

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE UNIVERSITY EXECUTIVE BOARD HELD ON TUESDAY 31 MARCH 2026 IN ROOM 109, REGENT STREET AND VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

PRESENT: I Wilmot (Deputy Chair) Professor A Linn
 Professor D Anand (to Minute 25.153) Professor C O'Connor
 Professor C Dormor

IN ATTENDANCE: J Adebajo (Minute 25.157) Dr I Locke (Minute 25.156)
 Dr L Bond A Musani (Minute 25.155)
 D Burt (Minute 25.158) M Wigg (Minute 25.155)
 A Campbell (Minute 25.158) Dr M Yassim
 J Lamarque (Secretary)

APOLOGIES: Professor P Bonfield (Chair) K Patel
 Professor C Kalantaridis

25.152 ANNOUNCEMENTS

25.152.1 **Welcome:** The Deputy Chair welcomed all members and attendees to the meeting. Members noted that Dr Lucy Bond - Head of School, Humanities and Dr Mazia Yassim - Associate Head of College (External Relations) attended on behalf of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and Westminster Business School respectively.

25.152.2 **Apologies:** Members noted apologies as noted above.

25.152.3 **Declaration of interests:** Members did not declare any conflict of interest for the matters on the agenda.

25.152.4 **Requests to discuss starred items and business not on the agenda:** The Deputy Chair confirmed there were no requests to discuss starred items or items of business not on the agenda.

Chair's business

25.152.5 The Deputy Chair updated members on the recent successful Open Day, which was well attended.

25.152.6 Members discussed the recent announcement of new Joint Chief Executives for the Office for Students.

25.153 INTERNAL FIRST RECRUITMENT UPDATE

25.153.1 Professor Dibyesh Anand - Co-Chair, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee presented an update on the internal first recruitment process (Document UEB 260331B).

25.153.2 The Co-Chair, EDI Committee informed members that the process is having a positive impact for recruitment, in particular for women in global majority backgrounds.

25.153.3 Members commented that the process advantages those who are not as mobile in their careers and is a powerful tool.

25.153.4 **AGREED** Members confirmed that the internal first recruitment process should continue.

25.154 STAYING SAFE: BUSINESS CONTINUITY GROUP UPDATE

25.154.1 The University Secretary and Chief Operating Officer/Co-Chair, Staying Safe: Business Continuity Group informed members that the group met two weeks ago, and the focus was on business as usual and the recent incident at New Cavendish Street.

25.154.2 Members discussed the meningitis outbreak in Kent and how the University would manage an outbreak should such an issue arise. Members noted that the Safety, Health and Wellbeing team would provide training for senior colleagues.

25.155 UWSU BLOCK GRANT REQUEST 2026-27 AND STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

25.155.1 Adil Musani - UWSU President and Michael Wigg - UWSU Chief Executive Officer (CEO) presented the UWSU block grant request for 2026-27 and the UWSU strategic development plan (Document UEB 260331A).

25.155.2 The CEO thanked the University for its continued financial support.

25.155.3 Members heard that the partnership is exemplary in the sector and that a recent external audit showed UWSU to be a model of best practice in the sector.

25.155.4 The CEO informed members that UWSU moved into the top quartile in the recent National Student Survey and is one of a few students' unions above benchmark.

25.155.5 Members heard that UWSU was named the Most Inclusive Employer and Students' Union of the Year in the top 100 Inclusive Employers Index and has won numerous UK and international awards recently.

25.155.6 The CEO informed members that UWSU is aware of the challenges the sector is facing and is not asking for a grant increase this year. He explained that UWSU will absorb the costs of peer support and make efficiency savings and assured members that any restructure will not affect student front end delivery.

25.155.7 The UWSU President updated members on the funding priorities for 2026-27.

25.155.8 In response to a members' query on how the balanced score card is produced, the CEO confirmed that it is based on metrics and a series of KPIs that are measured, and the scores are then weighted. Members noted that UWSU is on track to achieve their metrics.

25.155.9 A member commented on the 'academic representation system' priority and the focus on improvement in the next year. The CEO confirmed that UWSU is considering using the call centre to contact representatives to get more insight and be more involved in mid-module evaluations.

25.155.10 **APPROVED** Members confirmed the UWSU block grant of **[Redacted]** for the financial year 2026-27.

25.156 FERMENTATION SUITE PROJECT BUSINESS CASE

25.156.1 Dr Lucy Bond - Head of the School of Humanities and Dr Ian Locke - Assistant Head of the School of Life Sciences presented the business case for the Fermentation Suite project (Document UEB 260331C).

25.156.2 The Assistant Head informed members that the current Fermentation Suite is not fit for purpose, and – despite heavy investment to keep equipment up to date and to current specifications - there are concerns about maintaining compliance within the containment area and wider health and safety considerations.

25.156.3 In response to a members' query, the Assistant Head confirmed that currently the suite is utilised heavily for both teaching and research activities.

- 25.156.4 The Assistant Head informed members that research funding cannot be used for this project as structural requirements require capital input.
- 25.156.5 Members heard that work would be carried out over the summer break to minimise disruption to teaching.
- 25.156.6 **APPROVED** Members confirmed support for the business case and allocated **[Redacted]** to refurbish the Fermentation Suite at New Cavendish Street.

25.157 LIFELONG LEARNING ENTITLEMENT

- 25.157.1 Professor Catherine O'Connor - Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC) for Education and Jessica Adebajo - Deputy Registrar, Quality and Standards presented a proposal for the strategic approach to the Lifelong Learning Entitlement (LLE) (Document UEB 260331D).
- 25.157.2 The DVC (Education) informed members that the University received approval for its expression of interest to deliver LLE; however, the LLE market is unproven.
- 25.157.3 The Deputy Registrar outlined the challenges to systems and operations, and the changes required to deliver LLE and informed members that the University can deliver LLE funded provision at any point after January 2027. The DVC (Education) confirmed that guidance is not yet available.
- 25.157.4 In response to a member's query about whether LLE funded students would join an existing module or register on a separate module, the DVC (Education) confirmed that units must be 30 credits or above, and two 20 credit modules could be put together.
- 25.157.5 Members discussed the implications for current systems and the benefit of preparation for when the right opportunity arises. Members considered that the timescale must be led by the colleagues who are going to undertake the work and understand the implications.
- 25.157.6 The DVC (Education) confirmed that she will ask the Head of the School of Computer Science and Engineering to do more work on the proposal as part of the scoping exercise to enable further decisions to be made and noted that there will be a need for project management support.
- 25.157.7 The Deputy Registrar confirmed that carrying out the scoping work will be a useful exercise even if the University decides not to proceed.
- 25.157.8 **AGREED** Colleagues to carry out further work to scope the two pilots suggested for modular provision in anticipation of the module LLE funding.
- 25.157.9 **AGREED** The University will maintain the current programme-based model and the associated approach to develop short course and professional qualification professions, while monitoring policy developments and sector demand for LLE modular provision.

25.158 DEGREE ALGORITHM PROPOSAL

- 25.158.1 The DVC (Education), David Burt - Academic Registrar and Adam Campbell - Head of Business Intelligence (BI) and Insight presented a proposal to explore options relating to degree algorithms.
- 25.158.2 Colleagues outlined work taking place in response to a request from the Office for Students (OfS) to all providers to confirm by 31 July 2026 if they intend to continue discounting credits or using dual algorithms in their degree classifications.
- 25.158.3 Members heard that colleagues have engaged with the work of sector mission groups around this request and will submit a paper outlining potential options to UEB and Academic Council. Members noted that this work includes data modelling and an overview of the University's position in relation to the OfS degree algorithms report published in November 2025.

25.159 STUDENT CONTINUATION UPDATE

- 25.159.1 The DVC (Education) informed members that the University is experiencing patterns of lower attendance and lower pass rates than last academic year. Members noted that the Executive Director, Performance Improvement and Innovation is working with the Heads of Schools to check resit arrangements and to consider transition and related activities for next academic year.
- 25.159.2 The DVC (Education) reported that she is working with the Director of Student and Academic Services to work with risk groups in a more targeted way and to put in additional assessment support for this academic year. The DVC (Education) assured members that colleagues will address modules with very low pass rates.
- 25.159.3 Members discussed the drop in tariffs, targeted support, using AI technology and maths support.

25.160 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING, ACTIONS AND MATTERS ARISING

- 25.160.1 **APPROVED** Members confirmed that the minutes of the meeting held on 17 March 2026 (Document UEB 260331E) are an accurate record.
- 25.160.2 Members noted an update on actions and matters arising from previous meetings (Document UEB 260331F).

25.161 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 25.161.1 Members did not raise any other items of business.

25.162 POLICY ON RESEARCH SABBATICALS

- 25.162.1 **APPROVED** Policy on Research Sabbaticals (Document UEB 260331G) to be implemented with immediate effect.

25.163 POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH FEES

- 25.163.1 **AGREED** Members recommend the proposed postgraduate research fees (Document UEB 260331H) to Resources Committee.

25.164 UPDATE ON APPRENTICESHIP PROVISION

- 25.164.1 Members received the update on apprenticeship provision (Document UEB 260331I).

25.165 POST-EVALUATION REPORT – NURSING SIMULATION SUITE

- 25.165.1 Members received the post-evaluation report for the Nursing Simulation Suite (Document 260331J).

25.166 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS PACK – FEBRUARY 2026

- 25.166.1 Members received the Management Accounts for February 2026 (Document UEB 260331K).

25.167 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**2025-26**

21 April 2026
12 May 2026
26 May 2026
9 June 2026
23 June 2026

6 July 2026 – UEB dinner
7 July 2026 UEB away day
28 July 2026
11 August 2026

2026-27

1 September 2026	2 March 2027 – UEB away day
21 September 2026 – UEB dinner	9 March 2027
22 September 2026 – UEB away day	23 March 2027
6 October 2026	20 April 2027
27 October 2026	11 May 2027
11 November 2026	25 May 2027
24 November 2026	8 June 2027
15 December 2026	22 June 2027
12 January 2027	5 July 2027 – UEB dinner
26 January 2027	6 July 2027 – UEB away day
9 February 2027	27 July 2027
23 February 2027	10 August 2027
1 March 2027 – UEB dinner	

Regular meetings are 10.30am to 12.30pm (unless alternative time stated above) in Room RS109, Regent Street and via Microsoft Teams.