

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Minutes of the meeting held on 16 February 2026

Present

Mark Wilkinson	Independent member	Chair of the Board
Claire Blennerhassett	Teaching staff member	
Sequoia Chapman	Independent member	
Andrew Cooper	Independent member	
Leon Culbertson	Academic Board nominee	
Jenny Foster	Support staff member	
Antony Lockley	Independent member	Chair, Remuneration Committee
Jo Nettleton	Independent member	<i>In attendance for part A of the agenda</i>
Paul Nyamwela	Student member	
Natalie Palin	Independent member	
Gayle Wells	Independent member	Interim Chair, Audit & Risk Committee

In Attendance

Lynn Hill	Chief Operating Officer	Acting Joint Vice-Chancellor
Rhona Morris	Governance, Projects & Policy Manager	Secretariat (Acting Clerk)
George Talbot	Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research & Knowledge Exchange) and Dean of Arts & Sciences	Acting Joint Vice-Chancellor
Jane Sutton	Governance Officer	Secretariat
Jo Wright	Chief Governance Officer	

Apologies

Ian Cleminson	Independent member	Chair, Finance Committee
Ceri Davies	Interim Chief Executive, Edge Hill Students' Union	
Sophie Rowley	Student member	
Helen Stalker	Independent member	
Michael Young	Ex Officio	Vice-Chancellor

BG.25.069 Declarations of Interest

None.

BG.25.070 Chair's Announcements

There were no Chair's announcements.

BG.25.071 Chair's Action

There was no Chair's Action to report.

BG.25.072 Minutes of the previous meeting

Received: Document BG/046/25

Resolved: The minutes of the meeting held on 19 January 2026 were agreed as an accurate record.

BG.25.073 Action Log

Received: Document BG/047/25

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 concerning grade inflation had been incorrectly marked as complete and will be reopened.

The Action Log was received.

BG.25.074 Matters arising not included elsewhere on the agenda

None.

SECTION A ITEMS

BG.25.075 Vice-Chancellor's Report

Received: Document BG/048/25

Reported: The Acting Joint Vice-Chancellors confirmed that there was no new information to add to the report.

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

- University College London has settled with former students who had launched legal action, claiming they did not receive the education they paid for during the Covid pandemic. Edge Hill is not on the list of 36 institutions which have received pre-action claim letters from solicitors representing students. The University's exposure will be assessed and shared with the Board for assurance in the next Vice-Chancellor's report.

Action: Acting Joint VCs

- The Marketing and Communications team is developing a launch and engagement plan for the University's new strategy. In addition to campus activities, events will take place in Liverpool and Manchester, where the University has a presence and partners. Opportunities for Board engagement with these launch events are being identified. A report on the launch and the potential for Board involvement will be shared in due course.

Action: COO

.01 Nurse Paramedic Update

- Clarification was given that "Part B" refers to students who need to change programme. The cost of this will be funded by the University. Paper authors were reminded to include definitions in full where acronyms or sector-specific terms are first introduced.

• **[Exempt from publication – confidential]**

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

BG.25.076 Strategic Plan 2026-2031 and University Brand

Received: Document BG/049/25

Reported: The Acting Joint VCs introduced the item. The COO highlighted that, following the supportive reception of the draft Strategic Plan at the 17 November 2025 Board meeting, the University had run a digital consultation with staff, students and external stakeholders. There were 262 respondents, 25 of which were students, 33 external stakeholders and the remainder were staff, accounting for under 10% of the staff base.

Respondents were generally very positive and welcomed the proposed pillars. However, several stakeholders considered that it would be valuable to outline a clear commitment on how each strategic pillar would be delivered. This has been addressed in the revised draft through the inclusion of a “we will” listing following the description of each pillar. The document also ends with a holistic summary of how the strategy will be delivered.

Discussed: During discussion, the following points were noted:

.01 Branding

- Governors welcomed the new branding. They noted that it provides a strong identity for the University to more professionally articulate its character and mission in an increasingly competitive marketplace. International markets were considered during the branding review, and the extant University crest will be retained for use in certain markets. The new branding meets accessibility standards.
- A staff presentation will be scheduled to provide the rationale for rebranding and to introduce the new branding. The decision to undertake the exercise has been challenged by some staff, particularly when set against the Professional Services Review and the drive for budget saving measures.
- Careful consideration is being given to sequencing the new Strategy and branding launch. The timing of the latter will help scaffold the University’s new approach to clearing.

- Consideration will be given to scheduling a presentation for the Board on the new brand messaging at an upcoming Board development session.

Action: Chair and Acting Clerk

The University is shifting to a digital-led branding approach. The digital costs associated with implementing the new brand, including the website, are included in the University's financial plans. The rebranding of physical materials will be phased to allow budgets to be managed appropriately.

.02 Strategic Plan

- The Board re-confirmed its strong support for the direction, clarity and vision presented in the new Strategic Plan. However, Governors reiterated concern on the title wording of the second strategic pillar "Your Education, Your Way", and the potential for this to be misinterpreted if applicants did not fully read the supporting text. The Executive undertook to review the wording from student perspectives and against Competition & Markets Authority guidance. If required, the title will be amended and tested, as necessary.

Action: Acting Joint VCs

- The new branding message that the University is the "the heart of the North West" is represented in the Strategic Plan through the fourth pillar, termed "Place and Belonging". The Strategic Plan's presentation of the region is designed to enable flexibility for the University in how it communicates across - and places emphasis on - the different locations in which it operates.
- The Executive undertook to provide the Board with indicative timescales for completion of the supporting business plans that will underpin delivery of the Strategic Plan.

Action: Acting Joint VCs

- Governors noted that the completion of the supporting business plans will likely require phasing across 2026. The work involved to produce them is considerable and will require input from the full Executive and senior leadership teams. Consideration will be

given to scheduling in forthcoming Board development sessions opportunities for Board members to input to the supporting business plans.

Action: Acting Clerk

Agreed: **i) To approve the Strategic Plan 2026-31, subject to a review of the “Your Education, Your Way” wording.**
 ii) To note the University Brand.

BG.25.077 Integrated Strategic Framework (template)

Received: Document BG/050/25

Reported: The Chief Governance Officer (GCO) introduced the item. She highlighted that the template includes draft strategic Key Performance Indicators (sKPIs), which link to the Strategic Plan’s Critical Success Factors (CSFs) and associated risks.

Discussed: During discussion, the following points were noted:

- Governors endorsed the template’s overall approach to provide assurance on strategic level risks. The ISF will be remitted to the Audit & Risk Committee (ARC) for detailed consideration. However, the Board will continue to reserve review of the sKPIs to itself in order to monitor the delivery of the University’s new Strategic Plan.

Action: Acting Clerk

- The Board requested clarity regarding the relationship between the CSFs and the strategic pillars. The CGO agreed to map the connection between the CSFs and the strategic pillars.

Action: CGO

- The Board requested clarity on the timescales for commencing Board reporting of the sKPIs

Action: CGO

Agreed: **To approve the Integrated Strategic Framework template.**

BG.25.078 Chair of Audit & Risk Committee

Received: Document BG/051/25

Discussed: In discussion, the following points were noted:

- Governors approved the nomination of Tim Hudson as Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee. Tim displayed the expertise and attributes which gave the Selection Panel confidence in his ability to immediately succeed in the role.
- The Chair thanked the Independent Governors who participated on the Selection Panel.

Agreed: **To formally approve Tim Hudson's appointment as an Independent Governor. He will also serve as Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee for three years in the first instance.**

SECTION B ITEMS

BG.25.078 Update from Committee Chairs

.01 Audit & Risk Committee (16 February 2026)

Reported: The Interim-Chair of the ARC provided a summary of the meeting held on 16 February, noting full assurance on all matters.

- The Board Assurance Framework (BAF) risk scores for the estates strategy and cyber risk have increased, with the reasons for this well understood.
- The BAF is in a mature state, which will support its migration into the ISF.
- The internal audit report on estates and facilities management yielded a good discussion, as did an item on the policy management framework. Actions arose on contractor management and health & safety.
- ARC approved updated policies on:
 - Gifts & Hospitality
 - Fraud, Bribery and Anti-Corruption

Discussed: During discussion members noted the following:

- The ARC has an open commitment to define the University's risk appetite, as part of the University's Risk Management Strategy.
- The Chair thanked Gayle Wells for her work as Interim Chair of the ARC.

Agreed: To receive the Committee Chair's Update

BG.25.079 Any other business

.01 Regional Affairs

The Board noted the Government's decision to proceed with all local council elections in May 2026.

SECTION C ITEMS

The following items were received for information:

BG.25.080 Date and time of next meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for 16 March 2026 at 5:30pm.