



Board of Governors

Minutes of the blended meeting held on 25th February 2025

EE1012, Edward Elgar, St John's Campus

24/41 Attendance

41.1 Present

Mrs S Speck	Independent Governor, Chair
Mr E Atkinson	Student Governor
Mrs L Barber	Staff Governor
Dr D Beech (v)	Independent Governor
Mr S Devlin	Independent Governor
Professor D Green CBE	Vice Chancellor & Chief Executive
Mr M Hardy	Independent Governor
Dr C Jones	Independent Governor
Mr N Khan	Independent Governor
Mr J Lambert	Student Governor
Ms R Mane	Student Governor
Ms C Moir (v)	Staff Governor
Mrs S Morgan	Independent Governor
Mr A Noorani (v)	Independent Governor
Mr D Pocha (v)	Independent Governor
Mr M Scriven	Staff Governor

41.2 In Attendance

Mr R Bonham	Pro Vice Chancellor Finance & Resources
Mrs J Britton	Pro Vice Chancellor Communications & External Affairs
Mrs A Cope	Director of Human Resources
Ms H Johnstone	University Secretary and Clerk to the Board
Professor S Moyle	Pro Vice Chancellor Health & Science
Ms A Jordan	Provost
Mrs J Newland	Assistant Clerk to the Board
Professor L Stansbie	Pro Vice Chancellor Education, Culture & Society

41.3 Apologies

Mr R Richards	Independent Governor
Mr K Sorrell	Independent Governor
Ms L Taylor	Independent Governor

V – attended virtually

24/42 Declarations of Interests

42.1 There were no declarations of interest.

24/43 Minutes

43.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 21st November 2024 [BG24/39] were confirmed as an accurate record of the meeting.

43.2 Matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda

43.2.1 Rathbones investment portfolio [minute 35.3.2]: The PVC Finance & Resources confirmed the number of signatories for the portfolio had been confirmed.

24/44 Chair's Business

44.1 Feedback from the Board/UEB Development Session 8th February 2025

44.1.1 The Chair commented on the value and success of the recent Board/UEB development session on the new Strategic Plan. The PVC Communications and External Affairs updated the Board on the next stages in the development of the new Plan.

24/45 Academic Governance

45.1 Report from Academic Board [BG24/46]

45.1.1 The Board received the report of the Academic Board meeting of 29th January 2025. The Provost highlighted points including the successful outcome of the recent GMC visit to the Medical School, submission of the University's response to the OfS strategy consultation, updates on the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2029 and the Graduate Destinations Report 2024. A member commented on media reports of a possible change to the Graduate route and the possible impact.

45.1.2 It was noted Academic Board approved a proposal to remove progress week from Semester 2 in academic year 2025/26 and to extend the Easter break from 2 to 3 weeks. Members confirmed that there would be communication to students around the change.

45.1.3 The Board noted the report.

45.2 Annual Report on Academic Quality & Standards 2023/24 [BG24/47]

45.2.1 The Provost presented the annual report on Academic Quality & Standards 2023/24 that provides an overview of the academic health of University taught courses and research degree programmes, and enables Academic Board and the Board of Governors to fulfil their responsibilities for academic governance and specifically in relation to the University continuing to meet the OfS minimum conditions for quality and standards.

45.2.2 The Provost highlighted key points in the report including those on OfS student outcome measures, internal statistical indicators, conclusions of the external examiner reports, annual evaluation, partnerships and apprenticeships. During 2023-24 there were improvements in some key areas of student experience, a continued focus on the OfS B3 student outcome indicators with student retention continuing to be a central focus, and considerable work to better understand the impact of Generative AI. [NOT FOR PUBLICATION] There had been some difficulties with monitoring the B3 student outcome measures due to changes in when data was available.

45.2.3 The Board noted the conclusion that the University can be very pleased with its achievements in relation to external quality assessments over 2023/24 and that improvements had been observed in relation to student experience and outcomes.

45.2.4 The Board approved the Annual Report on Academic Quality and Standards 2023/24.

45.3 Degree Outcomes Statement [BG24/48]

45.3.1 The Provost presented the updated annual Degree Outcomes Statement that includes an update on analysis of data on degree classification profiles. The Board noted the University continues to maintain strong oversight of the proportions of classifications awarded to students both at subject and University level and the University does not have high levels of 'unexplained' increases in proportions of first and upper second-class honours. The Statement has been approved by Academic Board.

45.3.2 A member queried the attainment gap of students who enter with BTEC qualifications and noted this is closely monitored.

45.3.3 The Board approved the University's updated Degree Outcomes Statement for publication.

24/46 Vice Chancellor's Report [BG24/40] *Confidential*

The Vice Chancellor presented his report and highlighted the following points:

46.1 The University's Provost has been shortlisted in the Purpose Coalition's Breaking Down Barriers Awards 2025, in the category of Successful School Years.

46.2 The University is best 'general' institution in the UK for the employment of graduates on a sustained long-term basis, following analysis of 8 years of the official Longitudinal Education Outcome data. The Board received an update on applications figures and on the recent offer holder day. Good progress is continuing in work with FE Colleges and on the Black Country Health Partnership.

46.3 The Vice Chancellor referenced a recent media article on the average amount of student loans repaid by graduates, noting there were shortcomings in how the data was used.

46.4 *[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]*

46.5 *[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]*

46.6 The Board noted initiatives to alleviate student hardship and that the main emphasis of the first phase of the Foundation Anniversaries Campaign is to raise funds to support student welfare and scholarships. Events include the annual University Charity Challenge and the Vice Chancellor undertaking the 280km Compostela Challenge.

46.7 The Board received the Vice Chancellor's report.

24/47 The National HE Context

47.1 Dr Diana Beech gave a presentation on the major issues facing Higher Education in England, focusing on the sector's financial sustainability and the new government's missions and thinking on the HE sector.

47.2 The Board thanked Dr Beech and discussed risks and opportunities. Members discussed the reduction in funding for the Arts and Humanities and noted the change in narrative around the

creative sector from the new government, the value of the Arts and Humanities and how universities can champion those values.

24/48 Health Innovation Dudley [BG24/41]

48.1 The Board received the Health Innovation Dudley business case, presented by the PVC Health & Science, member of the Dudley Project Steering Group, noting it been considered by the Finance & Development Committee and UEB. The business case provided the background and financial information on the proposed partnership and legal agreements with Dudley College of Technology for teaching of Higher Education students in the new Health Innovation Dudley Centre (HID). The Board noted the update on the expected completion of the building. *[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]* The Board noted the financial model, the financial risk analysis and that the project risk register was reviewed regularly by the Project Steering Group.

48.2 *[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]*

48.3 The Board approved the University proceeding to enter into the required agreements with Dudley College and DMBC, with the caveat that Barclays Bank need to give approval.

24/49 Report of Finance & Development and People & Culture Committees

49.1 Finance & Development Committee report [BG24/42]

49.1.1 The Board received the report of the Finance & Development Committee meeting held on 4th February 2025 that considered among others the Health Innovation Dudley business case, proposals for a Defined Contribution Pension Scheme and the Period 5 finance update. The Board noted the Period 6 finance update, which was currently being finalised, was very similar to the Period 5 report.

49.1.2 *[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]*

49.1.3 The Board received the report.

49.2 People & Culture Committee report [BG24/43]

49.2.1 The Board received the report of the People & Culture Committee meeting of 13th February 2025. The Committee Chair highlighted the Committee approved the Annual Report for the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers that demonstrates the University's engagement with the Researcher Development Concordat is having positive impacts for its researchers and enhancing the University's wider research culture. The Committee commended the report to the Board.

49.2.2 The Committee also discussed the proposals for a Defined Contribution Pension Scheme and received the Gender Pay Gap Data Report for 2024 and the annual EDI report 2023-24 (the latter being transmitted to the Board with the Committee's report).

49.2.3 The Board noted the report.

24/50 Progress update on Uniworc Ltd and proposals for a DC pension scheme [BG24/44]

50.1 *[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]*

24/51 Students' Union Business

51.1 Students' Union Report [BG24/45]

- 51.1.1 The Students' Union officers presented their update on recent activities and progress on their officer objectives. The Help and Advice Service has seen a 66% increase in cases opened compared to the same period last year and the service has introduced 'Flexible Fridays' drop-in appointments and launched a new Housing Guide. While sports club and society memberships declined slightly, engagement events have aimed to boost participation. Financial support initiatives, including the Community Cupboard, Kitchen Korner, and Breakfast with the SU, have benefited students facing cost-of-living challenges. Student representation remains strong, with productive Rep Forums, a successful Student Voice Conference, and leadership elections that had gone very well. Networks have led impactful campaigns such as Race Equality and Women's Week, while EDI efforts continue to improve accessibility and cultural celebrations. Sustainability initiatives have progressed, addressing waste reduction, travel guidance, and student-led environmental engagement.
- 51.1.2 The officers added that despite challenging resource issues, they remain dedicated to delivering services and support. The Board congratulated the officers on the range of activities. Commenting on the increase in the cases opened by the Help and Advice Service, members asked if the officers needed any further support.
- 51.1.3 The Board noted the report.

24/52 Report of Audit and Nominations & Governance Committees

52.1 Report of Audit Committee meeting [BG24/49]

- 52.1.1 The Chair of the Committee presented the report of the Committee meeting held on 28th January 2025 and noted the Committee received the annual TRAC (Transparent Approach to Costing) return and the 2023/24 Value for Money report that was transmitted to the Board for information. The Committee received internal audit reports on Cyber Security and on Data Protection.
- 51.1.2 As recommended by the Committee, the Board approved the update to the Risk Management policy, to reflect the previously approved changes to the format of the Risk Register template.

52.1.3 The Board received the report.

52.2 Report of Nominations & Governance Committee meetings [BG24/50]

- 52.2.1 The Board received the report of the Nominations & Governance Committee meetings of 4th December 2024 and 11th February 2025 and noted updates on the governor recruitment campaign in light of current and future vacancies on the Board. The Committee received the annual report on the Board's equality and diversity.
- 52.2.2 The Board approved the appointment of Sean Devlin as Chair of the People & Culture Committee from 1st August 2025, as recommended by the Committee.
- 52.2.3 The Board approved amendments to Bye-Law 1, to bring consistency to the meeting quoracy for Committees, and to reflect the wording of the University Articles in relation to Board meeting quoracy.
- 52.2.4 The Board noted the report.

24/53 OfS Matters [BG24/51]

- 53.1 The Board received for information an update on OfS matters.

24/54 Any Other Business

54.1 *[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]*

24/55 Date of Next Meetings

Board Development Session (Teams)
Board Meeting

25th March 2025
6th May 2025