University of the Built Environment
EST. 1919

Patron: His Majesty King Charles III

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MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

26 MARCH 2026

REDACTED MINUTES FOR PUBLICATION

A meeting of the Board of Trustees was held via Zoom Videoconferencing from 14.30-16.15pm on Thursday 26 March 2026.

Present:	C Costigan (CC)	
	J Gill (JG)	
	J Hubert (JH)	(Staff Trustee)
	N Hughes (NH)	
	Prof M Jones (MJ)	(Vice Chair)
	R Kerslake CBE (RK)	(Chair)
	Dr L Marr (LM)	
	B McManus (BM)	(Student Trustee)
	C Thackeray (CT)	(Staff Trustee)
	Prof A Wheaton (AW)	(Vice Chancellor)
In attendance:	A Denton (AD)	(Student Co-opted Member)
	L Carmichael (LC)	(Co-Opted Member)
	D Balme (DB)	(Chief Operating Officer – from item 3 onwards)
	S Bartle (SB)	(Pro Vice Chancellor Commercial – from item 3 onwards)
	J Fawkes (JEF)	(Deputy Vice Chancellor & University Secretary)
	Prof W Finlay (WF)	(Pro Vice Chancellor Education & Students – from item 3 onwards)
	L Hughes (LH)	(Clerk to the Board)
	M Speight (MS)	(Executive Director Strategic Enterprise – for item 3.1 only)
	Prof M Todd (MT)	(Pro Vice Chancellor Academic– from item 3 onwards)
	A Williams (AWi)	(Executive Director Innovation & Partnerships – from item 3 onwards)
Apologies:	Prof. N Braisby (NB)	
	D O'Rourke (DOR)	
	G Scott (GS)	

1) GENERAL BOARD GOVERNANCE

14008 **1.1) DECLARATION OF ANY CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

14009 There was a conflict of interest reported for Lucy Carmichael for agenda item, 4.2 for which she would be invited to step out of the meeting. There were no other conflicts of interest reported.

<u>14010</u> **<u>1.2) RECORDING OF THE MEETING</u>**

14011 Trustees provided their consent to the recording of the meeting within Zoom in order to support minute taking and provided the recording is deleted thereafter.

<u>14012</u> **<u>1.3) APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND WELCOMES</u>**

14013 There were apologies for absence from Prof. Nick Braisby, Dominic O'Rourke and Graeme Scott.

14014 The Chair advised Trustees that the meeting had been deliberately and significantly reduced in length, scaled back in content and held online only following the announcement that Ofsted would inspect the institution in the week prior to the meeting, thereby providing time and space to the Executive Team to appropriately prepare for and navigate through the inspection.

<u>14015</u> **<u>1.4) MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 3 DECEMBER 2025</u>**

14016 The minutes and the proposed redactions of the Board of Trustees meeting held on 3 December 2025 (as provided at paper 1.4) were **APPROVED** as a true record and signed by the Chair. They will be published on the University's Governance webpage.

<u>14017</u> **<u>1.5) MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 6 MARCH 2026</u>**

14018 The minutes of the Exceptional Board of Trustees meeting held on 6 March 2026 (as provided at paper 1.5) were **APPROVED** as a true record and signed by the Chair. They will be fully redacted and **not** published on the University's Governance webpage.

<u>14019</u> **<u>1.6) MATTERS ARISING AND ACTIONS SUMMARY</u>**

14020 The summary showing the outcomes of actions from the meeting held 3 December 2025 (paper 1.6) was taken as read with updates on listed actions, where not yet completed, duly **NOTED.**

14021 The Board requested that the in-depth review of UCEM Asia Ltd, which has now been deferred twice, be brought to the July 2026 Board meeting. Listed as action 13741, this should not be considered closed on the Actions Summary.

ACTION: **The in-depth review of UCEM Asia Ltd must be scheduled for the July 2026 Board meeting. [JEF]**

14022 The Board **NOTED** the substantive update on the applicability of the Freedom of Speech Act to the University's Hong Kong operations and that work would now commence to implement the legal advice received.

ACTION: **Implement the legal advice provided on Freedom of Speech in Hong Kong, including updating the University's Freedom of Speech Policy. [JEF]**

<u>14023</u> **<u>1.7) CHAIR'S ACTIONS</u>**

14024 The Board **NOTED** that it had been sent the licence to assign and the deed of assignment relative to the Beechwood Road premises by email on 6 January 2026 and that it had **APPROVED** on 7 January 2026 the resolution that these documents could be signed by the Vice Chancellor and/or Deputy Vice Chancellor.

14025 The Board **NOTED** that it had been sent the final negotiated Heads of Terms for the sale of Shinfield Grange (the building and one acre of land) to Harkalm Group by email on 2 March 2026 and that it had **APPROVED** by majority by 3 March 2026 that the Heads of Terms could be signed and the deal progressed.

14026 The Board **NOTED** that it has been asked via email to approve Chris Costigan being appointed to the role of Lead Trustee for Safeguarding on an interim basis with immediate effect on 11 March 2026 (following the resignation of Jules Quinn) and that it had **APPROVED** this appointment by majority by 12 March 2026.

<u>14027</u> **<u>1.8) TRUSTEE APPOINTMENT RENEWALS</u>**

14028 The Board **APPROVED** the re-appointment of Graeme Scott for a second three-year term of office from March 2026-March 2029 as Independent Trustee / Honorary Treasurer.

14029 The University Secretary advised the Board that discussions had been taking place within the Board's leadership about various current and upcoming Board roles since the resignation of Jules Quinn from the Board on 4 March 2026 and the impending retirements of other Trustees later this year. Various proposals were made in paper 1.8 and discussed as a result.

14030 The Board **APPROVED** the re-appointment of Prof Nick Braisby for a third three-year term of office from November 2026-November 2029 as Independent Trustee. The Board further **AGREED** that with the retirement of Chris Costigan after nine years in December 2026, that Prof Nick Braisby would step into the Chair of Audit Committee role from the end of the year, with transition through the autumn.

14031 The Board **APPROVED** the appointment of Nick Hughes as interim Chair of Nominations & Governance Committee with immediate effect and for the remainder of 2026 until new Independent Trustees can be recruited to the Board and appointed to such roles.

14032 The Board **NOTED** the Nominations & Governance Committee's approval to appoint Dr Liz Marr as Lead Trustee for EDI and, as a result, **APPROVED** her associated appointment to serve on the Nominations and Governance Committee with immediate effect.

14033 The Chair thanked all those who were taking on additional responsibilities at this time given the reduced number of Trustees on the Board at the current time.

2) GOVERNANCE

14034 **2.1) REDACTED**

14035 REDACTED

14036 REDACTED

14037 The Chair then provided a brief update further to the Exceptional meeting of the Board which took place on 6 March 2026.

14038 REDACTED.

14039 REDACTED

14040 REDACTED

14041 REDACTED.

3) UNIVERSITY UPDATE

14042 The Executive joined the meeting for the remainder of the agenda.

14043 **3.1) OFSTED INSPECTION – OUTCOME AND NEXT STEPS**

14044 Mike Speight also joined the meeting for this item of business, having been the Ofsted Lead Nominee during inspection.

14045 A verbal update on the outcome of the Ofsted Inspection of the University's apprenticeship provision, held 17-20 March 2026, was provided by Prof Ashley Wheaton. There are some key aspects to the experience, process and impacts of the inspection for the Board of Trustees to fully understand and appreciate as it considers the future of the institution.

14046 The Vice Chancellor confirmed that the inspection had taken place under Ofsted's new inspection framework and that outcomes are now graded on a five-point scale (not four), with Expected Standard as the middle outcome. Expected Standard is considered better than the previous 'good' outcome.

14047 REDACTED

14048 REDACTED.

14049 REDACTED

14050 The Vice Chair congratulated the institution on securing Expected Standard in this context, which is an acknowledged high bar to meet under the new Framework, with a 'secure' rather than 'best' fit approach taken. The Lead Trustee for EDI also commented that the University has performed brilliantly and REDACTED

14051 There is a sense of disappointment in some staff that 'Strong' had not been achieved in some areas of provision. The Board was keen to dismiss this perception and to ensure staff are appropriately congratulated and celebrated. They also acknowledged the leadership of Wendy Finlay and Mike Speight in particular through the week. The institutional toll and the wellbeing toll for many staff heavily involved during the inspection was fully noted and accepted by the Board.

ACTION: **Consider how a suitable staff celebration and communication, on behalf of the Board, can be organised upon publication of the final inspection outcome report. [JEF]**

14052 REDACTED.

ACTION: REDACTED

14053 The University Secretary thanked MJ, LM and CC who were involved with the inspection on behalf of the Board and showed strength in leadership and governance at the highest level of the institution.

14054 The Board **NOTED** the indicative 'Expected Standards' outcome of the recent Ofsted Inspection and agreed the follow-up actions to now take place.

14055 The Chair thanked Mike Speight for his attendance and contribution and invited him to leave the meeting.

14056 3.2) EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT SURVEY RESULTS

14057 The Vice Chancellor presented paper 3.2 to the Board which provided the Employee Engagement Survey results from January 2026. The survey was completed by the highest ever response rate seen at 91% (319 responses) and improvements were seen in every score (except question 12 which remained flat at 92%). The overall weighted average result was 4.1 (vs target of 4.25 and a 0.2 improvement vs the last survey).

14058 REDACTED

14059 The Board expressed its satisfaction that scores are now moving back in the right direction from a lower position through 2025. They also welcomed the impressive Ofsted survey statistics. Following Trustees concerns in this area, these are very positive results, and the Executive Team was congratulated accordingly. The Board would like to see some evidence of what work and actions were undertaken through the last period to bring about this result and where the impacts have been seen in greater detail. This should help leaders and managers maintain the momentum for the future.

ACTION: **Provide some further analysis on the Employee Engagement Survey Results, what actions have been effective and the impact of activities undertaken through the last period to bring about the improvements seen. [DB]**

14060 There is a proposal currently being considered by the Executive to move to a single annual survey. The timing of this, however, needs more consideration before it is finalised. This is intended to help with survey fatigue and support having enough time to impact scores between surveys.

14061 The Board **NOTED** the latest Employee Engagement Survey results which returned a 'weighted average score' of 4.1 and had the highest ever participation rate.

14062 3.3) GENDER, ETHNICITY AND DISABILITY PAY GAP REPORT

14063 The Chair welcomed Lily Rogers into the meeting for item 3.3.

14064 LR presented the institution's Gender, Ethnicity and Disability Pay Gap Report for 5 April 2025 to the Board for approval. Whilst the report is long, it includes six core calculations in each of the three demographics. For the first time, and ahead of this becoming a mandatory requirement in 2027, the report includes proposed actions to undertake to improve the University's position in the future.

14065 The institution is reporting a mean gender pay gap of 14.7% which has widened slightly from the prior reporting year (12.3%) and a median gender pay gap of 7.7%, which has reduced significantly from the prior reporting year (14.7%).

14066 The Board thanked Lily for the report and commended the University for reporting beyond the gender pay gap alone to ethnicity and disability. There was a short discussion the impact of the Associate Lectures included on the reference date in each category but overall, and, in comparison with the wider sector, the University is doing well.

14067 The Board queried what the University is doing to actively improve disclosure rates to improve the overall reliability of the data, as low disclosure hides inequalities. The EDI Committee will be considering this when it meets in April 2026, alongside the actions proposed.

14068 The Board **APPROVED** the Gender, Ethnicity and Disability Pay Gap Report for the period to 5 April 2025 for immediate publication on the external website.

14069 The Chair thanked LR for her work on the report and contributions then invited her to leave the meeting.

4) PROPERTY MATTERS

14070 4.1) REDACTED

14071 REDACTED

14072 REDACTED

14073 REDACTED.

14074 REDACTED.

14075 4.2) REDACTED

14076 Lucy Carmichael left the meeting for this agenda item due to a conflict of interest with her ongoing Chairship of Beechwood Architecture, REDACTED

14077 REDACTED

14078 REDACTED

14079 REDACTED

14080 REDACTED.

ACTION: REDACTED

14081 Lucy Carmichael returned to the meeting at the conclusion of this agenda item.

5) ANY OTHER BUSINESS

14082 5.1) REDACTED

14083 REDACTED

ACTION: REDACTED

14084 5.2) MATTERS FOR NOTING, APPROVAL AND REPORT

14085 The Board was invited to make comments on the additional Board paper of matters for report and approval (items 6 and 7). Particular attention was drawn to the Annual Sustainability Report 2024-25 which will proceed to publication and to the draft calendar of dates 2027 for Trustees which will be issued via Outlook as soon as possible. No other comments were made so all matters were deemed approved and noted (as below).

14086 5.3) FAREWELL AND THANKS TO STUDENT TRUSTEE BEN MCMANUS

14087 The Chair formally thanked Ben McManus for his time as Student Trustee with the University and wished him well for the future. A gift was posted to Ben in advance of the meeting. Ben thanked the Board for their support and guidance during his time on the Board and expressed his gratitude for the experience it has provided.

14088 5.4) ANY OTHER BUSINESS

14089 There being no other items of business raised, the Chair thanked all Trustees for their participation in the meeting.

14090 5.5) MEETING CLOSE

14091 The Chair closed the meeting at 16.15pm.

The following matters were circulated in a separate pack for approval or report in advance of the meeting.

6) APPROVALS AND FOR REPORT

14092 **6.1) ANNUAL SUSTAINABILITY REPORT 2024-25**

14093 The Board **APPROVED** the Annual Sustainability Report 2024-25 for publication on the external website.

14094 **6.2) POLICIES FOR REVIEW AND RE-APPROVAL**

14095 The University Secretary presented two University policies for re-approval (paper 1.10). The Board was advised that the proposed final updates to the Anti-Bribery Policy and a new Economic Crime Policy would come forward to the next Board for approval, following pre-scrutiny by the Executive.

14096 The Board **APPROVED** the Whistleblowing Policy V2.02 for finalisation and republication as the new V3.0.

14097 The Board **APPROVED** the EDI Commitment Statement V1.01 for finalisation and republication as the new V3.0.

14098 **6.3) BOARD SUB-COMMITTEE UPDATES**

14099 The Chair reminded Trustees that significant business is undertaken on behalf of the Board by its sub-committees and that it is important for the wider Board to be aware of the business discussed and the decisions taken. Meetings of two Sub-Committee have taken place since the last Board meeting in December. Those matters discussed and decided in these meetings were presented to the Board.

14100 An update was provided on the outcomes and decisions of the Nominations & Governance Committee, held 11 February 2026, as presented in the Executive Summary of the meeting at paper 6.3a. The Board **NOTED** that some of the key items discussed were: the Gilles Report and its relevance to how UBE undertakes governance; pre-approval of various Board roles; the Board recruitment requirements in the months ahead; and, the approval of institutional post nominals for the University of the Built Environment Honorary Community. The Board also **NOTED** that the full minutes of the meeting will be available for reference on the Trustee Portal.

14101 An update was provided on the outcomes and decisions of the Finance Committee, held 11 March 2026, as presented in the Executive Summary of the meeting at paper 6.3b. The Board **NOTED** that some of the key items discussed were: the revised forecast to year end; agreement of a breakeven budgetary approach to 2026/27; opening of a new account for surplus cash at bank to spread risk; not to increase bursary spend at the current time; and, an annual review of investments performance with Sarasin & Partners. The Board also **NOTED** that the full minutes of the meeting will be available for reference on the Trustee Portal.

7) OTHER MATTERS FOR NOTING ONLY

14102 **7.1) TRUSTEE CALENDAR**

14103 The Board **NOTED** the Trustee calendar of dates for 2026, noting the updates made since the last meeting, which are all accurately reflected in Outlook appointments.

14104 The Board **NOTED** the draft Trustee calendar for 2027 and that this would shortly be issued in Outlook.

ACTION: **Issue the draft 2027 Trustee Calendar in Outlook to all Trustees. [LH]**

14105 **7.2) REPORT ON HEALTH AND SAFETY**

14106 The Board **NOTED** the latest report on Health and Safety covering all UBE sites for the period December 2025-February 2026.

14107 **7.3) UBE COMPLAINTS, APPEALS AND WHISTLEBLOWING REPORT**

14108 The Board **NOTED** the data on complaints made to University of the Built Environment in Quarter 2 2025-26 as detailed in paper 7.3.

14109 The Board **NOTED** the data on appeals cases in Quarter 2 2025-26 as detailed in paper 7.3.

14110 The Board **NOTED** that there had been no whistleblowing cases in the last quarter.

14111 The Board **NOTED** the OIA cases in Quarter 2 2025-26 as detailed in paper 7.3.

14112 **7.4) DATA PROTECTION REPORT**

14113 The Board **NOTED** the ten minor data protection breaches in the December 2025-March 2026 YTD period, and that there was one Data Subject Access Requests and no third-party disclosures in this period (paper 7.4). The Board **NOTED** that the overall rate of breaches remains low. The Board also **NOTED** that the data protection function at the University is still being managed on an outsourced basis via Evalian.

14114 **7.5) STAFF ORGANISATION CHART**

14115 An updated Senior Level University staff organisational chart by department / SLT level was provided at paper 7.5 and **NOTED** by the Board.

Date of next meeting:
Thursday 9 July 2026

Meetings before 9 July 2026:
30 April 2026 – Academic Assurance Committee
6 May 2026 – Honorary Community Luncheon
20 May 2026 – Audit Committee
11 June 2026 – Nominations and Governance Committee
22 June 2026 – Finance Committee
3 July 2026 – Graduation Ceremonies (AM and PM)

Signed	Ros Kerslake
Name	Ros Kerslake CBE
Position	Chair of the Board of Trustees
Date	8 July 2026