



**MEETING OF SENATE
MINUTES**

Monday 8 December 2025

14.00, [REDACTED]

Present:

Professors: Arpad Abraham, Melissa Allen, Michael Banissy, Jonathan Beaverstock, Ian Bond, Matthew Brown, William Browne, Edmund Cannon, Tristan Cogan, Ryerson Christie, Emma Clark, Ian Craddock, Esther Dermott, Mark Dillingham, Alison Donnell, Tim Edmunds, Natalie Edwards, Charl Faul, Rachel Flecker, Mike Fraser, Sarah George, Ruth Glynn, Daryl Hill, , Jonathan Ives, Catherine Kelly, Sam Leary, Astrid Linthorst, Karim Malik, Barry Main, David Manley, Jennifer McManus, Harry Mellor, Anthony Mulholland, Stuart Mundell, Ian Nabney, Aydin Nassehi, Therese O'Toole, Hugh Piggins, Guy Poppy, Martyn Powell, Chrissie Thirlwell, Tuomas Tahko, Jeremy Tavare, Nicholas Roberts, Alison Rust, Nigel Savery, Annela Seddon, Michelle Spear, Brian Squire, Judith Squires (**Chair**), Jaap Velthuis, Clea Warburton, Karen West, Kate Whittington, Chris Willis, Liang-Fong Wong, John Wylie.

Dr Peter Allen, Dr Arab Hassani, Mr Yogadhveep Arora, Miss Sarah Bain, Mr Ahmad Bilal, Ms Francesca Blackburn, Dr Manjola Caro, Dr Alex Clayton, Dr Ruzanna Chitchyan, Dr Bethan Charles, Miss Gurvin Chopra, Dr Jennifer Collins, Dr Suchandrima Das, Dr Amy Edwards, Dr Bassam Elsaied, Mr Ed Fay, Dr Jonathan Fellows, Mr Jordan Fung, Dr Hermes Gadelha, Mr Teo Guez, Dr Maxine Gillway, Mr Steve Hall, Dr Joseph Hallett, Dr Suzanne Held, Dr Gibran Hemani, Dr Michael Henehan, Dr Sue Horseman, , Ms Rayna John, Dr Chris Kent, Dr Alison McClean, Mrs Mary Millard, Dr James Palmer, Dr Dinesh Pamunuwa, Dr Angeliki Papadaki, Ms Lucinda Parr, Miss Lucy Pears, Professor Benjamin Pohl, Dr Efi Psomopoulou, Dr Mark Schenk, Dr Matthew Tointon, Jo-Jo Vyvyan-Jones, Dr Meng Wang.

Apologies: Professor Michele Barbour, Dr Emily Bell, Professor Craig Butts, Professor Tom Ellson, Mr Michael Flay, Dr Lauren Goodhead, Dr Joanna Howarth, Professor Oliver Johnson, Dr Zoe Leinhardt, Mrs Antonia Lythgoe, Professor Tansy Jessop, Professor Tim Parkin, Miss Mia Stevens, Professor Evelyn Welch

In attendance: Helen Cole (Senior Governance Officer and **minutes**), Charlie Cowley (Head of Faculty Transition and Projects, Faculty of Health and Life Sciences) for item 8. Hannah Quinn (Chief of Staff).

1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING ON 6 October 2025 (on file)

1.1 **APPROVED** as a true and accurate record the minutes of the previous meeting on 6 October 2025.

1.2 The Chair advised the members that the action in the minutes from 6 October (paragraph 8.4) relating to a presentation to Senate from BILT (Bristol Institute for Learning and Teaching) remained ongoing and would be scheduled in due course.

2. CHAIR'S REPORT

2.1 RECEIVED and NOTED paper ref: (**SN/25-26/009**) (on file).

2.2 The Chair welcome Emma Smith (Interim Chief Digital Information Officer) noting that Emma had joined the University on 8 December (today) and was in attendance as an observer.

- 2.3 The Chair provided a verbal update expanding on some of the themes within in the Chair's Report, in particular the Government's recently announced Student Levy and its impact on the University of Bristol and the wider UK HE sector. It was noted that arguably the precise articulation and details as now confirmed meant that the University was impacted to a lesser extent than could have been the case. For example, the levy would take the form of flat fee (at £925 per international student, per year of study, increasing with inflation) as opposed to percentage of the fee, there would be an exception for the first 220 students and a delayed introduction until the 2028-29 academic year. The Chair noted the details of maintenance grants announced co-currently, these were worth up to £1,000 but with restrictions/ eligibility to be applied in relation to household income and course/ programme type. The above, coupled with the changes in salary sacrifice pension schemes announced at the same time and to be implemented from April 2029 meant that the University's financial plans remain unchanged but that planned mitigations would need to be implemented to ensure future financial stability.
- 2.4 The Chair noted the following recent interactions with and announcements from the Office for Students. The announcement on 13 November of a new Strategy for 2025 to 2030 that also noted that over this time the OfS *would prioritise sector resilience, with an aim for all institutions to have the effective governance needed to navigate increased financial and strategic risk successfully*. On 5 November, Edward Peck, recently appointed Chair of the OfS had written to all the Chairs of University Boards setting out emerging sector risks and the need for Boards to exercise duties thoroughly and appropriately. The University's Board of Trustees had discussed the letter at its meeting on 21 November.
- 2.5 The Chair noted the recent publication of the Post 16 Education and Skills white paper. The paper complemented and reinforced other signals from Government notably a strong discourse in the direction of tertiary education providers needing to collaborate but also to focus on fewer more specific areas of strength. It was noted that the University was already aware of this direction of travel because this imperative was also seen via the funding landscape.
- 2.6 The Chair noted that the [Vice-Chancellor had recently re iterated the University's commitment to combatting division and hate in all its forms](#). It was noted that on 18 November, the University had signed a [joint statement with Bristol City Council](#), other universities, colleges and faith leaders reaffirming determination to stamp out abusive behaviour and intimidation.
- 2.7 A question was raised on how the University would reflect on recent public comments from Professor Arif Ahmed's (Director of Freedom of Speech, Office for Students). Specifically, the distinction of whether academic freedom of speech was only applicable where the subject was an area where an academic had expertise in or whether it applied more broadly. The Chair confirmed that the University's legal team were reviewing the definitions used by the University, including the training modules provided for staff . (Link here to [Freedom of Expression & Academic Freedom training module](#).) The Chair noted that this topic would be discussed at the next meeting of the University's Freedom of Speech Advisory Board. Separately, the Chair noted that Professor Ahmed had attended and spoken at the meeting of the University's Leadership Network (ULN) held on 20 October 2025.
- 3. REPORT FROM THE ACADEMIC TRUSTEES ON BOARD-RELATED BUSINESS**
- 3.1 Professor Ian Craddock and Professor Natalie Edwards provided a verbal update on the business undertaken by the Board of Trustees at its most recent meeting on 21 November 2025.

3.2 The Board considered the following:

- Chair's Report
- Executive Report
- University Climate Action Plan
- Autumn 2025 Strategy Performance Report
- Financial & Student Number Forecasts for Submission to the OfS including the Going Concern Statement
- Finance Report
- Annual Report & Financial Statements 2024/25
- Bristol Dental School: a subsidiary
- Annual Report: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (staff and students) 2024/25
- Revisions to Charter, Statutes and Ordinances 3 and 6
- Report from Nominations Committee
- Report from Finance & Investments Committee
- Report from Audit and Risk Committee
- Report from Infrastructure Planning Committee
- University Secretary's Report
- Report from Honorary Degrees Committee

4. UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT PLAN 2025-2030

4.1 RECEIVED and **DISCUSSED**: paper ref: (SN/25-26/010) (*on file*).

4.2 The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Global Engagement) introduced the paper, noting that this area of the University's work was linked to and aligned with the next two agenda items: Mumbai Enterprise Campus and UoB Educational Principles for Transnational Education (TNE)

4.3 NOTED that further information and future updates could be found on the [relevant page of the University's internal SharePoint site](#). (Available to University staff / postgraduate researchers and taught students.)

4.4 A Senate member commented that in terms of communications, there appeared to be a disconnect, the paper referred to increasing the proportion of international students, but many Schools were at present seeking to reduce intake targets in order to meet the 50% operational surplus target. In response, the Executive agreed that the nuance of communication should be improved. At the broadest level, the aim was to have focused, realistic programme specific targets based on UoB data from the last three years.

4.5 A question was raised on whether it was beneficial for the University to benchmark itself against other HE institutions and if there was a risk of an extreme/ excessive and reactive response in doing this. The Executive noted the University was not seeking to look at other comparative institutions to provide models or benchmarks for its own activity. However, an examination of best practice and focus on what institutions in direct competition with the University of Bristol were doing well was important to understand.

4.6 A question was raised in relation to promotional documents regarding the Greater Bay Area (GBA) that only include simplified Chinese, which was a misrepresentation of the area, due to the use of traditional Chinese in both Hong Kong and Macau. In response, the Executive commented that feedback of this type was greatly appreciated, noting that the University would take this instance forward and asked that similar queries and concerns be raised directly with themselves.

4.7 A question was asked to whether the University's [Think Big Scholarship](#) had been considered alongside the Global Engagement Plan. In response, the Executive responded that the Think Big Scholarship generated a large, diverse cohort and was aligned with and complemented the Plan.

- 4.8 A question was raised on the reference to summer schools in the Plan and whether it was thought that they would be continued to be used for foundation studies or if the intention was a broadening of their use to develop new models of engagement. The Executive responded that it was the later, the aim was to include summer schools if needed on certain programmes thereby diversifying and strengthening the offering. It was noted relevant staff were already engaged so awareness in terms of the availability of teaching staff was in hand.
- 4.9 A question was raised with reference to the 35% target detailed in KPI8 (see below) noting that in 2024/25 this target had been surpassed but that International Foundation Programmes were still subject to scrutiny. In response the Executive advised that there were specific instances where the 50% target was not being met and that in some areas targets needed to be higher than the minimum target(s). On a related point, the question was posed to ask that if the target was collective, whether some areas could compensate for others, the Executive reiterated that this was not the intention, the aim was for all areas to improve by 2030.

Our KPIs by 2030:

KPI8 International Foundation Programmes (IFP) sustain 35% international undergraduate recruitment with a minimum 80% progression rate and no more than 50% of IFP students from a single country of origin. (University level)

5. MUMBAI ENTERPRISE CAMPUS

5.1 RECEIVED and DISCUSSED: PRESENTATION

5.2 The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Global Engagement) introduced the paper

5.3 In discussion, Senate members noted that the University was working to a tight/ fast time frame with the campus scheduled to open in August 2026, and queried how delays would be mitigated/ managed, for example in preparing the physical spaces required, and at what point the University would risk liability. In response the Executive advised that the site had now been acquired, sufficient progress needed to be completed by March 2026 to obtain India government approval and accreditation at this point. From a student perspective once offers were made (to students) and accepted the contract to deliver then became live, this would be in May 2026. The Executive assured Senate that the University had a range of liability management strategies in place and that both the Audit and Risk Committee and Board of Trustees had provided scrutiny of the plans and risk mitigations.

5.4 In discussion, Senate members queried the levels/ quantity and proportion of research and teaching staff in Mumbai. In response the Executive noted that the first year would be teaching intensive, in the longer term the aspiration was a structure that was not detached from local context but was instead a localised Bristol experience. The optionality to have a flexible approach in terms of the mix and type of programmes and courses being offered in Mumbai was part of the rationale for recruitment at the associate professor level in the initial stage with professorial level to come later.

5.5 In discussion, Senate members noted that the University was very mindful of the cultural environment and context and was seeking to embed itself within the cultural landscape in Mumbai. It was important that the University was able to demonstrate allied interests and not take an “extractational” approach. As an initial example, it was noted that a recent art exhibition in Mumbai curated by a university staff member had created a strong, positive media response in India,

5.6 A question was raised on the identity of investors and the wider financial arrangements funding Mumbai Enterprise Campus. In response the Executive noted that this information

was now available via the following SharePoint links (Available to University staff / postgraduate researchers and taught students).

[Mumbai Enterprise Campus](#)
[Frequently asked questions about the Mumbai Enterprise Campus](#)

Senate members requiring further information should contact project-mec@bristol.ac.uk in the first instance.

6. UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL EDUCATIONAL PRINCIPLES FOR TRANSNATIONAL EDUCATION (TNE)

6.1 RECEIVED and **DISCUSSED**: paper ref: **(SN/25-26/011)** (*on file*).

6.2 The Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (Quality Assurance and Enhancement) introduced the paper on behalf of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education and Students). NOTED that the Principles were general but that at present discussions and interpretation was from the Mumbai Enterprise perspective/ angle.

6.3 In discussion Senate noted that the University was very mindful of cyber security for the Mumbai Enterprise Campus noting that the risks were varied and linked together across many otherwise separate areas, for example export controls including visa management and ensuring that digital infrastructure established in Mumbai did not impact exposure to cyber threats against other university activities. The Executive noted that the Audit and Risk Committee, the Infrastructure Planning Committee and Board of Trustees had oversight and were providing scrutiny of assurance activity in this space.

6.4 A Senate member asked in what way quality standards would be assessed within Mumbai, for example whether there would be an NSS/ PTES (National Student Survey/ Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey equivalent. In response the Executive advised that students in Mumbai would be asked to respond the same questions for both surveys via the University's local system i.e. not through NSS as this was UK only. This would allow the University to compare Mumbai and Bristol returns; this would form part of a range of activities to review and monitor the broader student experience in Mumbai Enterprise Campus.

6.5 In discussion Senate queried whether senior tutors would be added to the staffing structure in Mumbai, at present only an academic personal tutor was referred to, and this might limit the strength and effectiveness of support. On a related point it was noted that if the ratio of staff to students was too small (i.e. too few tutors) then staff members might find it difficult to provide adequate support to each tutee assigned to them. The Executive responded that Senate's concerns were noted and advised that these areas were part of ongoing conversations.

6.6 In discussion Senate reflected on the requirement to apply whole education principles in Mumbai, noting that teaching programme would be delivered in English and whether this meant that the local setting (a multilingual city) was not being recognised sufficiently thereby risking inconsistency with the principles underpinning inclusive education and authentic assessment. In response the Executive noted that the language requirement for students enrolled in Mumbai would be the same as those enrolled in Bristol because both groups would receive a Bristol degree. This meant that the approach taken needed to combine and address these potential opposing needs. The Executive acknowledged that this was an important and interesting question that would be considered further going forward and thanked Senate members

for their engagement. It was noted that paper was intended as a model for potential further transnational education initiatives in the future.

6.7 With reference to principle 4, a Senate member queried what the University’s approach would be to Freedom of Speech at the Mumbai Enterprise Campus. In response it was noted that the steer from the OfS was that transnational educational settings were not expected to comply with The HE Freedom of Speech Act. However that said, the University was seeking assurances from government sources in India in particular the Department of Education at the federal level.

7. US2030: PROFESSIONAL SERVICES TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME (PSTP) UPDATE

7.1 RECEIVED PRESENTATION (on file)

7.2 The Chief Operating Officer and the Executive Director of Faculty Operations presented to Senate.

7.3 There were no questions from Senate. NOTED that further ongoing information could be found at the following SharePoint link (Available to University staff / postgraduate researchers and taught students) [University Structures 2030 programme \(US2030\) - Home](#)

8. FACULTY OF HEALTH AND LIFE SCIENCES – SCHOOL NAMING SUBMISSION

8.1 RECEIVED and NOTED paper ref: **(SN/25-26/012)** (on file).

8.2 The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Health and Life Sciences) introduced the paper.

8.3 NOTED the proposed two new school names within the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences Schools: School of Biochemistry and Biomedical Sciences, School of Psychology and Neuroscience

8.4 NOTED the revised School structure, effective from 1 August 2025, summarised below, all other Schools to retain their existing names.

Current Schools Names	New School Configuration	New Name (if applicable)
School of Biochemistry + School of Cellular & Molecular Medicine	Merged	School of Biochemistry and Biomedical Sciences
School of Psychological Science + Neuroscience	Merged	School of Psychology and Neuroscience
Bristol Medical School (incorporating Anatomy and Physiology & Pharmacology)	Merged	—
School of Biological Sciences	Unchanged	—
Bristol Dental School	Unchanged	—
Bristol Veterinary School	Unchanged	—

8.5 NOTED that on 18 November 2025, UEB discussed and recommended this paper to Senate and the Board of Trustees. NOTED that at its meeting on 30 January 2026, the Board of Trustees would be asked to approve the new names.

8.6 NOTED that Ordinance 6 stipulates that: *2.1.7 (b) Senate shall be consulted by the Board of Trustees in relation to any proposals to create, close, name or rename Faculties or Academic Schools).*

8.7 There were no questions from Senate, Senate expressed its support of the paper and the names.

9. PEOPLE AND CULTURE GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

9.1 RECEIVED PRESENTATION (on file)

9.2 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost and the Head of Equity, Diversity & Inclusion presented to Senate. NOTED that apologies had been received from the co-sponsor for the item, the Chief People Officer, who was unwell.

9.3 In discussion Senate noted that mechanisms needed to be in place to ensure staff understood their responsibilities in these areas, this perhaps accounted for the divergence of practice at present. In response to a question, it was noted that the intention was not to remove/ disband EDI groups at the School level. Instead, the review would seek to ensure that decisions were being made at the right level by the right group or staff job role, thereby improving the staff experience, and engaging staff. In some cases, when required, EDI groups at the School level would remain, this would allow staff to engage, raise concerns and contribute even though decision making would take place at a higher level. The aim was to no longer have policies and statements issued by individual Schools, but input from Schools would continue to be important.

10. PROGRESS AGAINST UNIVERSITY STRATEGY:

EDUCATION AND STUDENT SPI

10.1 RECEIVED and NOTED paper ref: (SN/25-26/013) (on file).

10.2 NOTED the autumn 2025 goal performance reports that relate to the education and student experience (E&SE) portfolio.

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION SPI

10.3 RECEIVED and NOTED paper ref: (SN/25-26/014) (on file).

10.4 NOTED the progress update against Goals 1 & 6 that related to the research sub strategy and the relevant critical path SPIs.

11. RESEARCH COMMITTEE REPORT

11.1 RECEIVED and NOTED paper ref: (SN/25-26/015) (on file).

11.2 NOTE the attached report from URC on activity since the last report in October 2025.

12. EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT

12.1 RECEIVED and NOTED paper ref: (SN/25-26/015) (on file).

12.2 NOTE the attached report from URC on activity since the last report in October 2025.

12.3 A query was raised as to whether the data evaluation of changes to the process for agreeing reasonable adjustments (introduced January 2025) referenced in paragraph 5 of the Report could be shared more widely. AGREED that this request be taken forward by the paper authors, the Executive Director for Education & Students, and the Clerk to Senate.

Action: Clerk to Senate

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

13.1 There was none.

MEETING CLOSED.

Next meeting Monday 2 February 2026, 2pm