsyPrac) award.

15709.0 Courses and Partnerships Approval Committee Terms of Reference - S25/26 - 58

Purpose - For Noting

REPORTED

Senate **noted** [without discussion] the final Terms of Reference for the Courses and Partnerships Approval Committee (CPAC). These had been agreed by Senate at its meeting on 5 November 2025 and subsequently noted by CPAC on 3 December 2025.

15710.0 Senate Appointments Committee - S25/26 - 59

Purpose - For Approval

DECISION

Senate **approved** [without discussion] the appointment of a new member of the Academic Ethics and Integrity Committee (AEIC). The proposal related to the appointment of Dr Rox

Middleton to the Learning & Teaching role on AEIC.

15711.0 Independent Advisor Re-Appointment - S25/26 - 60

Purpose - For Approval

DECISION

Senate **approved** [without discussion] the renewal of term of a current Independent Advisor, Professor David Tosh, as Deputy Independent Advisor for a further three years.

15712.0 University Doctoral Studies Committee Terms of Reference and Membership AY2025/26 - S25/26 - 61

Purpose - For Approval

DECISION

Senate **approved** [without discussion] the updated Terms of Reference and Membership of the University Doctoral Studies Committee for use during the coming academic year. The Terms of Reference remain unchanged. There was a request for change of membership, removing an Ex-Officio role.

15713.0 Regulations Framework Update - S25/26 - 62

Purpose - For Noting

REPORTED

Senate **noted** [without discussion] the update on the Regulations Framework since the last meeting of Senate.

15714.0 Calendar of Meetings 2026/27 - S25/26 - 63

Purpose - For Noting

REPORTED

Senate **noted** [without discussion] the draft calendar of meetings for 2026/27.

15715.0 Academic Programmes Committee - S25/26 - 64

Purpose - For Noting

REPORTED

Senate **noted** [without discussion] the summary report of the meeting of the Academic Programmes Committee held on 10 December 2025.

15716.0 Boards of Studies

Purpose - For Noting

REPORTED

Senate **noted** [without discussion] the minutes of the Boards of Studies.

15717.0 Report from Council - S25/26 - 65

Purpose - For Noting

REPORTED

Senate **noted** [without discussion] the report from the Council meeting held on 20 November 2025.

15718.0 Research & Knowledge Exchange Committee - S25/26 - 66

Purpose - For Noting

REPORTED

Senate **noted** [without discussion] the summary report of the meeting of the Research & Knowledge Exchange Committee held on 25 November 2025.

15719.0 Urgent Business Senate - S25/26 - 67

Purpose - For Noting

REPORTED

Senate **noted** [without discussion] the decisions taken by correspondence since the last meeting of Senate.

SUB25/26 - 05 - Amendments to the Excellence in Doctoral Supervision Prize

Senate had made a decision by correspondence on 22 December 2025. Senate **did not approve** the proposed changes to the terms of the prize competition (11 votes in favour, 1 did not approve, 1 abstention; which did not meet quorum for decision-making).

It was reported that the Excellence in Doctoral Supervision Prize team had decided not to pursue the proposed changes at this stage and would take additional time to reflect on the feedback from members of Senate. A revised proposal would return to Senate at a later date.

SUB25/26 - 06 - New Board of Examiners

Senate had made a further decision by correspondence on 22 December 2025, when it had **approved** the appointment of a new Board of Examiners (13 votes in favour).

It was reported that these decisions had been requested by circulation due to the time-sensitive nature of the proposals.

15720.0 Any Other Business

Purpose - For Noting

There was no other business.

Publication note*: Senate also considered two reserved items which have not been published in accordance with the minute publication framework because they contained information relating to identifiable individuals and individual student matters.*