



## MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

FRIDAY 31 JANUARY 2025

09.00 – 16.10

### MINUTES

**Present:** Ms O Adesanya, Mr M Allan, Mr S Boyd, Ms G Bowen, Mr J Boyer (Chair), Professor A Carr, Ms J Cecil, Ms L Collins, Mr L Coppi, Professor I Craddock, Professor N Edwards, Ms J Huggins via Teams, Mr N Joicey, Mr N Keveth, Ms L Lambert, Ms X Levantis, Mr F Quek, Mr S Robertson, Professor J Squires (Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost), Professor E Welch (Vice-Chancellor), Professor Dame M Welham.

**In attendance:** Mr Michele Acuto (Pro Vice Chancellor, Global Engagement) – Item 8, Professor Christiane Berger-Schaffitzel (Professor of Biochemistry) – Item 9, Mr James Bigwood (Chief People Officer) (Online) – Item 10, Ms Haylie Carr (Head of HR Policy and Reward) – Item 10, Miss Gurvin Chopra (Postgraduate Education Officer) – Item 14, Mrs Helen Cole (Senior Governance Officer and minutes), Dr Rachel Denholm (Senior Lecturer – Medical School) – Item 9, Mr Michael Flay (Interim Deputy University Secretary and Head of Governance), Miss Bakhtawar Javed (International Students Officer) Item 14, Dr Tommaso Jucker (Associate Professor in Forest Ecology and Global Change) – Item 9, Miss Ella Lovibond (Sports and Student Development Officer), Professor Richard Martin (Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor – Research & Innovation) – Item 9 Miss Lucy Pears (Student Living Officer) – Item 14, Lucinda Parr (Chief Operating Officer, Registrar and University Secretary), Miss Katie Poyner (Union Affairs Officer) – Item 14, Miss Mia Stevens (Undergraduate Education Officer) – Item 14, Mr Aubrey Slade (Strategic Finance Director) – Item 7, Professor Jeremey Tavaré (Pro Vice-Chancellor, Health and Life Sciences) – Item 9, Mr Peter Vermeulen (Chief Financial Officer), Professor Gavin Welsh (Professor of Renal Cell Biology) – Item 9, Mr Keith Woolley (Chief Information Officer) – Item 6, Miss Linlu Ye (Equality, Liberation and Access Officer) – Item 14.

**Apologies:** There were none.

#### 1. WELCOMES, APOLOGIES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed members to today's meeting.
- 1.2 The Board congratulated Melanie Welham, independent trustee, on her recent Honorary Degree of Doctor of Science awarded by the University of Bath.
- 1.3 The Board congratulated Nick Joicey, independent trustee, on his recent appointment on secondment as Chief Operating Officer at the Blavatnik School of Government, Oxford. The Chair advised the Board that in due course he would become Chair of the Board at Quantum Oxford Circuits. It was **NOTED** that these roles would be complimentary as the University was seeking to expand its role as a leading institution for quantum spin outs.
- 1.4 The Board noted that the outgoing Chief Property Officer (Barra Mac Ruairi) and his senior leadership team from campus division would be joining Board members for lunch.

1.5 **NOTED** that the Board wished to formally record its thanks and appreciation to Barra for his significant contribution to the University, most notably, helping realise the vision for TQEC.

1.6 The Chief Operating Officer provided a verbal update on plans for the Chief Property Officer role going forward, noting that an interim internal candidate would initially be appointed. **REDACTED: Section 43 - Commercial interests**

## 2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

2.1 There were none.

## 3. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

3.1 The minutes of the 22 November 2024 meeting of the Board of Trustees were **APPROVED** as a true and accurate record (*on file*).

## 4. **ACTIONS & MATTERS ARISING**

4.1 RECEIVED and **NOTED**: the Board action register (*on file*).

4.2 **NOTED**: that action 6.4.9: the Bristol Skills Profile and Employability had been brought forward as an agenda item for the Board meeting on 28 March 2025.

4.3 **AGREED**: that action 6.6.5: Modern Network be kept as open until the Board was satisfied with progress. **NOTED** that the Chief Digital Information Officer had provided a paper in the Reading Pack [pages 12-13] and would join the meeting at agenda item 6 (Exec Report) to answer any further queries. Some comments/feedback had been provided to the CIO in advance of the Board meeting and it was anticipated that these would be addressed as part of this verbal update.

4.4 **AGREED** that those actions marked as '*Recommend Closure*' on the register could now be removed.

## 5. **CHAIR'S REPORT** (ref **BT/24-25/025**) (*on file*)).

5.1 RECEIVED and **NOTED**: the Chair's Report, and Board forward plan for 24/25.

## 6. **EXECUTIVE REPORT AND QUESTIONS** (ref **BT/24-25/026**) (*on file*)).

6.1 RECEIVED and **DISCUSSED**: the Executive Report

6.2 The Executive provided verbal updates to compliment the report, in particular student number forecasts for 2025/26, Modern Network and the University's position when compared with UK HE sector. **NOTED** that the University's current financial position and forecasts for the immediate future and planned responses would be discussed under item 7 (Report of the CFO).

### Student Numbers

6.3 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost summarised the latest data. **REDACTED: Section 43 - Commercial interests**

6.3.1 **REDACTED: Section 43 - Commercial interests**

6.3.2 REDACTED: Section 43 - Commercial interests

6.3.3 REDACTED: Section 43 - Commercial interests

6.4 REDACTED: Section 43 - Commercial interests

6.5 **NOTED:** that discussions later in the agenda under item 8 (Global Education Plans) would explore the regional mix of overseas students including potential increases in areas defined as rest of the world

6.6 REDACTED: Section 43 - Commercial interests

6.7 In response to a question, the Executive expanded on the use and definition of the *recruitment vulnerability figure* referred to in the papers.

REDACTED: Section 43 - Commercial interests

*Keith Woolley joined the meeting via Teams*

Modern Network

6.8 **AGREED:** that good progress had been made since the last update (as detailed in the papers) REDACTED: Section 43 - Commercial interests

In response, it was noted that at its meeting in March, the Board would be presented with a timeline. REDACTED: Section 43 - Commercial interests

6.9 REDACTED: Section 43 - Commercial interests

6.10 REDACTED: Section 43 - Commercial interests

*Keith Woolley left the meeting*

University's position relative to UK HE Sector

6.11 The Vice-Chancellor **NOTED** that at present the University was in a strong position when compared to its UK based collaborators and competitors but was not complacent. The Board would be aware of other institutions announcing cost saving measures both in the last few weeks but also over the last two to three years.

REDACTED: Section 43 - Commercial interests

6.12 **NOTED:** REDACTED: Section 43 - Commercial interests

6.13 The Board queried the extent to which the HE sector was engaged with government in relation to regulation. In response, it was noted that the OfS was currently undergoing a review, and that at present the indication was not that regulation would become lighter touch, in fact the reverse was the case. For example, a twice-yearly update from each institution's CFO was now required. The validating of external students on subsidiary programmes provided indirectly by HE providers was cited as another area where the OfS had applied more regulation in recent months.

6.14 **AGREED:** that the Board was supportive of the approach outlined, noting that as the governing body it needed to remain proactive  
REDACTED: Section 43 - Commercial interests  
The Board were mindful of communications to staff, in particular maintaining morale and levels of engagement to ensure that staff felt they had an active role in supporting to future of the University.  
REDACTED: Section 43 - Commercial interests  
With regards to communication, the Vice-Chancellor and the CFO had met with the SU Sabbatical Officers over the last week to discuss this topic.

*Aubrey Slade joined the meeting*

## 7. FINANCE REPORT

### A: CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER REPORT

7.1 RECEIVED and **DISCUSSED:** paper ref **BT/24-25/027a** (on file)).

7.2 **NOTED:** that the budget would be presented to the Board in May 2025 - this paper presented a summary of the most important financial matters as of January 2025.

REDACTED: Section 43 - Commercial interests

7.3 **NOTED:** the following four developments since the circulation of the paper:

7.3.1 REDACTED: Section 43 - Commercial interests

7.3.2 REDACTED: Section 43 - Commercial interests

7.3.3 REDACTED: Section 43 - Commercial interests

7.3.4 REDACTED: Section 43 - Commercial interests

7.4 REDACTED: Section 43 - Commercial interests

7.5 The Executive outlined activity undertaken since the start of the year; examples cited included:

7.5.1 REDACTED: Section 43 - Commercial interests

7.5.2 REDACTED: Section 43 - Commercial interests

7.5.3 REDACTED: Section 43 - Commercial interests

7.5.4 REDACTED: Section 43 - Commercial interests

7.5.5 REDACTED: Section 43 - Commercial interests

7.5.6 REDACTED: Section 43 - Commercial interests

**B: UNIVERSITY FINANCES: LONG-TERM FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK**

7.6 RECEIVED and **DISCUSSED**: paper ref **BT/24-25/027b** (*on file*)).

7.7 **APPROVED**: the Long-Term Financial Framework as approved by University Executive Board and the Finance & Investments Committee. The Board was supportive of the paper, noting that there was a link between this work and the Board of Trustees Risk Appetite Statement. **NOTED** that the approach to the Carbon Action Plan (to be presented to Board at its July 2025 meeting would inform the rules detailed in the paper.

7.8 REDACTED: Section 43 - Commercial interests

7.9 REDACTED: Section 43 - Commercial interests

7.10 The Board queried the level/ extent of currency exposure.  
REDACTED: Section 43 - Commercial interests

REDACTED: Section 43 - Commercial interests

7.11 REDACTED: Section 43 - Commercial interests

7.12 The Board discussed the role of TQ  
REDACTED: Section 43 - Commercial interests

7.13 REDACTED: Section 43 - Commercial interests

*Aubrey Slade left the meeting  
Michele Acuto joined the meeting*

## 8. GLOBAL EDUCATION PLANS

8.1 RECEIVED and **DISCUSSED**: paper ref: **BT/24-25/028** (*on file*).

8.2 **NOTED**: the Plan's overarching approach, KPIs, and proposed measures to provide a more focused and at scale global education approach.

8.3 **NOTED**: that the paper and presentation had been amended since the last Board discussion in the light of input from the Board of Trustees, UEB, Divisional and Faculty Executives. In terms of next steps, final approval would be via UEB in April 2025 with the Board of Trustees to note again at its meeting May.

8.4 **NOTED**: that a separate and more comprehensive paper and presentation regarding the University's approach to the International Foundation Programme (IFP) would be considered by UEB in April.

8.5 REDACTED: Section 43 - Commercial interests

8.6 REDACTED: Section 43 - Commercial interests

8.7 REDACTED: Section 43 - Commercial interests

*Michele Acuto left the meeting  
Christine Berger-Schaffitzel, Rachel Denholm Jeremy Tavare, Tommaso  
Jucker, Richard Martin, Gavin Welsh joined the meeting.*

**9. RESEARCH SENSITATION: HEALTH AND LIFE SCIENCES FACULTY TO INCLUDE RESTRUCTURE PROPOSAL**

9.1 RECEIVED and **DISCUSSED**: (BT/24-25/029) (on file)).

9.2 The Pro Vice-Chancellor, Health and Life Sciences presented to the Board of Trustees (presentation on file).

9.3 REDACTED: Section 43 - Commercial interests

REDACTED: Section 43 - Commercial interests

REDACTED: Section 43 - Commercial interests

REDACTED: Section 43 - Commercial interests

REDACTED: Section 43 - Commercial interests

9.4 For the Research sensitisation element of the item, Christine Berger-Schaffitzel, Rachel Denholm, Tommaso Jucker, Richard Martin and Gavin Welsh presented summaries of their academic research and responded to questions.

9.5 **APPROVED**: the proposal to restructure the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences Faculty.

*Christine Berger-Schaffitzel, Rachel Denholm Jeremy Tavare, Tommaso  
Jucker, Richard Martin, Gavin Welsh joined the meeting  
James Bigwood (online) and Haylie Carr joined the meeting*

**10. STATUTORY ANNUAL REPORT ON GENDER & ETHNICITY PAY GAP**

10.1 RECEIVED and **APPROVED**: paper ref: BT/24-25/030 (on file)

10.2 **APPROVED**: the data to be published as part of the statutory GPG report.

10.3 In discussion the Board noted the rationale for expressing raw data points for internal use versus percentage points for statutory returns. **AGREED** that communications to staff on the data in the report should demonstrate a clear narrative on reasons for the changes and the potential for improvement. It would be important to communicate that the University had planned activity in this area.

*James Bigwood and Haylie Carr left the meeting*

**11. ANNUAL REPORT ON PHILANTHROPIC INCOME 23/24**

11.1 RECEIVED and **APPROVED**: paper ref: BT/24-25/031 (on file).

**12. REPORT FROM FINANCE & INVESTMENT COMMITTEE**

12.1 RECEIVED and **APPROVED**: paper ref: BT/24-25/032 (on file).

12.2 REDACTED: Section 43 - Commercial interests

12.3 REDACTED: Section 43 - Commercial interests

**13. REPORT FROM NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE**

- 13.1 RECEIVED and **APPROVED**: Nominations Committee report (**BT/24-25/033**) (*on file*)).
- 13.2 **APPROVED**: that Nick Joicey be reappointed for a third and final three-year term as an Independent Trustee on the Board of Trustees from 6 May 2025 to 5 May 2028 (see paragraph 2.5).
- 13.3 **APPROVED**: that Nick Joicey be reappointed as Treasurer for a second and final three-year term (aligned with Board membership) from 6 May 2025 to 5 May 2028 (see paragraph 2.6).
- 13.4 **APPROVED**: that Ololade Adesanya be reappointed for a second three- year term as an Independent Trustee on the Board of Trustees from 12 May 2025 to 11 May 2028 (see paragraph 2.8).
- 13.5 **APPROVED**: that that Lucie Lambert be appointed as an Independent Member on Audit and Risk Committee effective from 1 February 2025 to 31 December 2025 (see paragraph 2.8).
- 13.6 **NOTED**: progress in relation the External Board Effectiveness Review 2024-25 (see paragraph 3).

*Gurvin Chopra, Bakhtawar Javed, Ella Lovibond, Lucy Pears,  
Katie Poyner, Mia Stevens, Linlu Ye joined the meeting*

**14. SU SABBATICAL OFFICERS PROGRESS UPDATE**

- 14.1 RECEIVED and **DISCUSSED**: PowerPoint Presentation delivered by SU Sabbatical Officers (*on file*)).
- 14.2 The Sabbatical Officers presented and updated the Board on progress in their areas of responsibility. The following areas were covered in discussion:
- Work on fostering a sense of belonging for international students at the University of Bristol and within the wider UK HE Sector.
  - Whether there was an increasing number of students undertaking part time work in addition to studying and whether there was evidence of increasing students working more than the recommended hours both at the University and within the wider UK HE Sector.
  - The Officers reflections on the changes delivered via the Structure of the Academic Year (SAY) since September 2024.

*Gurvin Chopra, Bakhtawar Javed, Ella Lovibond, Lucy Pears,  
Katie Poyner, Mia Stevens, Linlu Ye left the meeting*

**15. Any other business**

- 15.1 There was none.
- 15.2 Date of next meeting: 27 March 2025