PUBLIC

Edge Hill University

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Minutes of the meeting held on 18 May 2026

Present

Mark Wilkinson	Independent member	Chair of the Board
Rhona Morris	Acting Clerk to Governors	
Claire Blennerhassett	Teaching staff 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
Antony Lockley	Independent member	Chair, Remuneration Committee
Natalie Palin	Independent member	
Sophie Rowley	Student member	
Helen Stalker	Independent member	
Gayle Wells	Independent member	

In Attendance

Kurt Allman	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Business Development & External Engagement	
Chris Greenough	Head of the School of Education	*For agenda item BG.25.107*
Lynn Hill	Chief Operating Officer	Acting Joint Vice-Chancellor
Peter Roberts	Associate Director, Strategic Assurance	*For agenda items BG.25.106 and BG.25.108*
Jon Russ	Chief Executive, 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
Jo Wright	Chief Student & Governance Officer	

Apologies

Sequoia Chapman	Independent member
Jo Nettleton	Independent member
Paul Nyamwela	Student member

BG.25.098 Declarations of Interest

None.

BG.25.099 Chair's Announcements

.01 Board membership
Paul Nyamwela and Sophie Rowland's terms as Student Representatives are due to conclude at the end of June. The Chair thanked them for their stalwart contributions to the Board and wished them luck for the future.

River Fitzgerald has been elected to the Board by her peers, and will join future meetings from July. The second Student Representative, selected from the incoming Presidents by the Students' Union, has yet to be confirmed.

.02 2025 English Social Mobility Index
Edge Hill has been ranked 13th in the English Social Mobility Index, which recognises the effectiveness of the University's widening participation work. The Index is compiled by London South Bank University and published by the Higher Education Policy Institute and combines access, continuation and outcomes measures for undergraduates.

.03 Committee of University Chairs
The Chair will attend the Committee of University Chairs (CUC) Spring Plenary at the end of May, where the CUC's revised Higher Education Code of Governance will be presented for approval. The Code is designed to support governing bodies deliver the highest standards of governance across their institutions. The Board will consider the latest update and, if appropriate, confirm its ongoing adoption of the Code, once it is published.

BG.25.100 Chair's Action

Following a consultation by correspondence exercise with the Board, the Chair approved the Terms of Reference for the Vice Chancellor Recruitment Committee.

BG.25.101 Minutes of the previous meeting

Received: *Document BG/063/25*

Resolved: The minutes of the meeting held on 16 March 2026 were agreed as an accurate record.

BG.25.102 Action Log

Received: *Document BG/064/25*

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.25.103 Matters arising not included elsewhere on the agenda

.01 Compliance Review of Professionally Accredited Programmes

The Internal Auditors (RSM) have undertaken a review of the University's course approval and monitoring process, the outcome of which will be reported at the Audit & Risk Committee (ARC) meeting in June. In addition, the new Dean of the Centre for Enhanced Learning and Teaching will seek opportunities to enhance the Quality Assurance & Enhancement team's central oversight of the University's Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) programmes. Escalation routes to manage emergent risks will also be reviewed.

[Exempt from publication – confidential]

SECTION A ITEMS

BG.25.104 Vice-Chancellor's Report

Received: *Document BG/065/25*

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

.01 Implementation of the Strategic Plan

- The timeline for the Strategic Plan launch is being finalised and will be shared with the Board in June.

Action: Acting Joint Vice-Chancellors

- To encourage internal engagement with, and ownership of, the Strategic Plan, the Executive has committed to delivering engagement sessions at department-level.
- Work on the Strategic Key Performance Indicators and the underpinning Management Information will be presented to ARC in June.

Action: Associate Director, Strategic Assurance

.02 HCPC/Nurse Paramedic Update

- The Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) has reviewed a complaint lodged by Nurse Paramedic graduates and found in the University's favour. *[Exempt from publication – confidential]*

- The Finance Committee will receive a year end view of the HCPC/Nurse Paramedic expenditure.

Action: Director of Finance

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

.01 Student recruitment

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

- Institutions that have lowered their entry criteria to hold enrolment numbers are now experiencing difficulties meeting the Regulator's B3 Condition baseline for continuation. The University has the option to offer its Foundation Year to prospective students who do not meet the entry requirements for their preferred degree programme.

.02 Revised Executive structure

- Following an exercise to benchmark the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic) role against the sector, the post has been retitled to PVC (Education & Student Success). The job advert for the role went live on 14 May.

.03 Business Optimisation

- *[Exempt from publication – confidential]*

.04 Antisemitism

- In response to the Government's requirement to take a zero-tolerance approach to antisemitism, a joint communication has been issued from University and the Students' Union Faculty Presidents to reinforce that the University is an inclusive, safe and supportive environment for all. The University has also provided signposting for Jewish students and staff to relevant support.

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

BG.25.105 Student Report

Received: *Document BG/066/25*

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:

- There is anecdotal evidence that uptake of SU initiatives and events has increased in-year. The SU is seeking to quantify engagement and use the data to inform future planning.

- Independent Governors commended the quality of the Impact Report and the context provided on how the SU spend the University's block grant.

Agreed: To receive the Student Report.

BG.25.106 Equity, Diversity and Inclusion: Annual Report

Received: *Document BG/067/25*

Reported: The Chief Student and Governance Officer (CSGO) introduced the item, confirming that there was no new information to add to the circulated report.

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

- Athena Swan awards were secured at departmental level because this was an attractive metric for external research funding organisations. Advance HE (which administers the awards) has recently revised its approach and advised institutions not to seek awards below faculty level.

- The KPIs which underpin the University's new EDI Strategy include benchmarking against the sector.

- The EDI Steering Group will be disbanded and replaced by an EDI Strategy Committee chaired by the CSGO, to provide visibility and leadership at Executive level.

Agreed: To receive the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion: Annual Report.

BG.25.090 Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

Received: *Document BG/068/25*

Reported: The CGSO introduced the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy. She drew members' attention to the introductory wording which states that the University will embed EDI into its core systems, culture and decision-making frameworks.

The Head of the School of Education outlined the bottom-up approach to developing the Strategy and noted that a student facing version will be produced.

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

- The Board commended the bottom-up methodology to co-create the EDI Strategy with internal stakeholders to render relevant, credible and effective impact. Members also celebrated that a theory of change approach is embedded throughout the Strategy.

- Over the last year, clear reporting lines have been established to report EDI matters through the faculties, into the EDI Strategy Committee (which will replace the EDI Steering Group) on to the Executive and the Board. The primary reporting instrument to the Board is the EDI Annual Report.

- Independent Governors queried how the Board could more visibly champion the University's commitment to EDI. The Executive undertook to consider:
    - Ways in which the Board might actively and meaningfully support the University's EDI Strategy. This to include how information that comes to the Board is framed, to ensure that EDI impacts are considered as part of Board decision making.
    - Any additional mechanisms to enhance the Board's visibility of EDI matters and to gain assurance regarding the impact of the EDI Strategy and the effectiveness of the associated Action Plan.

Action: CSGO

  It was noted that should the Board decide to establish a People Committee, this would be the most appropriate place to discuss any additional EDI related reporting.

- As part of the Business Optimisation agenda, work is underway to enhance the management information which will track performance against University's Strategic KPIs and the effectiveness of the EDI Action Plan.

- The Executive undertook to provide confirmation to the Board that the EDI Action Plan has been established.

Action: CSGO

Agreed: To **approve the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy**.

BG.25.108 Sustainability Strategy

Received: *Document BG/069/25*

Reported: The CSGO and the Head of Risk, Assurance and Business Support introduced the Strategy. They underscored that the Strategy reflects a commitment to sustainability at all levels of the University and noted that the SU is represented on the Institutional Sustainability Committee.

The CSGO also highlighted that prior to publication, the Strategy document will undergo checks to ensure consistency of language and accessibility of design.

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

- The University has developed a one-year interim Carbon Management Plan and is working with a specialist consultant to produce a longer term roadmap. The Plan will be delivered by the Facilities- and Estates- Management teams and owing to the capital investment involved, it will be presented to the Finance Committee for consideration.

- The Board welcomed the decision to assign each strategic theme to a member of the Executive. Members also acknowledged the University's commitment to embed a positive and proactive sustainability culture through a structure of committees and fora operating at all levels.

Agreed: To **approve the Sustainability Strategy**.

BG.25.109 People & Performance: Annual Report

Received: *Document BG/070/25*

Reported: The COO introduced the report, noting the lag between the period under review and presentation to the Board. She confirmed that future annual reports will be presented to the Board at its October meeting.

Action: COO

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

- The Board probed the University's plan to develop and retain talented, engaged staff, and secure strong and effective tiers of leadership. Independent Governors noted the organisational resilience which can be achieved through investment in developing middle management capacity and capability. They also noted the importance of the strategic portfolio review to help determine the future size and shape of the University, feeding into extant Business Optimisation activity to arrive at an appropriate staff to cost base ratio.
- The COO undertook to work with the Acting Clerk to schedule an update for the Board on the University's organisation development plans and activity.

Action: Acting Clerk with COO/Organisation Development Manager

- Members noted the improved staff retention figures but speculated that this might in part represent sector instability; with fewer vacancies offered and the perception of lower job security for new employees. Independent Governors also queried the reasons for the drop in the volume of applications to the University e.g. is it related to the number of vacancies or interest in the available posts. As follow up, the Executive undertook to:
    - Identify the reasons for the reduction in applications, split by academic and other role types.
    - Provide more regular people and performance data updates to the Board, broken down by both percentages and numbers.

Action: Chief Operating Officer/Acting Director HR

Agreed: To receive the People & Performance: Annual Report.

SECTION B ITEMS

BG.25.110 Update from Committee Chairs

.01 Finance Committee (27 April 2026)

Reported: The Chair provided a summary of the FC meeting held on 27 April, noting that:

- The Committee examined the Q2 Budget Reforecast and noted some pressure on the cash position.
- The University's budget forecasting model was found to be robust.
- Income exposure regarding PSRB registered programmes is being monitored by the University. However, the risks associated with a programme losing PSRB compliance have implications which extend across the remit of the Board, ARC and FC. This requires coordinated action with the Board and Committee Chairs.

.02 Governance & Nominations Committee (18 May 2026)

Reported: The GNC meeting was postponed.

.03 Interim Vice-Chancellor Recruitment Committee

Reported: Prior to the Board meeting, Members met privately. During the session, a summary of the Recruitment Committee was received and recorded separately.

Agreed: To receive the Chairs' Updates.

BG.25.111 Academic Board Summary Report: January 2026

Received: *Document BG/071/25*

Reported: The Chair of Academic Board (Acting Joint Vice-Chancellor) introduced the report.

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

- To comply with Office for Student (OfS) expectations on degree classification algorithms, a review of the University's extant approach and proposal for future working are nearing completion. A draft report outlining the updated approach will be considered by Academic Board at its meeting on 1 July and submitted to the Regulator by its 31 July deadline. The Executive undertook to share this degree classification algorithm report with the Board.

Action: CSGO

- The Executive will work over the next 12 months to prioritise and map investment in Digital Transformation. The outcome will be reported to the Board at an appropriate point.

Action: COO

- Members noted satisfaction with the approach the Research Excellence Framework 2029.

Agreed: To receive the Academic Board Summary Report: January 2026.

BG.25.112 Finance: Management Information

Received: *Document BG/072/25*

Reported: The COO introduced the item, noting that the report had been scrutinised by the Finance Committee at its meeting on 27 April.

Discussed: During discussion members noted the following information:

- The University needs to continue to focus on cash generation to obtain long-term financial sustainability.

- The Executive undertook to include definitions of key terms and working examples (e.g. cash generation) in the finance training due to be delivered to the Board.

Action: Director of Finance

- *[Exempt from publication – confidential].*

Agreed: To receive the Finance: Management Information.

BG.25.113 Governor Role Description

Received: *Document BG/073/25*

Reported: The Acting Clerk introduced the item, highlighting that the exercise was undertaken by the GNC to modernise role descriptions and ensure they reflect current practice.

Discussed: The Board noted satisfaction with the revised governor role description.

Agreed: *i)* To **approve the Governor Role Description**.

ii) On an individual basis, to seek confirmation from governors that they agree to uphold the terms of the revised role description.

BG.25.114 Any other business

None.

SECTION C ITEMS

The following items were received for information:

BG.25.115 Date and time of next meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for 15 June 2026 at 5:30pm.

BG.25.116 Students' Union Election Report (BG/074/25)

SECTION D ITEMS

BG.25.117 Meeting Evaluation

Was the agenda correctly focused?
Were the papers appropriate?
Was the discussion appropriate?