CONFIRMED

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Governors held on Wednesday 18 March 2026.

Present: Richard Bacon (Chair), Jenny Body, Rob Camm, Laura Claydon, Carolyn Donoghue, Professor Georgie Gough (until G26.03.15.2), Professor Dame Julie Lydon, Ian MacKenzie, Professor Elena Marco (until G26.03.15.2), Jamie Paddon, Tim Simmonds, Margaret Simmons-Bird, Dave Tansley (from G26.03.6.12), Professor Sir Steve West (until G26.03.14.2).

Apologies: Asad Zarif Awan, Domini Harewood, Grant Mansfield, Ciara Mullan, Gan Subramaniam.

In Attendance: Dr Jodie Anstee until (G26.03.15.2), Clerk, Professor Amanda Coffey DVC and Provost (until G26.03.14.2), Katherine Davies, Director of Transformation and Improvement (for G26.03.7), William Liew, Chief Financial Officer (until G26.03.14.2), Jo Midgley, DVC and Registrar (until G26.03.14.2), Dan Wood, Chief People Officer (until G26.03.14.2), Jessica Wrigley, Governance Officer (until G26.03.14.2), Christine Gledhill, Deputy Clerk (minutes).

G26.03.1 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

G26.03.1.1 Members were invited to declare any agenda items for which they may be conflicted. No declarations were received.

G26.03.2 APOLOGIES

G26.03.2.1 Apologies received were noted as set out above.

G26.03.3 MATTERS RAISED BY GOVERNORS

G26.03.3.1 Members were invited to share any matters of concern or strategic interest for the University and the Board, where these were not covered by items already covered in the agenda, and any details of recent University events or visits attended. No matters were forthcoming.

G26.03.4 MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

Paper G26/03/01 was received

G26.03.4.1 Members **approved** the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 19 November 2025.

Matters Arising

G26.03.4.2 Members were referred to the table of actions at the foot of the agenda and noted those that had been completed.

G26.03.4.3 Matters Arising – AI Seminar (G25.11.4.4 refers)
Members noted that the AI deep-dive seminar for Board Members would be arranged to take place after the Easter break.

ACTION: Deputy Clerk

G26.03.5 COMMITTEE ASSURANCE REPORTS
Paper G26/03/02 was received

G26.03.5.1 **Emergency Committee**
Richard Bacon, Chair of the Committee summarised the confidential discussion held by the Committee at its meeting on 8 December 2025, which was noted by the Board. Members were advised that further details of the discussion and subsequent decision were available in the confidential minutes provided in the BoardEffect library.

G26.03.5.2 **Nominations and Governance Committee**
The Committee Chair, Richard Bacon summarised discussions held by the Committee at its meeting on 27 January 2026.

G26.03.5.3 Members noted that the recruitment deadline for the Governor opportunities had closed on 1 March, for which ten applications had been received; these were currently being reviewed for shortlisting.

G26.03.5.4 Members also noted that the Committee had received details of the current position in relation to Governors' completion of mandatory training and noted that the Clerk would circulate to each Governor details of their individual progress.

ACTION: Clerk

G26.03.5.5 Members heard that the Committee had discussed the relatively low attendance by Governors at University events and noted that the Chair would discuss this with Governors individually in the 1:1 meetings scheduled in the summer term. Members also noted that he and the Clerk would look again at how best to make Governors aware of events and ensure appropriate attendance.

ACTION: Chair

G26.03.5.6 **People and Academic Assurance Committee (PAAC)**
The Committee Chair, Jenny Body shared highlights of the discussions held by the Committee at its meeting on 4 February 2026. Members noted the following in particular:

i. Two recommendations were being made to the Board –
   a. Annual Academic Quality Report – PAAC's confirmation of assurance regarding the University's management of academic quality and standards for 2024/2025.
   b. Annual Statement of Research Integrity – the Committee's endorsement of the Statement for Board approval for publication on the University website.

   Both of the above appear later in the meeting agenda as substantive items for the Board's consideration for approval.
ii. Discussion of the following:
   a. Student recruitment and demographic trends.
   b. Academic Performance and Risk –
      i. The White-Asian awarding gap (flagged Red); the Committee had requested a paper on the topic, with detailed analysis and actions, for the next meeting.
      ii. The Committee's confirmed assurance with no matters requiring escalation to the Board.
   c. Outcomes of the Collaborative Provision Review.
   d. Student Wellbeing and Duty of Care – an update on the University's approach and the growing external recognition of the University's work in this space.
   e. People Performance and Risk –

i. People survey – the Committee acknowledged the importance of clear strategic focus for Board oversight in relation to pulse and other people survey data.
ii. The Committee's confirmed assurance with no matters requiring escalation to the Board.

f. Academic Board Observer report – no Board Member had been able to attend the December 2025 Academic Board meeting; PAAC therefore considered a written summary of the discussions that had taken place, with verbal contributions received from those present who had attended.

G26.03.5.10 **Finance, Estates and IT (FEIT) Committee**
Ian MacKenzie, the FEIT Committee Chair, summarised the discussions held by the Committee at its meeting on 2 March 2026.

G26.03.5.11 Members noted that the Committee had discussed the Finance Strategic Risk, and felt that whilst the paper presented a largely stable position, it did not sufficiently reflect the challenges of the broader operating context for the sector.

G26.03.5.12 The Committee Chair referred to the draft minutes of the meeting and min.F26.03.05 in particular, which detailed that discussion, including:

i. The risks facing the University in the medium-term; the Board needed to understand the gravity of the situation, as the VCE and the FEIT Committee were doing the 'heavy lifting' on its behalf.
ii. Committee Members were comfortable that this was a journey to get them to understand what the budgets looked like.

G26.03.5.13 Members also noted that the Committee had made a number of approvals including various policies, as detailed in the assurance report.

G26.03.5.14 Members heard that the Committee had received a comprehensive update on major systems implementation, and that the FEIT Chair was due to meet with the DVC and Registrar, Jo Midgley on 27 March for a further update on the Student Information System (SIS).

G26.03.5.15 The DVC and Registrar informed Members that the enrolment capability element of the SIS had now been signed off.

G26.03.5.16 **Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee (ARAC)**
Jamie Paddon, Chair of ARAC provided Members with a summary of discussions that had taken place at the Committee meeting held on 4 March 2026. Members noted the following in particular:

G26.03.5.17 *Annual Risk Report*

i. Following a robust discussion, the Committee had determined that assurance could not be provided to the Board on the management of risk within the University based on the outcomes presented.
ii. Members felt that these were volatile times and that outcomes were lagging behind reality.
iii. Risk Management – the need to understand risk in the context of other risks, and to have a record of the controls in place to manage these; this would provide assurance to ARAC and to the Board.

G26.03.5.18 *Internal Audit Final Reports*

i. Five reports were considered, all undertaken as part of the 2025/2026 plan and all recommendations from these had been accepted by management.
ii. Change Programme Governance – this review had been removed from the plan by the Internal Auditors, whom the Committee reminded of the protocols

for such amendments; i.e. to inform the ARAC Chair, who would then put the proposal to ARAC for formal consideration for approval.

G26.03.5.19 The Chair of the Board thanked the Committee Chairs and commented on the value of their leading on the activities of their respective Committees. The observation was made that the University was dealing with numerous issues and the important work undertaken by the Board's committees was recognised.

STRATEGIC ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

G26.03.6 VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REPORT

Paper G26/03/03 was received

G26.03.6.1 Members noted the content of the report and received an update from the Vice-Chancellor.

G26.03.6.2 *Annual Risk Deep Dives*

i. The challenging environment within which the University was operating was one of increased risks, therefore work was underway to consider carefully the areas of risk impacting on the institution – some of which the University was able to mitigate, with others beyond its control.
ii. The University continued to contribute to and take information from UUK and the University Alliance (UA), which was being shared with the wider VCE membership.

G26.03.6.3 *Advanced Manufacturing, Security and Defence Statement*
Members noted that a position statement had been developed to share with the University community and external stakeholders, to clarify its corporate position and role in relation to the defence sector.

G26.03.6.4 *Meningitis*
Members were reminded of the recent reports in the media of a meningitis outbreak in Kent which had affected a number of young people, two of whom had sadly died. Members heard that there was currently no indication of concern beyond Kent and that the University had triggered appropriate communications to students and staff to raise awareness. Public health across all regions were alert to this matter.

G26.03.6.5 *Bristol Old Vic Theatre School (BOVTS)*

i. The University continued to maintain oversight throughout the teach out period; students and staff impacted appeared to be content with how this was progressing.
ii. The University also continued to engage with the BOVTS CEO and Board.

The remainder of this agenda item is recorded as a confidential minute.

G26.03.7 STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION, PERFORMANCE AND RISK

Paper G26/03/04 was received

G26.03.7.1 Katherine Davies, Director of Transformation and Improvement joined the meeting, and was invited to provide an update. Members noted the following:

G26.03.7.2

i. The staff- and student-related KPIs had been considered by the PAAC at its meeting on 4 February 2026.
ii. An update on the current Change portfolio and key trends.
iii. The University Transformation Programme (UTP) benefits realisation report – requested by the Board – which provided interim results on benchmarking and qualitative commentary. A SUMS benefits realisation review had been commissioned and would be shared with the Board at its meeting in July.

ACTION: Director of Transformation and Improvement

- iv. Portfolio dashboard – there were a number of Amber-rated risks.
- v. The size of the portfolio and the impacts of delay in respect of the SIS on resourcing for other projects, and balancing the portfolio with BAU were presenting a mixed picture in terms of capacity to deliver the full portfolio.
- vi. Concerns were being addressed through the new Transformation Programme, and there was a need to be more discerning in relation to projects and how these were delivered.
- vii. The Fit for the Future Review would provide what the outputs should be.
- viii. New benefits framework –
  - a. This would provide ownership of benefits.
  - b. Having a smaller number of projects and appropriate due diligence in place were anticipated to present a better resourced, better sequenced series of events.
  - c. Useful to have a separate budget.
  - d. A more robust discussion would be possible when the portfolio was reprofiled.
- ix. Transformation Expo, 21 April 2026 – the second such event, to which Governors were warmly invited.

G26.03.7.3 During discussions Members noted the imperative to prioritise appropriately and acknowledged that some projects may be paused or stopped. Any challenges in terms of capacity and capability would be clearly signalled.

G26.03.7.4 Members remarked upon the need to consider the communications strategy required when the SUMS benefits realisation review was completed; in terms of both positive outcomes and areas that were less so. Members noted that this approach was already adopted in relation to the staff survey that was currently live, as staff were reminded of the work already done and of where there were challenges.

G26.03.7.5 Dan Wood, Chief People Officer expressed his personal thanks to the Director and team for their exceptional work.

The Director of Transformation and Improvement left the meeting.

STUDENT VOICE

G26.03.8 UPDATE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE STUDENTS' UNION

Paper G26/03/05 was received and noted

G26.03.8.1 Members noted the report and in particular the reference to a need for compassionate communications, which had arisen following a call from the NUS for an improvement in communications following a student death.

G26.03.8.2 During discussions Members noted the following:

- i. The Higher Education Mental Health Implementation Taskforce that was in place, chaired by the Vice-Chancellor.
- ii. There was currently a live survey to all institutions to gauge how universities were using data analytics and how these were being joined up.
- iii. Importantly, universities were being encouraged to ensure that the communications used at difficult times were worded sensitively and with compassion.
- iv. This was a challenge for all universities.
- v. There was an issue in relation to consistency of communications across University departments and a need to systemise processes to reduce the room for error.

vi. The work being undertaken by the Assistant PVC Campus and Community and his team in relation to timely interventions, to ensure that no student received a ‘cold letter’ without first having had a conversation.
vii. PG supervision – students were being encouraged to provide data, as the University wished to understand whether this was an issue particular to one part of the University, or one that spanned several areas.
viii. Student terms and conditions and Duty of Care – the need to incorporate something about action the University would take and that which it would not.
ix. This matter had been picked up with the VP Education who had confirmed that this concerned PG Taught programmes and consistency of expectations. The VP Education was seeking to secure more details in relation to one or two Masters programmes.
x. The need for the University to be clear about what it did, and to ensure that this was done. The importance of the role of the Success Coaches in this regard was acknowledged.
xi. This matter would be picked up by the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee (LTSEC). Members requested that the outcome be reported to the PAAC, ensuring that examples of good or exceptional practice were incorporated.

ACTION: DVC and Provost

The Chair requested that details of the Board’s discussion be relayed to the Student Nominee.

ACTION: Chair/Clerk

G26.03.8.3 Members acknowledged that it was important for matters that were exercising the SU to be brought to the attention of the University (e.g. via the Partnership Board, 1:1s with VCE Members, etc.) prior to being presented to the Board.

G26.03.8.4 Members noted that Governors who had attended the recent student engagement session had had a similar experience, and endorsed the view that students should relay day-to-day BAU to the University on a regular basis, with then a clear response being given to them on how issues were being addressed.

G26.03.8.5 Members also remarked that for the first time all of the students present that had attended were student representatives, and that this was not necessarily what Governors were seeking from these meetings. All students present were also international students which did not feel representative of the UWE student body.

G26.03.8.6 Members heard that the majority of current student representatives were international students and that there was a wider piece around how the University was able to hear the Student Voice from all students. Members also noted that at the last SU vote in 2025 there had been a huge increase in voting, but almost all those who had voted were international students.

G26.03.8.7 Members acknowledged the significant impact that strong political views that were held that did not represent the whole student community would have, and that there was a need to consider how the Student Voice more widely was gathered.

G26.03.8.8 Members also recognised the difficulty presented for the University in addressing this, as the SU was a separate entity. However, the University had alerted the SU Chief Executive to this issue, and had signalled that if this was not able to be addressed, the University would seek different ways to formally engage with the SU.

G26.03.8.9 Members remarked upon the fact that the previous day Governors had heard that 40% of the student body were commuter students; these students had a very different student experience to others, and would be much less inclined to engage in this way.

G26.03.8.10 Members requested that this matter be discussed further by the PAAC.

ACTION: DVC and Registrar/PAAC

ITEMS FOR APPROVAL (ACADEMIC ASSURANCE)

G26.03.9 ANNUAL ACADEMIC QUALITY REPORT

Paper G26/03/06 was received

G26.03.9.1 Professor Amanda Coffey, DVC and Provost reminded Members that the report was presented in an established format and focused on all aspects of academic quality and standards (OfS B conditions of registration).

G26.03.9.2 Members noted that the report was necessarily retrospective but did include changes to the registration requirements, and that it had been considered appropriately through the University's academic governance arrangements.

G26.03.9.3 The PAAC Chair informed Members that the Committee had considered the processes and methods used, whether these were appropriate and ensured a quality academic experience, had operated effectively and that the plans in place were appropriate. The Chair conveyed to the Board the Committee's assurance regarding the University's management of academic quality and standards for 2024/2025.

G26.03.9.4 Members confirmed their assurance that:

(i) the necessary methodologies and processes are in place to ensure that the University provides a high quality academic experience to students that aligns with sector academic standards.

(ii) these methodologies and processes operated effectively during the 2024/2025 academic year.

(iii) appropriate plans are being taken forward during 2025/2026 to address any areas of risk identified and to further enhance quality, standards and the student experience.

G26.03.10 ANNUAL STATEMENT OF RESEARCH INTEGRITY

Paper G26/03/07 was received

G26.03.10.1 Members noted that the Concordat to Support Research Integrity, of which the University was a signatory, required that a statement of assurance be provided to the Board on the University's management of matters of research integrity. If assured, the Board was required to approve the statement for publication on the University website. The statement had progressed through the University's academic governance arrangements as required.

G26.03.10.2 Members remarked upon the reference in the statement to plans for future developments to be undertaken in the first half of the current academic year and enquired whether there was any update on those.

G26.03.10.3 Members heard that much of the groundwork had been established to ensure that steps were in place in respect of the focus on AI use in the research space, and the development of new guidance. A series of engagement opportunities were being brought together.

G26.03.10.4 Members also noted that further work was being done to enhance research ethics training to include AI.

G26.03.10.5 Members requested clarification as to what 'Studiosity' was and noted that this was a platform that was used by students which allowed them to self-serve to receive early feedback on academic skills such as grammar, style, consistency, etc. (not knowledge).

G26.03.10.6 Members noted that the platform was well-established in the sector but there had been some issues at the University with levels of engagement. Members heard that where it was used, it had a positive on outcomes in terms of academic skills and that the University needed to be better at encouraging students to use all the tools available to them; noting that the best way to do so was directly through academic staff.

G26.03.10.7 Members also noted that there was a need for a wider discussion about AI in learning and teaching and in assessment; for example, how the University could have assessments that were resilient but enabled students to work with AI in the future.

G26.03.10.8 Members recognised that this was an important matter, given that it was University-mandated and outcomes were improved when used. Members requested that an update be brought back to the Board.

ACTION: DVC and Provost

G26.03.10.4 Members confirmed their assurance and **approved** its publication on the University website.

REPORTS

G26.03.11 CLERK'S REPORT

Paper G26/03/08 was received

G26.03.11.1 Members noted the following:

i. Board Assurance Framework – update on areas of business considered through the spring term.
ii. Board Stakeholder Mapping –
    a. Having in place an engagement framework of the institution's stakeholders (globally, nationally and local) was a key feature of the Committee of University Chairs (CUC) Higher Education Code of Governance.
    b. The stakeholder engagement framework described the ways in the Board engaged with or received data and insights for each stakeholder group.
    c. Members raised the potential of including a stakeholder category for social media content creators, influencers, etc. – this was seen as becoming an increasingly important source of understanding the reputation of the institution.

G26.03.12 POST-MEETING FEEDBACK

The Chair encouraged Members to access the online form provided on the Governors Teams site, to reflect on the questions posed in the agenda and give their feedback. A word/email version of the form would be emailed to those Members unable to access this.

ACTION: Clerk/ All Members

G26.03.13 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

G26.03.13.1 <u>Professor Elena Marco, Academic Board Nominee</u>

Members congratulated Elena who would take up the role of Deputy Vice-Chancellor at Kingston University in May. On behalf of the Board, the Chair thanked her for her enormous contribution to the life, management and work of the University, and for the participation, clarity and decisiveness she had brought during her time as a Board Member.

G26.03.13.2 Laura Claydon, Independent Member

The Board's thanks were also conveyed to Laura, whose second term of office had come to an end. Laura's care and meticulous scrutiny of business was hugely appreciated and it was with pleasure that the Board noted that Laura was continuing as a member of the University Ethics and Integrity Committee, at an important stage of its development.

G26.03.14 ITEMS FOR WIDER COMMUNICATION

G26.03.14.1 The Chair invited Members to identify any items of discussion for sharing with the wider University community. Members noted that the key highlights of the Away Day discussions would be captured in the Governance news article.

G26.03.14.2 Members of the University Executive and the Governance Officer left the meeting.

G26.03.15 RESERVED BUSINESS

Paper G26/03/09 was received

This item is recorded as a confidential minute.

ITEMS TO NOTE

***G23.03.16 EMERGENCY COMMITTEE MINUTES**

*Paper *G26/03/10 was received and noted.*

***G23.03.17 NOMINATIONS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES**

*Paper *G26/03/11 was received and noted.*

***G23.03.17 PEOPLE, CULTURE, QUALITY AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE MINUTES**

*Paper *G26/03/12 was received and noted.*

***G23.03.18 FINANCE, ESTATES AND IT COMMITTEE MINUTES**

*Paper * G26/03/13 was received and noted.*

***G23.03.19 AUDIT, RISK AND ASSURANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES**

*Paper *G26/03/14 was received and noted.*

***G23.03.20 FINANCIAL UPDATE AND FORECAST OUTTURN FOR 2025/2026**

*Paper *G26/03/15 was received and noted.*

***G23.03.21 PLANNING AND BUDGETING PROCESS AND TIMELINE FOR 2026/2027**

*Paper *G26/03/16 was received and noted.*

***G23.03.22 HONORARY DEGREES REPORT**

*Paper *G26/03/17 was received and noted.*

***G23.03.23 CORPORATE SEAL**

Members noted that there had been no requirement to apply the Corporate Seal since the last meeting.

***G23.03.24 ACADEMIC BOARD MINUTES, 10 DECEMBER 2025**

*Paper *G26/03/18 was received and noted.*

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

8 July 2026	13:00 – 18:00	Starting with a joint strategic seminar with Academic Board

OUTSTANDING ACTIONS			
Meeting	Minute	Action	Lead
18 March 2026	G26.03.4.3	AI deep-dive seminar for Board Members to be arranged to take place after the Easter break.	Deputy Clerk
18 March 2026	G26.03.5.4	Details of progress in relation to completion of mandatory training to be sent to individual Governors.	Clerk
18 March 2026	G26.03.5.5	Governor attendance to be discussed at the Chair's 1:1 meetings with individual Members. Matter also to be discussed with the Clerk.	Chair
18 March 2026	G26.03.7.2	Outcome of SUMS review to be shared with the Board at its meeting on 8 July 2026.	Director of Transformation and Improvement
18 March 2026	G26.03.8.2	Compassionate communications to students to be discussed by the People and Academic Assurance Committee.	DVC and Provost
18 March 2026	G26.03.8.2	Details of the Board's discussion with regard to the SU President Update to be relayed to the Student Nominee.	Chair/Clerk
18 March 2026	G26.03.8.9	The matter of the student body being fully and appropriately represented to be discussed by the People and Academic Assurance Committee.	DVC and Registrar
18 March 2026	G26.03.10.8	Update on the use of Studiosity to be provided to the Board.	DVC and Provost
18 March 2026	G26.03.12	Word/email version of the online post-meeting feedback form to be shared with Governors.	Clerk