

Board of Governors

TIME /DATE / VENUE	1130, 29 January 2026, Room 4.18, St Andrew's Court Board Room
PRESENT	<p>Professor Sandy Pepper (Chair) David Madoc-Jones Madeline Denmead (to Min 51) Dr Michelle Hale Dr Marius Kwint (to Min 51) Verity Knight Harriet Parr (via videoconference) Stacey Parrinder-Johnson Sukkanya Siva Mark Readman (via videoconference) (to Min 49) Alan Lees (via videoconference) Justin Fanstone Bahram Bekhradnia (to Min 51) Helen Astle Penny Emerit (via videoconference)</p>
IN ATTENDANCE	<p>Professor Sherria Hoskins, Provost Fiona Hnatow, Chief People Officer (to Min 51) Chris Chang, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Global Engagement and Student Life) Professor Vikas Kumar, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research, Innovation and External Relations) Professor Anne Murphy, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) Mary White, Chief Financial Officer Nigel Williams, Pro Vice-Chancellor Research and Innovation (Min 47 only) David Bacon, Director of the Institute of Cosmology and Gravitation (Min 47 only) Nikki Fairchild, Associate Professor in Creative Methodologies and Education (Min 47 only) Wayne Bowen, Deputy Chief People Officer (Min 48 only) Raj Jethwa, Chief Executive, University and Colleges Employers Association (via videoconference) (part Min 48 only) Eric Baumgartner, Executive Dean for the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (observer) Tahir Ahmed, Director of Estates and Campus Services (Min 51 only)</p>
SECRETARIAT	<p>Paul Mould, Executive Director of Corporate Governance Jacqui Bryden, Senior Governance Officer Julie Reynolds, Executive Assistant to Paul Mould</p>

Some agenda items were taken out of order to facilitate timing and the availability of members and guests.

42. Introductions, Apologies, Quoracy and Conflicts of Interest

- i. The Chair welcomed the Board to the meeting.
- ii. Apologies were received from Professor Graham Galbraith, who was represented at the meeting by the Provost.
- iii. The Executive Director of Corporate Governance confirmed that the meeting was quorate and could proceed to business.
- iv. There were no declarations of interest.

43. Approval of the Agenda

The Board confirmed acceptance, and where necessary approval, of the unanimous consent agenda items. One item on the unanimous consent agenda had been raised in advance by an external governor, who agreed to take this matter off-line with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education).

44. Matters Arising

Paul Mould, Executive Director of Corporate Governance noted:

- i. There were five actions on the Action Log. All actions were green indicating that the actions were on-track or completed.
- ii. The summary of the November 2025 Board pulse surveys was noted.
- iii. There were no other matters arising.

45. Report from the Chair – confidential

46. Report from the Vice-Chancellor - confidential

47. Deep Dive Discussion: Research and Innovation

Vikas Kumar, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research, Innovation and External Relations and Nigel Williams, Pro Vice-Chancellor Research and Innovation accompanied by David Bacon, Director of the Institute of Cosmology and Gravitation, and Nikki Fairchild, Associate Professor in Creative Methodologies and Education presented a deep dive discussion about the Research Strategy action plan. The key points noted were:

- i. The strategic objectives were approved in December 2024: strengthening research culture; expanding world-leading research; forging strategic partnerships; and tackling economic, environmental and societal challenges. It
- ii. Research and innovation activities were very important to the University underpinned by the Governments' new Industrial Strategy. Such activity created high value jobs and long-term funding and investment opportunities. Total research funding since 2015 was £150m. The University was on a journey of development and there had been five distinctive areas of research themes.



- iii. The REF (Research Excellence Framework) was scheduled for 2029 and the University submission and ranking in the framework would be a source of future Quality Related (QR) funding opportunities. The framework included five key performance indicators (KPIs) linked to the University's strategic objectives. Stretch targets had been allocated to the KPIs and considerable progress had been made in the volume of publications and the number of quotes citations from University researchers.
- iv. The Research Strategy action plan identified four missions which were aligned to the Industrial Strategy and gave the University a distinctive focus through the establishment of specialist research centres. The missions had been mapped to courses to provide students with innovative research opportunities and encourage research as a career.
- v. The timeline for the implementation of the action plan was two years with consultation and mobilisation in the first year for delivery in 2027. Research activities and projects had a significant impact on education and learning and contributed to the student experience positively. Innovation and engagement activities delivered by the Institute of Cosmology and Gravitation were presented as examples of research excellence.
- vi. The University risks that impacted research and innovation had been identified at both operational and corporate level and research governance would improve research risk to reduce the exposure of the University to significant financial, reputational, and security liabilities.
- vii. In discussion, it was noted that:
 - a) The target given for the KPI on REF research power was lower than expected because it was based on submittable research and the number of submissions could not increase at the same rate although the quality could be improved. A quality assessment indicated that 600 submissions was optimal.
 - b) It was important to protect the intellectual property (IP) created by research activities. The University supported early career researchers and encouraged a culture of community and retention in a supportive environment. A team to manage IP would be developed to enable the University to commercialise research into spin-out companies for real world applications where possible.
 - c) Developing research and innovation in a constrained financial environment was potentially challenging and it was important to have a bold strategy to develop growth, partnerships, income generation activities and civic undertakings, which would facilitate more research opportunities.
 - d) Research and innovation were aligned to education and teaching to ensure balance and mutual benefit. An example was that Physics was a loss-making course but contributed greatly to research activity.
 - e) The potential for research 'deserts' could be created if a research project did not align to the strategic priorities or missions. Future research projects would be considered but the priorities were those of Research England. It was important to create a balance and grow the capability of individuals to deliver quality research and build capacity through mentoring.

viii. Following the deep dive discussion, the Board noted the strategic action plan for research and innovation to 2030.

- 48. People Update - confidential**
- 49. Strategic Overview of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences- confidential**
- 50. Finance and Infrastructure Committee Chairs Report – confidential**
- 51. Technology Building Update - confidential**
- 52. Connected Curriculum: Progress and Risk Analysis - confidential**
- 53. Student Recruitment Update – confidential**
- 54. Unanimous Consent Agenda**

Approved

- a) Minutes of the previous Board meeting held on 26 November 2025
- b) External Auditor Appointment
- c) Statement of Primary Responsibilities Comparison with Board Business 2025
- d) Report of the Chair of Academic Council

Noted

- e) Undergraduate Degree Outcomes Statement 2024/25

A query about the awarding gap would be addressed outside of the meeting and an update would be provided on the Board agenda in July.

55. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Board of Governors would take place on:

- Tuesday 31 March 2026 from 1130 to 1630

The confirmed meeting dates for 2026/2027:

- Wednesday 1 July 2026 from 1130 to 1630
- Wednesday, 7 October 2026
- Tuesday, 24 November 2026
- Wednesday, 27 January 2027
- Tuesday, 23 March 2027
- Wednesday, 7 July 2027