



**MEETING OF SENATE  
MINUTES  
Monday 13 APRIL 2026  
14.00, via Microsoft Teams**

**Present:**

Professors: Arpad Abraham, Melissa Allen, Jonathan Beaverstock, Alvin Birdi, Ian Bond, Matthew Brown, Craig Butts, Edmund Cannon, Ryerson Christie, Emma Clark, Ian Craddock, Esther Dermott, Mark Dillingham, Alison Donnell, Tim Edmunds, Natalie Edwards, Rachel Flecker, Mike Fraser, Sarah George, Tansy Jessop, Oliver Johnson, Catherine Kelly, , Karim Malik, Jennifer McManus, Anthony Mulholland, Stuart Mundell, Aydin Nassehi, Tim Parkin, Guy Poppy, Martyn Powell, Alison Rust, Nigel Savery, Michelle Spear, Brian Squire, Judith Squires, Tuomas Tahko, Jeremy Tavaré, Leah Tether, Chrissie Thirlwell, Jaap Velthuis, Clea Warburton, Evelyn Welch (Chair), Karen West

Dr Peter Allen, Dr Faezah Arab Hassani, Yogadhveep Arora, Dr Emily Bell, Ahmad Bilal, Francesca Blackburn, Dr Manjola Caro, Dr Ruzanna Chitchyan, Dr Jennifer Collins, Dr Suchandrima Das, Dr Amy Edwards, Ed Fay, Dr Jonathan Fellows, Michael Flay, Jordan Fung, Dr Maxine Gillway, Dr Lauren Goodhead, Teo Guez, Dr Joseph Hallett, Dr Suzanne Held, Dr Michael Henehan, Rayna John, Dr Chris Kent, Antonia Lythgoe, Dr Alison McClean, Mary Millard, Dr James Palmer, Lucinda Parr, Lucy Pears, Dr Efi Psomopoulou, Dr Mark Schenk, Mia Stevens, Dr Matthew Tointon, Jo-Jo Vyvyan-Jones

**Apologies:** Professor Michele Acuto, Dr Sarah Bain, Professor William Browne, Professor Tom Ellson, Dr Alex Clayton, Professor Barry Main, Professor David Manley,

**In attendance:** James Bigwood (Chief People Officer) for item 5, Helen Cole (Senior Governance Officer and **minutes**), Sarah Davies (Director of Education Innovation) for item 4, Janine Fox (Academic Representation Manager at Bristol SU), Steve Hall (Executive Director for Students & Education) for item 6, Victoria Jones Parry (Executive Director of Strategic Planning & Transformation), Hannah Quinn (Chief of Staff), Emma Smith (Interim Chief Digital Information Officer) for item 4

**1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING ON 2 FEBRUARY 2026 (on file)**

1.1 NOTED that on 10 April, Senate member Matthew Brown had emailed the Senior Governance Officer with queries and corrections to the minutes of the last meeting. After discussion it was AGREED that the following correction be made:

2.3 The position of the University was relatively robust and stable but, having received £0 capital grant from the OfS in 2024-25, running costs would need to be covered from the surplus, which stood at ~~£54~~, £67.8m as predicted.

1.2 AGREED that at Matthew Brown's request a further minor amendment would be made to paragraph 7.2, to be agreed with the Senior Governance Officer after the meeting.

1.3 Subject to the above, Senate APPROVED the minutes of the previous meeting on 2 February 2026.

## **2. CHAIR'S REPORT**

- 2.1 Senate RECEIVED and **DISCUSSED** paper reference **SN/25-26/022** (*on file*).
- 2.2 The Chair provided a verbal update on activity in relation to the recruitment of the incoming Deputy Vice-Chancellor. It was noted that the constitution required only that Senate are *consulted* in relation to the process and that the appointment was a decision by the Board of Trustees. It was noted that some members of Senate would be approached to engage in some elements of recruitment activity.
- 2.3 The Chair noted that the University's Chancellor, Sir Paul Nurse would complete his second 5 year term of office on 31 December 2026 and that activity was underway to find the University's next Chancellor.
- 2.4 The Chair reflected on her recent activity and engagements detailed in the Report and the link between these and the importance of the University's work on internationalisation. The Chair noted both recent political developments both nationally and internationally and changes in the Research funding landscape and the bearing that these had both on the University of Bristol and on the UK Higher Education sector.
- 2.5 The Chair noted that the University was now mid way through its Vision and Strategy with four years remaining to 2030. On 26 March, the Board had discussed Strategy 2030 Mid-Point Refresh and Senate would be asked to engage on this topic at its meeting in June. Areas to consider would include achievements to date, adaptations and additions required.

## **3. REPORT FROM THE ACADEMIC TRUSTEES ON BOARD-RELATED BUSINESS**

- 3.1 Professor Ian Craddock provided a verbal update on the business undertaken by the Board of Trustees at its most recent meeting on 27 March and Development Day on 26 March 2026.
- 3.2 On 26 March the Board considered the following areas:
- National Security and Defence Research
  - Graduate Outcomes and Employability
  - Strategy 2030 Mid-Point Refresh
  - Modern Network
- 3.3 On 27 March the Board considered the following:
- Chair's Report
  - Executive Report
  - CFO Report
  - Temple Quarter Enterprise Campus
  - Mumbai Enterprise Campus Report
  - Research and Innovation: Commercialisation
  - Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Annual Report
  - Report from Infrastructure and Planning Committee
  - Report from Finance and Investments Committee
  - Report from Audit And Risk Committee
  - Report from Nominations Committee
  - University Secretary's Report
  - Access and Widening Participation Plan
  - UoB Annual Statement on Research Integrity

#### **4. ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN EDUCATION: AGREED APPROACH AND PRIORITIES**

- 4.1 Senate RECEIVED and **DISCUSSED** paper reference **SN/25-26/023** (*on file*).
- 4.2 The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education and Students) and the Director of BILT (Bristol Institute for Learning and Teaching) and Director of Education Innovation presented to Senate, the following areas were noted in the discussion that then took place. In summary, Senate was mindful that this was an area that would be discussed and developed extensively over the next few months and this would include further agenda items to forthcoming Senate meetings.
- 4.3 The training and upskilling of students in this area when they joined the University, the potential for a 1st year Bristol Futures unit and expanding the existing AI fundamentals to prospective students were cited.
- 4.4 The extent to which the student body might be divided on ethical grounds in terms of their acceptance/ willingness to use AI, noting that building skills ensuring a shared narrative in terms of engagement would be important. In terms of the degree to which a student would encounter and/or be encouraged to use AI on joining a programme, Senate noted that this varied significantly. In terms of engagement, the principles sought to provide parity of access to upskill in AI but to allow students who wanted to opt away the option to do this. In summary that the opportunity would be given but not prescribed was the ambition. It was noted that providing this type of optionality had the potential to increase staff workload so a balance needed to be struck between quality of delivery versus affordability. It was noted that programmes needed to be designed to account for these differing requirements. It was noted that at present, individual elements within a single programme might vary in terms of whether the use of AI was completely banned or actively encouraged and that diversity of practice had the potential to create tension and confusion for students. Students sought a very clear statement on what was allowed at a unit level and what actions would be taken where students were in breach of these regulations.
- 4.5 Senate discussed the variation and equity in students' access to AI tools noting that the ability to pay for the updated/ best version of software could impact on awarding gaps and outcomes.
- 4.6 Senate discussed academic integrity and its impact on staff, noting that teaching staff had a dual role as educators and as research academics, to a certain extent the provision of employability skills to students and academic responsibility could sometimes exist as opposing requirements. A question was posed as to whether certain demographic groupings of students were more likely to be reviewed and challenged in terms of non sanctioned use of AI and whether this was being monitored. In response it was acknowledged that this type of data was not available currently, the assessment design challenge and teaching delivery challenge remained the focus at present. It was noted that training in this area would need to include discipline and qualification specific elements alongside more general content and that engagement with the Academic Integrity Network was ongoing. It was noted that messaging to students was being worked on in collaboration with Bristol SU to define what *good use of AI* in submissions looked like and also the importance of students developing their own voice.

#### **5. GENDER, ETHNICITY AND DISABILITY PAY GAPS**

- 5.1 Senate RECEIVED and **NOTED** paper reference **SN/25-26/024** (*on file*.)

- 5.2 NOTED the data to be published as part of the statutory Gender Pay Gap report, and voluntary reporting of Ethnicity Pay Gap and Disability Pay Gap. The Chief People Officer summarised and expanded on the data and trends in the Report.
- 5.3 In particular, the impact on the data sets of the decline in both overall headcount and turnover rate at the University was noted. A fall in these figures impacted on pay gap(s) because it meant that vacancies were not created and recruited to and the associated pipelines at lower pay grades in the organisations were not created either. Over the next 2-3 years, it was reasonable to expect this stagnation effect to persist. It was noted that in the future the University's Culture and Inclusion Committee would have a larger role in interrogating and engaging on these types of report on behalf of the Board of Trustees and thereby the University.

**6. STUDENT SUPPORT AND WELLBEING REPORT 2024/25**

- 6.1 Senate RECEIVED and NOTED paper reference **SN/25-26/025** (*on file.*)
- 6.2 The Executive Director for Education and Students summarised the achievements and challenges during 2024/25 and priorities for 2025/26 as per the Report. A query was raised as to whether there was causational effect between improvements in the turnaround of the provision of more timely support and ease of disclosure leading to an increase in disclosures. In response, it was agreed that this was a contributing factor but that the increased efficiency of the systems and processes compared to previous practice meant that fewer students now dropped off/ out midway through their submission resulting in more disclosures overall.

**7. EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT**

- 7.1 RECEIVED and NOTED paper reference **SN/25-26/026** (*on file.*)
- 7.2 NOTED the Annual Quality Assurance Report to Board of Trustees and a summary of the March 2026 meeting of Education Committee.

**8. RESEARCH COMMITTEE REPORT**

- 8.1 RECEIVED and NOTED paper reference **SN/25-26/027** (*on file.*)
- 8.2 NOTED the following: summaries of the meetings of Research Committee on 27 January and 16 March 2026, Digital Research Infrastructure Board Terms of Reference, REF 2029 Code of Practice.

**9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- 9.1 There was none.

**MEETING CLOSED**

Next meeting Monday 1 June 2026, 14.00