Board of Governors

Minutes of the meeting held on 25 February 2026 in 4Q005 on Frenchay Campus.

ACADEMIC BOARD

Present: Steve West (Chair), Yvonne Beach, Paul Bennett, Amanda Coffey, Wendy Colvin, Olena Doran, Jennifer Dye, Pujan Ghosh, Xenia Giagli, Georgina Gough, John Hancock, Tracey John, Matthew Jones, James Lee, Phil Legg, Elena Marco, Jo Midgley, Cathy Minett-Smith, Lyn Newton, Marcus Pugh, Darren Reynolds, Kos Siliafis, Muhammad Subhan, Nicola Temple, Mario Vafeas, Sarah Voss, Jenni Wilkinson, Asad Zarif Awan

In attendance: Jodie Anstee, Hannah Cavender-Deere (Officer), Rachel Cowie, Chris Gledhill, Katie Jenkins (item 2.1), Mike Ratcliffe (Secretary), David Young (Officer)

Observers: Margaret Simmons-Bird

Apologies: Mahfuza Binte Ali, Jason Briddon, Corinne Funnell, Sarah Grabham, Marc Griffiths, Khadiza Hossain, Vlasios Sarantinos

AB.26.02.1	**WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**
AB.26.02.1.1	The Chair welcomed members, including the observing member of the Board of Governors. Apologies were recorded in the normal way.
AB.26.02.1.2	No declarations of interest were received either in writing or verbally at the meeting.
AB.26.02.2	**DEEP DIVE/WORKSHOP**
AB.26.02.2.1	**Market Insight: Trends, risks and opportunities** Presentation.

AB.26.02.2.1.1	The Director of Student Recruitment and Marketing gave a detailed future-focused market insight presentation on risks and opportunities in relation to student numbers and UWE's academic portfolio.
AB.26.02.2.1.2	It was noted that the currently dynamic recruitment market is highly challenging, with the recruitment situation now tougher after several years in which UWE has outperformed its competitors. However, the situation is being carefully tracked by the recruitment and marketing team, and opportunities exist for our institution to be, not just resilient, but bold, distinctive and agile.
AB.26.02.2.1.3	Breakout groups resulted in conversations about how we can respond to market challenges and opportunities.
AB.26.02.2.1.4	In the plenary discussion, members raised the following topics: the distinctiveness of UWE delivery, the value of UWE having an identity as an 'applied university', the need for modernised practices and infrastructure, the balance between specific teaching facility expansion to improve the student experience (e.g. Q Block), the importance of collaborative engagement with stakeholders, the importance of CPD, the dual focus on degree apprenticeships and traditional degrees so both can grow in parallel, and the possibility of offering guaranteed offers for local students.
AB.26.02.2.1.5	The Chair summarised the complexity of the issues. There is a need to secure finances against our ambition, to identify markets where we can expand at scale, to make difficult decisions about consolidation and contraction to ensure we can develop in the right areas, to be aware that in the current funding environment we will need to cross-subsidise to achieve a balanced portfolio, and to maintain long term thinking (not just over the next 5 years but the next 10 to 20 years).
AB.26.02.2.1.6	Detailed member comments to be fed back directly to the DVCs and the Director of Student Recruitment and Marketing. The insight from Academic Board to contribute to further discussions, including on the master-planning process, at the March Board of Governors meeting.
AB.26.02.3	**MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**
AB.26.02.3.1	**Previous minutes** Paper AB.26.02.01 was received.
AB.26.02.3.1.1	Members approved the minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2025.
AB.26.02.3.2	**Action sheet and matters arising**

	Paper AB.26.02.02 was received.
  AB.26.02.3.2.1 AB.26.02.3.2.2 AB.26.02.3.2.3 AB.26.02.3.2.4 AB.26.02.3.2.5	The following updates were noted on the action sheet: AB.25.12.3.1.5 Sub-committee terms of reference and business plans - DVC-Registrar and Chair of UEIC to further review the terms of reference and membership regarding the ethical framework for partnership decision-making. UPDATE: This action was noted as still in progress AB.25.07.5.1.2 - Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers – action plan UPDATE: The full annual report will initially be considered by RKEC and then escalated to Academic Board in the autumn of 2026. Action in progress. AB.25.07.5.2.3 - Evaluation of UWE's resilience from a student completion perspective in the event of a cyber-attack. UPDATE: The Chair reported that, because at this point Academic Board is not yet fully assured, the UWE executive now needs to engage with this issue through a desktop exercise. The Deputy Registrar added that some assurance from Educational Services on business contingency on the student records system should soon be available. Action ongoing. AB.25.07.5.6.3 - External Speaker Policy UPDATE: The Chief of Staff and Clerk to the Board of Governors reported that amendments are being made to the guidance and will be approved via Chair's action once ready. Action in process. No matters arising were noted.
AB.26.02.3.3	***Chair's actions** Paper AB.26.02.03 was received.
AB.26.02.3.3.1	Members noted the following items approved under Chair's action since the last meeting: 1) Awarding of the title of Emerita Professor to Candy McCabe. 2) The addition of Prof Marc Griffiths to the Honorary Degrees Committee on 18 December 2025, by virtue of his new role as PVC for Regional Partnerships, Engagement and Innovation. 3) Approval of the renewal of UWE's academic partnership with the City School of Architecture (CSA), Sri Lanka.

AB.26.02.4	STANDING AGENDA ITEMS
AB.26.02.4.1	**Vice-Chancellor's report** Paper AB.26.02.04 was received.
AB.26.02.4.1.1 AB.26.02.4.1.2	Members noted the VC's report covering issues relevant to the University and the wider sector. Updates were received on the annual academic risk deep dives, the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School teach-out period, the external EDI Advisory Group, the business of the Board of Governors' February meeting, and the latest on the CUC HE Code of Governance review (with a gap analysis to be conducted by Governance and Legal Services once the revised code is published in the summer).
AB.26.02.4.2	**The Students' Union report** Paper AB.26.02.05 was received.
AB.26.02.4.2.1	The SU President introduced the report, with the following being highlighted: 1) Progress continuing in student representation and academic engagement, with 1,081 programme reps now recruited (93% of whom have been trained). 2) Positive feedback from the Student Rep Conference, with 120 reps in attendance. 3) A well-engaged Careers Fair, with 31 stalls and 320 students in attendance. 4) Updates on a successful Diversity Week and other Liberation Campaigns (Trans Awareness Week, Disability History Month, LGBTQ+ History Month). 5) An update on the SU's relocation within the Glenside site. 6) With the Renters' Rights Act coming into force on 1 May 2026, the announcement of a comms strategy and partnership Task and Finish Group with UWE and Bristol SU. 7) A call for staff to support the forthcoming SU elections.
AB.26.02.4.3	**Thematic sub-committee business reports** Papers AB.26.02.06-09 were received.
AB.26.02.4.3.1 AB.26.02.4.3.2	Members were updated on the business considered and the decisions and recommendations taken by the thematic sub-committees of Academic Board. The Chair of LTSEC noted that, at the meeting on 3 February 2026, members discussed, as a holistic item, TEF, APP and Non-

	Continuation data (see agenda item 5.1 below). They were also assured by the first year's data of the UG degree algorithm, received a summary of 2024-25 assessment offences data, and supported the direction of travel of the proposed Starting Block refresh.
AB.26.02.4.3.3	The Chair of RKEC noted that, at the meeting of 29 January 2026, the Committee deep dived on the research funding landscape and the alignment with current portfolio. It was assured on REF preparations, including on engagement levels of the recent Code of Practice consultation, with further assurances provided on Risk and Open Research.
AB.26.02.4.3.4	The Chair of SAPG noted that, at the meeting of 17 February 2026, members received an external environment scan, feedback from the Regional Partnerships Advisory Group, and an update on home and international recruitment. There was also a future-focused gap analysis regarding national and regional strategies and priorities (see item 2.1 above). Finally, the Group looked at a number of new academic partnerships and one exit.
AB.26.02.4.3.5	The Chair of UEIC noted that, at the meeting of 11 February 2026, the Committee scrutinised the Advanced Manufacturing, Security and Defence statement (see item 7.2 below), debated a Freedom of Speech case study, received assurance on Colleges taking forward the Student Ethics System, noted final work still to do on the Breach of Research Integrity Procedure, approved guidance on the use of research incentives, noted the UWE Risk Framework, and were assured on the activities of its Sub-Committees, including the rollout to all Schools of the Human Tissue audit.
AB.26.02.4.3.6	Based on the above reports, Academic Board was assured that University activity delegated to its thematic committees was being appropriately scrutinised and/or progressed.
AB.26.02.5	**ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**
AB.26.02.5.1	**Student Experience and Outcomes Indicators** Paper AB.26.02.10 was received.

AB.26.02.5.1.1 AB.26.02.5.1.2 AB.26.02.5.1.3 AB.26.02.5.1.4	The Secretary introduced an update on internal and external datasets recently discussed at LTSEC. In the context of the Office for Students integrating quality oversight, members of Academic Board were informed that the current paper brings together University updates on the proposed changes to the Teaching Excellence Framework (including a recalibrated "bronze" level), the Access and Participation Plan, and latest internal data on student non-continuation. Its purpose is to highlight the strategic importance of reflecting on and improving standards of learning and teaching. A key part of such reflection and improvement is flagging gaps and inconsistencies between the student groups. Where possible, analysis should be done based on data that demonstrates current and recent impacts. As well as being prompt, such analysis will also need to be well co-ordinated. LTSEC has a crucial role in the assurance it can provide to Academic Board. Presenting this data upwards to Board of Governors is also an important consideration. The Chair and members agreed that this is a significant element of University business, and UWE needs to be proactive and bold, focusing on evidencing sustained and consistent performance above benchmark to ensure an outstanding TEF ranking.
AB.26.02.5.2	**Update on Training and Development for Academic Board members** Paper AB.26.02.11 was received.
AB.26.02.5.2.1 AB.26.02.5.2.2 AB.26.02.5.2.3	The Secretary introduced a revised report to update on progress made in training and development for Academic Board members, noting the aggregated completion rates of essential and recommended modules for members. It was noted that further progress has been made on completion of the Anti-Racism Module 2, with more than half of members having also now completed the Freedom of Speech module. Members were encouraged to ensure completion of all mandated training. Because there is a potential for glitches in the general data report, members were additionally encouraged to check their own completion record.
AB.26.02.6	**ITEMS FOR ASSURANCE**
AB.26.02.6.1	**Academic Performance and Risk report (Academic Assurance)**

	Paper AB.26.02.13 was received.
AB.26.02.6.1.1 AB.26.02.6.1.2 AB.26.02.6.1.3	The DVC-Provost introduced an update drawing together the University's academic-related KPI targets and recently streamlined approach to the management of strategic and tactical academic risks. In the corporate scorecard updates, it was noted that improvement can be evidenced in the non-continuation data, with slight improvement noticeable in the Black/White awarding gap. The suggestion was made that, in the Student Outcomes risk descriptor, "failure to make progress with the Black/White awarding gap in the School of Health and Social Wellbeing" could be made less ambiguous by re-wording it as "sufficient progress not made."
AB.26.02.7	**ITEMS FOR APPROVAL OR ENDORSEMENT**
AB.26.02.7.1	**Revised Scheme of Delegated Authority** Paper AB.26.02.14 was received.
AB.26.02.7.1.1 AB.26.02.7.1.2 AB.26.02.7.1.3	The Chief of Staff and Clerk to the Board of Governors introduced a draft of a new Scheme of Delegation for UWE's governance structure which presents the composite duties and responsibilities of the Board of Governors and Academic Board. The draft was positively received from a technical standpoint, but the following comments were made by members (including the nominated readers): 1) Clarity on how the Scheme will be reviewed annually should be made within the document itself. 2) The University's Anti-Racism Strategy should be a more visible presence within the document. 3) Indirectly related to the document, there should be scope for a committee with responsibility for anti-racism potentially sitting alongside EDI (which is currently assigned to the People Executive Committee). Pending the above changes, plus final formatting adjustments, the Scheme of Delegation will be endorsed to Board of Governors for approval [**Action:** Chief of Staff and Clerk to Board of Governors].
AB.26.02.7.2	**Advanced Manufacturing, Security and Defence** Paper AB.26.02.15 was received.
AB.26.02.7.2.1	The PVC-Research and Knowledge Exchange introduced a draft statement setting out the University's position in ongoing work with the defence sector.

AB.26.02.7.2.2	It was noted that robust discussions on the draft statement have already taken place at UEIC, incorporating student feedback from the Student Rep Conference.
AB.26.02.7.2.3	The following further comments were made: 1) UWE has always worked with the defence industry. With an MOD site next door and other interests in the region, how does UWE engage and progress in this competitive and varied area? 2) A robust defence skills pipeline is a stated top-tier government priority. Many universities are already working on progression, training, and Level 4-6 skills. 3) There is a need to be strongly transparent while remaining legal and compliant. 4) Such a positional statement does not necessarily need to align with the personal views of UWE students and staff. 5) Students and staff will be able to publicly access information on current collaborations. 6) The University issuing such a statement helps it position itself at the forefront of challenging conversations, allowing it to proactively inform the direction of travel. 7) Having this statement is a prerequisite for UWE's proposed membership of the Defence Universities Alliance (DUA).
AB.26.02.7.2.4	It was noted by members that, for a global industry, there is a domestic (UK-based) tone to one specific section of the wording. Although done to allay student concerns on UK legal oversight, a possible amendment should be made here when escalated to Board of Governors [**Action:** Chief of Staff and Clerk to Board of Governors].
AB.26.02.7.2.5	The draft statement was endorsed to Board of Governors for its consideration and approval.
AB.26.02.7.3	**Reimagining Representation Project Outcome Report** Paper AB.26.02.16 was received.
AB.26.02.7.3.1	The DVC-Registrar introduced the final report on the recently completed two-year representation project, conducted in partnership with the Students' Union.
AB.26.02.7.3.2	Members were assured by the positive outcomes highlighted by the report – the enhanced clarity, consistency, and overall effectiveness of student representation now being demonstrated across UWE – as well as the next steps to be taken.

AB.26.02.7.3.3	Report endorsed to Board of Governors for their information.
AB.26.02.7.4	**Academic Committee Calendar, 2026-27** Paper AB.26.02.17 was received.
AB.26.02.7.4.1	Members approved the academic committee calendar for 2026/27.
AB.26.02.7.5	**Honorary Degree Committee Terms of Reference** Paper AB.26.02.18 was received.
AB.26.02.7.5.1	Members approved minor revisions to the HDC's Terms of Reference.
AB.26.02.7.6	**Addition to the Regulations for a new 90 credit iPGCE award** Paper AB.26.02.21 was received.
AB.26.02.7.6.1	Following UQSSC endorsement, Academic Board approved an IPGCE at a new credit size. Members noted that there was a precedent in the Academic Regulations for variation of total credit for the same award title, and no red flags were observed.
AB.26.02.8	**ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**
AB.26.02.8.1	**Honorary Degree Committee – update on 2025 activity** Paper AB.26.02.19 was received.
AB.26.02.8.1.1 AB.26.02.8.1.2	The Chair of HDC introduced a summary of the activity of the Committee in 2025. It was noted that a total of 15 new nominations were considered at the annual meeting of the Committee held on 15 January 2025 (of these, 11 were conferred in 2025).
AB.26.02.8.2	**Expressions of interest: Academic Board (elected) nominee to the Board of Governors** Paper AB.26.02.20 was received.
AB.26.02.8.2.1 AB.26.02.8.2.2 AB.26.02.8.2.3	The Head of Governance introduced an outline of the process for filling a vacancy for an Academic Board (elected) member of the Board of Governors. Expressions of interest will be invited from elected members of Academic Board with the term of office running to Summer 2028. Nominations will be reviewed and then considered through Academic Board, the Nominations and Governance Committee of the Board of Governors and the Board of Governors.
AB.26.02.9	**ITEMS FOR COMMUNICATION**

AB.26.02.9.1	No items were suggested for wider circulation at this time.
AB.26.02.10	**ANY OTHER BUSINESS**
AB.26.02.10.1	At this, her final Academic Board, the Chair thanked Professor Elena Marco for her great leadership and significant contribution to the University.
AB.26.02.11	**DATE(S) OF NEXT MEETING(S)**
AB.26.02.11.1	Next meeting dates for 2025/26: • 13 May 2026 • 1 July 2026 • 8 July 2026 (joint workshop with Board of Governors)