PUBLIC

Edge Hill University

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Minutes of the meeting held on 13 July 2026

Present

Mark Wilkinson	Independent member	Chair of the Board
Rhona Morris	Acting Clerk to Governors	
Sequoia Chapman	Independent member	
Ian Cleminson	Independent member	Chair, Finance Committee
Andrew Cooper	Independent member	
Leon Culbertson	Academic Board nominee	
Jenny Foster	Support staff member	
Tim Hudson	Independent member	Chair, Audit & Risk Committee
Kiran Hussain	Student member	
Jo Nettleton	Independent member	
Natalie Palin	Independent member	
Gayle Wells	Independent member	

In Attendance

Kurt Allman	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Business Development & External Engagement)	
Nick Braisby	Interim Vice-Chancellor (incoming)	
Isha Bhkya	Student	For agenda item BG/25/119
Lynn Hill	Chief Operating Officer	Acting Joint Vice-Chancellor
Daniel Morana	Head of Membership Services, Edge Hill Students' Union	
Jane Sutton	Governance Officer	Secretariat (Minutes)
George Talbot	Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research & Knowledge Exchange) and Dean of Arts & Sciences	Acting Joint Vice-Chancellor

Apologies

Claire Blennerhassett	Teaching staff member	
River Fitzgerald	Student member	
Antony Lockley	Independent member	Chair, Remuneration Committee
Helen Stalker	Independent member	

BG.25.118 Declarations of Interest

None.

BG.25.119 Isha Bhukya: Student story

Student Isha Bhukya joined the University in 2022 in its second cohort of Engineering students and as its first female engineering student. Isha has actively pursued enrichment and career enhancing initiatives offered by the University (particularly the Student Opportunity- and Thrive- Funds) and participated in national industry fora, including the UK Space Conference. Governors commended Isha's pursuit of, and positive engagement with, the opportunities available.

[Clerk's note: Isha Bhukya then left the meeting.]

BG.25.120 Chair's Announcements

.01 Membership

- The Chair welcomed new Student member Kiran Hussain and noted that River Fitzgerald has been elected to the Board by her peers and will join meetings from September.

- The Chair informed members that Jenny Foster's role at the University is under review as part of the Business Transformation Programme. He acknowledged the uncertainty this presented and thanked Jenny for her dedication and significant contribution to the Board as its Support Staff member.

- The Chair also noted that it was Lynn Hill and George Talbot's final meeting as Acting Joint Vice-Chancellors. He extended thanks to them on behalf of the Board for the significant work they have undertaken since their appointment. The Chair welcomed Professor Nick Braisby to his first meeting as (incoming) Interim Vice-Chancellor.

.02 [Exempt from publication – confidential]

BG.25.121 Chair's Action

None.

BG.25.122 Minutes of the previous meeting

Received: *Document BG/077/25*

Resolved: The minutes of the meeting held on 18 May 2026 were agreed as an accurate record.

BG.25.123 Action Log

Received: *Document BG/078/25*

Members noted that progress had been made since the last meeting, and that all items had either been actioned or were in progress.

The Action Log was received.

BG.25.124 Matters arising not included elsewhere on the agenda

None.

SECTION A ITEMS

BG.25.125 Vice-Chancellor's Report

Received: *Document BG/079/25*

Reported: The Acting Joint Vice-Chancellors noted the following updates to the report:

- Professor Neil Morris has been appointed Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Success). Neil is currently Interim Director of Digital, Data and Technology, and was previously Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Digital Transformation) at the University of Leeds.

- A serious incident involving a student occurred off campus and the University is supporting the individual and their family. An internal review of the student's journey with the University is being conducted. The Board will receive updates on any significant developments which have a bearing on the University.

Action: Acting Joint Vice-Chancellors / incoming Interim Vice-Chancellor

- The Executive team strategic objectives tracker will be shared with the Board.

Action: Acting Joint Vice-Chancellors

Discussed: In discussion, and in response to Governors' questions, the following information was noted:

.01 Student Record System (SRS)

- Governors acknowledged that responsibility for detailed SRS programme oversight is delegated to the Audit & Risk Committee (ARC). *[Exempt from publication – commercial interests]*

.02 Student recruitment

- The undergraduate recruitment market remains highly competitive. *[Exempt from publication – commercial interests]*

.03 National Student Survey (NSS)

- The Board welcomed the University's strong performance in the student voice, learning resources and assessment & feedback NSS themes. However, Governors expressed concern regarding the University's ranking for Teaching on my Course, which had fallen to 92nd nationally.

- Detailed analysis of the results is underway (including review of approximately 2,800 free-text student comments), to identify the principal influences on student satisfaction and to inform targeted improvements which will be embedded throughout the

student lifecycle. Members noted that as part of its action planning, the University will draw upon successful approaches adopted by high-performing Schools and Departments (Medicine, Nursing, Law & Criminal Justice, Business and Biological Sciences exceeded sector benchmarks) whilst also considering effective practice from other institutions.

- The comprehensive analysis (including longitudinal view) and resulting action plan will be presented to the Board in September.

Action: Deputy Vice-Chancellor (BD&EE)

Agreed: To receive the Vice-Chancellor's Report.

BG.25.126 Student Report

Received: *Document BG/080/25*

Reported: The Student Union (SU) Representative introduced the report, noting that its contents remained contemporary.

Discussed: In response to Governors' questions, the following information was noted:

- Members welcomed the evolution of the Student Report and recognised the value of receiving direct insight into the student experience as part of the Board's assurance arrangements.

- The Board acknowledged that whilst some issues raised by students reflected wider sector challenges, others related to matters within the University's direct control. Members noted that placements form a significant part of many students' academic journeys and have the potential to influence wider student satisfaction and graduate outcomes. The Executive undertook to follow-up on the student feedback regarding the placement process and develop a plan to ensure a consistent, high-quality experience for all.

Action: Acting Joint Vice-Chancellors / Interim Vice-Chancellor

- The Executive advised that work was underway to finalise a refreshed Memorandum of Understanding between the

University and the SU, providing greater clarity regarding respective roles, responsibilities and arrangements for engagement.

Action: COO

Agreed: To receive the Student Report.

BG.25.127 Edge Hill University and its Subsidiaries: Operating Budget 2026/27

Received: *Document BG/081/25*

Reported: The Chief Operating Officer (COO) introduced the item, confirming that there was no new information to add.

The Chair of the Finance Committee reported that the Committee had scrutinised the budget in detail and was recommending approval to the Board.

Discussed: In discussion, and in response to Governors' questions, the following information was noted:

- The Board recognised the challenging operating environment facing the sector and welcomed the cautious approach taken in preparing the 2026/27 budget. Overall, the Board noted that the proposed Budget sought to protect the University's financial sustainability whilst maintaining investment in strategic priorities and the student experience.

- Governors identified an error in the narrative relating to postgraduate recruitment forecasts and requested that the figures be corrected in the final version of the Budget documentation. The Executive confirmed that the underlying financial position was unaffected.

Action: Director of Finance (with the Dean of the Graduate School)

Agreed: To **approve the Operating Budget 2026/27**.

BG.25.128 EHU Governance Structures

Received: *Document BG/082/25*

Reported: The Acting Joint Vice-Chancellors introduced the item, highlighting that the review into the University's academic governance is ongoing and will be presented to the Board for approval in September.

They added that Advance HE has been commissioned to undertake a diagnostic review of the University's wider governance structure to ensure it is robust and optimally positioned to drive the Strategic Plan.

Discussed: In discussion, and in response to Governors' questions, the following points were noted:

- The proposals for Academic governance incorporate the recommendations made in February 2025 by AHEP, who were contracted to assess the effectiveness of the University's academic governance arrangements. A key recommendation was to install wider representation in academic decision making.

- For each committee and sub-committee comprising the revised Executive governance structure, agreed terms of reference (TOR) will ensure cohesion and clear lines of accountability. The Executive undertook to share all TORs once confirmed.

Action: Acting Joint Vice-Chancellors / Interim Vice-Chancellor

- The Advance HE review will include consideration of how risks arising from significant operational matters are escalated through Executive governance before being reported to the Board. This will be complimented by internal work to strengthen risk management mechanisms at operational level. The outcomes will be presented to ARC in due course.

- The incoming Interim Vice-Chancellor will consider whether any gaps exist in the Executive team.

Agreed: To receive the EHU Governance Structures report.

BG.25.129 Protecting the Interests of All Students: Annual Report

Received: *Document BG/083/25*

Reported: The Acting Joint Vice-Chancellor (LH) introduced the Annual Report, noting that the University's arrangements will continue to develop in response to incoming regulatory change.

Discussed: In discussion, the Board concurred that the Annual Report provides substantial assurance regarding the processes that the University has put in place to protect the interests of all students.

Agreed: To receive the Protecting the Interests of All Students Annual Report.

BG.25.130 Access & Participation Plan: Update

Received: *Document BG/084/25*

Reported: The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Business Development & External Engagement) (DVC) introduced the update. He advised that the Access & Participation Plan (APP) had been shaped in response to the OfS' revised regulatory requirements. The APP reflects the University's strategic commitment to widening participation, improving student success and addressing inequalities in access, continuation and outcomes.

Discussed: During discussion and in response to Governors' questions, the following points were noted:

- Members observed the increasing use of student journey data and encouraged the development of more integrated reporting, bringing together information from the APP, student engagement activity (e.g. the Student Report) and student performance data, the National Student Survey and Graduate Outcomes Survey to strengthen oversight of student experience and outcomes. Members noted that the strategic project to deliver centralised management information would support this endeavour and enhance evidence-based decision making.

- The Board recognised the importance of demonstrating the University's "value add" by enabling students not only to succeed academically but also to contribute positively to the economic and social development of their local communities

following graduation. Governors noted that external measures of social mobility continue to demonstrate strong Institutional performance e.g. Edge Hill has been ranked 13th in the English Social Mobility Index, which is compiled by London South Bank University.

- Staff development is being reviewed part of the University's organisational development. The work will consider how training and staff development can more explicitly support the University's strategic priorities for access and participation.

- The Board observed that the University's high proportion of students living in campus accommodation may provide additional opportunities to engage students throughout their studies and to enhance the effectiveness of widening participation initiatives.

Agreed: To receive the Access & Participation Plan update.

BG.25.131 Board Reforms 2026/27

Received: *Document BG/085/25*

Reported: The Acting Clerk introduced the proposed Board reforms for 2026/27 and confirmed that there was no additional information to report.

Discussed: The Board expressed their satisfaction that the proposed reforms would strengthen governance and broaden stakeholder involvement in committee business. In discussion, Members noted the following points:

- The proposals had been developed following extensive consideration by the Governance & Nominations Committee (GNC).

- The recruitment process for the Vice Chair can now commence.

Agreed: To **approve the Board Reforms 2026/27** which comprise:

a. Establishing a People and Remuneration Committee
b. Implementing a two-year pilot scheme to increase Stakeholder Governors' involvement in the Board's Committee structure.
c. A revised role description for Vice Chair of the Board of Governors.

SECTION B ITEMS

BG.25.132 Update from Committee Chairs

Received: *Document BG/086/25*

.01 Finance Committee (8 June 2026)

Reported: The FC Chair provided a summary of the meeting held on 8 June 2026, highlighting that detailed and robust scrutiny of the proposed Operating Budget 2026/27 was the predominant focus of the session and was thus adequately covered by the Board's agenda.

.02 Audit & Risk Committee (15 June 2026)

Reported: The ARC Chair provided a summary of the meeting held on 15 June, highlighting:

[Exempt from publication – confidential]

.03 Governance & Nominations Committee (25 June 2026)

Reported: The GNC Chair provided a summary of the meeting held on 25 June, noting that the focus of the session was the governance reform proposals for 2026/27 (please refer to item BG.25.131).

The GNC also reviewed Independent Governor membership of the Remuneration Committee (RemCo) and discussed initial plans for the Board's strategy and development day, which is due to take place in September.

.04 Remuneration Committee (7 July 2026)

Reported: In the absence of the RemCo Chair, Independent Governor Gayle Wells provided a summary of the meeting held on 7 July, noting:

- *[Exempt from publication – confidential]*

- A revised Senior Post Holder Disciplinary Policy was considered. Members provided feedback which will be integrated into an updated draft for consideration at the first meeting of 2026/27.

- The potential evolution to a People and Remuneration Committee was approved for recommendation to the Board, along with the associated terms of reference

.05 Vice-Chancellor Recruitment Committee

Reported: The Chair provided a progress update and noted that subject to discussion with executive search specialists Anderson Quigley, the campaign is due to launch between mid-August and early September. He added that staff focus group sessions will be conducted in the coming weeks, building on the stakeholder consultation undertaken during the 2024/25 Vice-Chancellor recruitment exercise.

Agreed: To receive the Chairs' Updates.

BG.25.133 Academic Board Summary Report: April and July 2026

Received: *Document BG/087/25*

Reported: The Chair of Academic Board (Acting Joint Vice-Chancellor) (GT) and DVC introduced the report, summarising the principal matters considered by Academic Board at its meetings in April and July 2026.

Discussed: In response to questions the following points were noted:

- There has been a positive change to the style of Academic Board meetings, with more focussed agendas and inclusive discussion.

- The University has completed its review of degree classification algorithms to ensure alignment with OfS expectations. From September 2026 onwards amended regulations will apply to all new entrants, whereby the University will:

    - Discontinue the practice of disregarding a student's lowest module mark when calculating degree classifications.
    - Reduce the amount of failed credit that students can carry into the next stage of study.

  When modelled on the previous cohort, the changes would have affected only a small number of students, and equity analysis had not identified any disproportionate impact on widening

participation or other student groups. Existing students remain subject to the regulations in place at the commencement of their studies.

Agreed: To receive the Academic Board Summary Report: March and July 2026.

BG.25.134 Trade Union Recognition Agreements

Received: *Document BG/088/25*

Reported: The COO introduced the item without further comment.

Discussed: The Board noted satisfaction with the Agreements as presented.

Agreed: To **approve the Trade Union Recognition Agreements**.

BG.25.135 Finance: Management Information/Late-Mid Year Reforecasts

Received: *Document BG/089/25*

Reported: The COO introduced the report, noting that the forecast operating surplus continues to improve against the Q2 reforecast position.

Discussed: The Board noted satisfaction with the management information and late-mid year reforecasts.

Agreed: To receive the Finance: Management Information.

BG.25.136 Any other business

None.

SECTION C ITEMS

The following items were received for information:

BG.25.137 Date and time of next meeting

The next meeting is the all day Strategy & Development Day, provisionally scheduled for 21 September 2026. Full details will be confirmed in due course.

BG.25.138 Minutes of the Staff Consultative and Negotiation Forum dated 11 June 2026 (BG/090/25)

BG.25.139 Board of Governors Meeting Calendar: 2026/27 (BG/091/25)

BG.25.40 CUC Higher Education Code of Governance (BG/092/25)

SECTION D ITEMS

BG.25.141 Meeting Evaluation

1. **Was the agenda correctly focused?**
2. **Were the papers appropriate?**
3. **Was the discussion appropriate?**

- Members valued the innovation of asking a student to present their experiences of the University to the Board. They looked forward to hearing other students' stories at future meetings.

- Governors suggested that they would value opportunities in the future to review data on the student experience to help evaluate the impact of the strategic change.