

UNIVERSITY COUNCIL

Thursday, 27 March 2025

MINUTES

Author:	Alison Jones, University Secretary, March 2025
Present:	Mr Jonathan Thornton (Chair), Mr Ajaz Ahmed, Mr Wamick Aijaz, Mr Bernard Ainsworth, Ms Sally Baines, Mr Robert Cox, Ms Sally Crosland, Professor Bob Cryan, Dr Sara Eastburn, Mr Krish Pilicudale, Baroness Kath Pinnock Professor Isobel Pollock-Hulf, Mrs Clare Morrow
In attendance:	Mrs Lydia Devenney, Ms Alison Jones, Mr Matt Mills (for item 2), Professor Jane Owen-Lynch, Professor Alistair Sambell, Professor Tim Thornton,
Apologies:	Mr Rhys Davies, Bishop Smitha Prasadam

PRELIMINARY ITEMS

PAPER REFERENCE

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 1.1 There were no declarations of interest.

2. MAJOR ITEM FOR DISCUSSION – PREVENT DUTY

- 2.1 The Director of Student Services updated members of Council on their obligations and the obligations of the University under the Prevent Guidance. He set out the roles and responsibilities of particular staff in the University, and the mechanisms in place to manage risk and provide assurance to Council and the Office for Students.
- 2.2 Members were briefed on the current position on trends in radicalisation, nationally and locally.
- 2.3 Members were reminded that the last submission of the University's Prevent Return to the OfS had been accepted without requests for additional information.

3. MINUTES

- 3.1 **Resolved:** that the minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2024 be accepted as a correct record. Members also received the notes from the Council Strategy Day held on 27 February 2025.

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4. MATTERS ARISING

- 4.1 There were no matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

5. CHAIR'S BUSINESS

- 5.1 There was no Chair's business.

6. VICE-CHANCELLOR'S BUSINESS

6.1 The Vice-Chancellor briefed members on:

- The current position in the sector and the continued challenge caused in large part by the current financial model and recent changes in Government policy.
- Information on entry tariffs across the sector and the distribution across different parts of the sector, set alongside an analysis of applications and acceptances.
- The current position for the University on home and international applications, and on initiatives to address changes in recruitment patterns, including development of new areas of provision and introduction of new methods of delivery.
- Some of the recent media articles concerning higher education.
- Industrial relations and sector pay negotiations.

6.2 The Vice-Chancellor went on to brief members on news items from across the University.

6.3 Members noted that the Pro Vice-Chancellors for Teaching and Learning and for Research, Innovation and Knowledge Exchange would be retiring from the University. The Vice-Chancellor thanked both for their significant contribution to the University.

6.4 Council also noted that member, Mr Krish Pilicudale had been awarded Chief Information Officer of the year.

7. UNIVERSITY SECRETARY'S BUSINESS

7.1 Members received a report from the University Secretary on various Council matters, specifically, that, as a consequence of the end of the term of office of Baroness Pinnock, a search was in train to recruit a new external member, and that consideration was also being given to the role of Vice Chair of Council.

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7.2 In addition, members considered and **approved** the renewal of the following members of Council for a further term of three years:

- Mr Bernard Ainsworth
- Mr Rhys Davies

7.3 To **approve** the renewal of Mrs Clare Morrow to Council until March 2027.

7.4 To **approve** the renewal of Mr Paul Leigh to membership of the Audit and Risk Committee for a further three years.

INSPIRING

8. STUDENTS' UNION REPORT

8.1 Members received a report from the President of the Students' Union on actions in the Students' Union, including:

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- The outcomes of the Students' Union elections
- Activities from clubs and societies
- The forthcoming Varsity challenge with the University of Bradford
- Data on student engagement with demographic analysis.

9. DEGREE OUTCOMES STATEMENT

- 9.1 The Pro Vice-Chancellor introduced the report which was a standard annual report in response to requirements of the OfS. UC_2025_03_27_P9
- 9.2 Members of Council **approved** the Degree Outcome Statement.

INNOVATIVE

10. RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE ACTIVITY UPDATE

- 10.1 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor presented the report on behalf of the Acting Pro Vice-Chancellor RIKE, highlighting; research grant and income success; examples of high-profile research; preparations for the 2029 REF, including our inclusion in the sector REF pilot. UC_2025_03_27_P10
- 10.2 Members noted the dominance of the Russell Group universities in securing research funding, but that the University had achieved some notable successes.
- 10.3 Members received and noted the report.

GROWTH AND EFFICIENCY

11. HOME AND INTERNATIONAL APPLICATIONS, ENROLMENTS AND RETENTION

- 11.1 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor updated members on the current position with student recruitment for May and September 2025, noting the criticality of conversion activities. UC_2025_03_27_P11

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

12. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 12.1 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor presented the updated Corporate Risk Register and statement of risk appetite, noting that members of the Audit and Risk Committee had discussed the report and register in detail at its last meeting, and had recommended the report and changes concerning continuation and recruitment. It was noted that there would be a full review of the register and approach alongside the development of the new University Strategy. UC_2025_03_27_P12
- 12.2 The Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee commented that members had been content to approve but had noted the volatility of the economic situation in the country and the sector.
- 12.3 Members of Council **approved** the revisions to the risk register.

13. FINANCIAL REPORT

- 13.1** The Director of Finance introduced the report on the financial position which had been received and reviewed by the Estates and Finance Committee, noting that the position had improved since the last forecast, although the underpinning position remained a budgetary deficit.
- 13.2** The Chair of the Estates and Finance Committee noted that members had discussed the report in detail and the strong performance in difficult circumstances.
- 13.3** Members of Council noted the report.

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PEOPLE FIRST

14. ANNUAL EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION REPORT

- 14.1** The Pro Vice-Chancellor for Teaching and Learning presented the annual report, noting that this had been received and considered by Senate, and that it formed part of the University's obligations under the Equality Act.
- 14.2** Members welcomed the report and the level of detail in both the data and the activity undertaken across the University.

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15. FIRE SAFETY UPDATE

- 15.1** Members received for information a report on actions taken in relation to fire safety, noting that this report had also been received at the Estates and Finance Committee and the Health and Safety Committee.

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OTHER COUNCIL MATTERS

16. COMMITTEE MINUTES

- 16.1** Members received the following sets of minutes:

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Audit and Risk Committee, 13 March 2025
Estates and Finance Committee, 7 March 2025
Governance and Membership Committee, 11 February 2025
Summary of the Senate meeting held on 5 March 2025

OTHER BUSINESS

2. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 8.1** There was no other business

3. AVAILABILITY OF AGENDA, PAPERS AND MINUTES

- 9.1 Resolved:** to exclude the following papers from the open version under Standing order 11.8.

Item 7 Vice-Chancellor's Business
Item 10 RIKE Activity Update

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Item 11	Home and international recruitment	UC_2025_03_27_P11
Item 12	Risk management	UC_2025_03_27_P12
Item 13	Financial report	UC_2025_03_27_P13
Item 15	Fire safety update	UC_2025_03_27_P15

4. DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 3 July 2025, at 13:00 in the McClelland Suite,