



University of Exeter

COUNCIL

MINUTES AND ACTIONS – APPROVED BY COUNCIL

9 December 2025

09.30am-14.45pm

Council Chamber, Northcote House

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Attendees:**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Quentin Woodley (Chair)	Pro-Chancellor and Chair of Council
Professor Lisa Roberts	President and Vice-Chancellor
Professor Dan Charman	Senior Vice-President and Provost
Professor Tim Quine	Vice-President and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience)
Professor Malcolm Skingle	Pro-Chancellor and Deputy Chair of Council
Sally Cabrini	Pro-Chancellor and Senior Independent Governor
Damaris Anderson-Supple	Independent Member (<i>online</i>)
Lauren Aste	Independent Member
Rebecca Boomer-Clark	Independent Member
Nigel Cain	Independent Member
Adrian Harris	Independent Member (<i>online</i>)
Karime Hassan	Independent Member
Salam Katbi	Independent Member
Gareth Mostyn	Independent Member
Tim Weller	Independent Member
Glenn Woodcock	Independent Member
Dr Sarah Hodge	Senate Representative
Professor Maisha Reza	Senate Representative
Professor Karen Knapp	Senate Representative
Elaine Cordy	Professional Services Representative
Izzy Brinkley	President Exeter, Falmouth and Exeter Students' Union
Seb Racisz	Guild President, Exeter Students' Guild
SECRETARY	
Mike Shore-Nye	Senior Vice-President and Registrar & Secretary
APOLOGIES	
Sarah Matthews-DeMers	Independent Member

STANDING ATTENDEES

Imelda Rogers	Executive Divisional Director of Human Resources, Assurance and Culture
Dave Stacey	Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and Executive Divisional Director of Finance, Infrastructure and Commercial Services
Dr Jeremy Diaper	Director of Governance Services (<i>minutes</i>)
Alison Chambers	Chief Executive Officer, University of Exeter Guild of Students

IN ATTENDANCE FOR ALL AGENDA ITEMS

Professor Liz Jones Vice-President and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience) Elect

IN ATTENDANCE FOR INDIVIDUAL AGENDA ITEMS**Minute Item 39 – Research Performance Report 2024/25**

Professor Krasi Tsaneva-Atanasova Vice-President and Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research and Impact

Minute Item 40 – Draft Research and Innovation Strategy (2026 – 2031)

Professor Krasi Tsaneva-Atanasova Vice-President and Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research and Impact

Stuart Brocklehurst Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Business Engagement and Innovation

Minute Item 42 – Curriculum for Change Update Report

Clare Wydell Director of Education and Academic Services

Professor Beverley Hawkins Dean of Taught Students

Minute Item 45 – Colleague Experience Survey: Overview of Results

Shades Chaudhary Assistant Director, Culture and Inclusion

33. Chair's Introduction, Welcome and Declarations of Interests

33.1 The Chair welcomed Council members to the meeting and invited any declarations of interest. Sally Cabrini (Pro-Chancellor and Senior Independent Governor) declared a Conflict of Interest as a Non-Executive Director of First Group PLC in relation to minute item 44 (reports from the President of the Exeter Students' Guild and the Falmouth & Exeter Students' Union) and the issues experienced surrounding Student Bus Prices and changes to the ticket bundles available for students and staff for the 2025/26 academic year.

33.2 The Chair noted that apologies had been received from Sarah Matthews-DeMers.

34. Minutes from the Meetings held on 22 October 2025 and 23 October 2025 (CNL/51/25-26, CNL/51a/25-26, CNL/52/25-26, CNL/52a/25-26 Strictly Confidential)

34.1 Council **APPROVED** the minutes of the meetings of 22 October 2025 and 23 October 2025.

35. Action Log (CNL/53/25-26, CNL/53a/25-26 Strictly Confidential)

35.1 Council received the Action Log for information which had been updated to incorporate the

most recent actions from the Council meetings on 22 October and 23 October 2025. The current status of the actions were noted.

36. Council Business Schedule 2025-26 (CNL/54/25-26, CNL/54a/25-26, CNL/54b/25-26 Strictly Confidential)

36.1 Council received for information the Business Schedule for the Academic Year 2025-26.

37. Chair's Business and Matters Arising

37.1 The Chair provided a verbal update on the following Matters Arising:

a) QantX-Squared Investment Company

37.2 Further to the verbal update provided to Council on 23 October 2025, the Chair invited the Senior Vice-President and Registrar & Secretary to provide a verbal update on the incorporation of the QantX-Squared Investment Company and signatory process. It was noted that the Company had been incorporated on 24 October 2025, but there had been some minor delays in QantX issuing the final Framework agreement in part due to some of the other Universities needing to issue updated disclosure letters as part of the Framework Agreement. The latest update provided by the SETsquared Executive Director on 8 December 2025 had indicated that all outstanding matters had now been resolved and it was anticipated that the agreement would be issued for signature before the Christmas Break.

b) Al Qasimi governance and drawdown of funds

37.3 The Chair provided an update to Council on Al Qasimi governance and the drawdown of funds. The Al Qasimi Building Outline Business Case had been approved by Council in May 2024, which had enabled the release of £6.4m to take the project through to the end of RIBA stage 4 and development of the Full Business Case. As a result of project delays caused by a necessary period of value engineering and review of the planning application the end of RIBA stage 4 was 9 months later than originally planned.

37.4 In order to progress the project to the end of RIBA stage 4 and presentation of the Full Business Case to Council in April 2026 an outlay of £7.5m had been required. This necessitated an earlier draw down of £1.1m to fund professional fees, including the contractor, design team, project management, cost consultancy and planning advisor.

37.5 Council noted that this drawn down of £1.1m from the £30m capital placemaker had been approved under Chair's action ahead of Council approval of the Full Business Case in April 2026. The total budget of £30 million had not changed as a result of this Chair's action to bring forward the planned spend.

c) Update on Council Effectiveness Review

37.6 Following a competitive procurement process, Halpin (part of Huron Consulting) had been formally appointed to undertake an external Council Effectiveness review. The review was scheduled to commence with an initial scoping meeting with the Steering Group in March – April 2026. A structured set of 14 questions on Board processes, Council Member Recruitment and onboarding, and board structure and skills had been developed by the Chair of Council and Director of Governance Services in consultation with Governance and Nominations Committee to ensure a clear focus on key issues and to help identify impactful

recommendations.

37.7 Initial desk-based research and analysis would be completed during the first half of 2026, with a preliminary report prepared by late June 2026. Further work would then be completed during Term 1 of the Academic Year 2026-27, including observation of selected Council and Council committee meetings. An initial report would be prepared by December 2026 and presented to Council in February 2027.

37.8 As part of the Council effectiveness review, Shakespeare Martineau would also be undertaking a desk-based review of the University's articles of governance, which would inform the approach to the forthcoming refresh of the University's Statutes and Ordinances.

d) Update on the refresh of the Committee of University Chairs (CUC) HE Code of Governance

37.9 The Committee of University Chairs (CUC) had requested input into the refresh of the Higher Education Code of Governance through a call for evidence and invitation for input from various stakeholders to enhance governance practices in the sector. The Chair confirmed that the University had submitted a consultation response which had incorporated feedback from Governance and Nominations Committee and the Chair of Audit and Risk Committee.

37.10 It was highlighted that Ian Cornish (Chair of the Board of Governors, Leeds Beckett University) was chairing the Review of the Code and had provided an update to a recent CUC meeting. The review of the CUC HE Code of Governance was intended to help strengthen University governance and provide a framework which would respond to the challenges facing the sector. The review of the Code would focus on a number of key areas, including: the important partnership between the governing body and executive teams; the relationship of the Vice-Chancellor and Chair of Council; clarification surrounding the role of the Chair, the Vice-Chancellor and the Chair of Audit and Risk Committee; the size, shape and composition of the governing body; the need for external effectiveness reviews to address key governance issues; and enhancing the level of transparency to demonstrate good governance to external stakeholders.

a) Additional training and support in relation to new board portal

37.11 Following the transition to the use of a new board portal over summer 2025, the Chair encouraged members to contact the Governance Services team if they were encountering any issues or required additional training or support.

38. President and Vice-Chancellor's Report (CNL/55/25-26 Strictly Confidential)

38.1 The University had been ranked in the top four Higher Education institutions in the world and 1st in the UK in the QS World University Rankings (Sustainability 2026) for the way in which it had prioritised the health and wellbeing of its students and broader society.

38.2 The Board of Directors at the Novo Nordisk Foundation (the world's largest charitable foundation by funds held) had agreed to support a UK Biobank project led by Professor Jon Mill (Professor of Epigenomics, Medical School), which had the potential to transform the ability to predict disease risk and enhance personalised medicine.

Closed Minute – Commercial in Confidence

38.6 In relation to the Life-long Learning Entitlement (LLE):

38.6.1 Council noted that the Lifelong Learning Entitlement (LLE) was a new funding system in England that would replace the current student finance system for related courses starting on or after 1 January 2027;

38.6.2 The LLE would enable individuals to learn, upskill, and retrain flexibly, with a focus on modular provision. Students would be able to use funding flexibly across their lifetime and would be available for both full-time or part-time courses (equivalent to 4 years of full-time post-18 education), but maintenance loans would only be available for in-person courses;

38.6.3 The minimum module size to be eligible for LLE funding would be 30 credits. This would allow learners to access 30-credit modules that form part of full qualifications;

38.6.4 Following the University's application to the Department for Education, formal approval had had been received on Friday 5th December to deliver LLE-funded modular provision from January 2027.

Closed Minute – Commercial In confidence

38.7 In relation to Artificial Intelligence:

38.7.1 It was noted that it would be important to actively consider the transformative impact of Agentic AI on education, teaching and learning, including enhancing student experience, assessment and feedback;

38.7.2 The digital team were developing a number of proof of concepts and case studies to consider wider enhancements to the student experience that could be enabled by AI, including the application of Agentic AI in the creation of new modules, teaching enhancements, and 24/7 student support;

38.7.3 The Higher Education Transformation Expo had been held in November 2025 which had explored the latest trends and technologies transforming the higher education landscape, including the potential enhancements that AI could foster to curriculum design, student skills development and readiness for employment;

38.8 Council commended the University for the important role they had played at COP30, the UN Climate Change Conference held in Belém, Brazil from 10-21 November 2025. It was noted that Exeter's experts working on the environment and climate emergency had helped to provide the latest research, policy insight and solutions to the escalating climate crisis. This had included:

38.8.1 The second Global Tipping Points report, led by Professor Tim Lenton (Global Systems Institute) which had been published to coincide with the pre-COP30 meeting in Brasilia and had been presented and discussion at various events with ministers;

38.8.2 Acting as a core partner of the Planetary Science Pavilion, alongside research institutions from Brazil, the US and Germany, and international organisations. The Pavilion had served as a high-profile platform to ensure science was central to COP 30 and enabled meaningful engagement between scientists, policymakers, negotiators, Indigenous leaders, and the wider public;

38.8.3 Professor Richard Betts (Chair in Climate Impacts) had showcased UK Brazil Research Partnerships on AmazonFACE and advancing Global Forest Science for Climate Policy;

38.8.4 Professor Pierre Friedlingstien (Global Systems Institute) had led on the annual Carbon Budget which tracked the trends in global carbon emissions;

38.9 It was highlighted that amidst the rise of climate scepticism and disinformation in global politics, it would be important to strengthen the University's engagement with business and the financial sector. There were also opportunities to strengthen the level of engagement with insurance and the asset management industry, who were increasingly required to adapt their business models to address the growing frequency and severity of climate-related events.

38.10 The University was planning to host the second Exeter Climate Forum in 2026, which would build on the success of the first Climate Forum and provide a further opportunity for researchers, policymakers and business leaders to engage in the latest science and inspire bold action to tackle the climate emergency.

39. Research Performance Report 2024/25 (CNL/56/25-26 and CNL/55a-d/25-26 Strictly Confidential)

The Chair welcomed Professor Krasimira Tsaneva-Atanasova (Vice-President and Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research and Impact) to the meeting and invited them to briefly introduce the Research Performance Update Report.

39.1 The research income figure for Q1-Q4 in 2024/25 to the end of April 2025 was £136.8m, with the contribution to Full Economic Cost at £41.6m. It was noted that this was above plan and all Faculties had exceeded or had been close to target.

39.2 Income per FTE was provisionally reported as £102.8k for 2024/25, which was significantly above the planned £90.3k.

39.3 The University had secured a total of 712 research awards (c. £140.7m) and achieved 98% of plan. The research award success had included the following major awards:

39.3.1 £19.6m in public and private funding to support MetaHub which would explore how metamaterials could reshape sectors, from healthcare to clean energy.

39.3.2 £15.5m from the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) to the Applied Research Collaboration South West Peninsula (PenARC), a regional research partnership hosted by the Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust in collaboration with the Universities of Exeter and Plymouth.

39.4 Across all 3 Faculties, the recurrent trend was a fall in the rolling success rates from UKRI and National Academies. There was also an increasing number of higher value applications with lower success rates which was also having an increased impact on overall research award rates.

39.5 There had been a consistent decline in success rates for UKRI funding since 2022/23, which reflected increased competition for funding. As a result of the current awards performance there was concern in relation to the income forecast for 2025/26 and overall success rates of UKRI applications across all Faculties.

Closed Minute – Strictly Confidential and Commercial in Confidence

ACTION: To provide a Strategic update to Council highlighting the alignment between the University's Strategy 2030 ambitions, UK Industrial Strategy and government priorities, including mapping specific research funding opportunities to potential philanthropic donors/foundations and individual academic staff expertise and areas of research focus.

ACTION: To schedule a further update on research award performance, including action plans to enhance success rates and lessons learned.

ACTION: To provide a more detailed breakdown of historic research income performance, including specific funders and areas that had secured full economic costing.

40. Research and Innovation Strategy 2026-2031 (CNL/57/25-26 and CNL/57a-d/25-26 Strictly Confidential)

The Chair welcomed Stuart Brocklehurst (Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Business Engagement and Innovation) to the meeting.

40.1 The Research and Innovation (R&I) Strategy 2026-2031 was designed to empower the community to deliver excellence, deepen collaboration, and translate ideas into impact to realise the vision of Strategy 2030;

40.2 The draft version of the Research & Innovation Strategy had been revised and updated to incorporate feedback from UEB and the wider University community. There had been several changes included since an iterative draft had been presented to Senate in March 2025, including:

40.2.1 The integration of research and innovation into one cohesive strategy;

40.2.2 Influence and reputation had been elevated to a strategic priority that would underpin excellent performance;

40.2.3 Enhanced alignment with the Government's Industrial Strategy and strategic framework for interdisciplinary research and innovation;

40.3 The Strategy was focused around three strategic priorities: Research Quality; Financial Sustainability; and the newly elevated priority of Influence & Reputation;

40.4 There were also three research pillars (interdisciplinary research; innovation and impact; and the research-education ecosystem) which were designed to enable delivery of the strategy in alignment with the Industrial Strategy, government mission and focus on national priorities surrounding economic growth, industrial capability and regional impact;

40.5 Further work would be undertaken to revitalise research networks and institutes to help develop an interconnected research eco-system and enable the University to enhance interdisciplinary engagement and provide flagship vehicles for delivering significant, world-

leading research activity, characterised by a clear, ambitious vision and groundbreaking research goals;

40.6 The following was noted in discussion:

40.6.1 The emphasis on the connection between education and research to help foster an integrated learning community and placing students at the heart of the eco-system was welcomed. It was highlighted that the Exeter Students' Guild Priority Surveys had highlighted the potential to enhance the levels of undergraduate student opportunities, including access to student internships, engagement in research partnerships and involvement in solving research problems. It was also noted that it was particularly important improve access to opportunities for those from widening participation backgrounds;

40.6.2 The integration of research and innovation into one cohesive strategy was supported and the importance of ensuring a holistic and co-ordinated approach to enhancing impactful research and commercial funding opportunities was affirmed;

40.6.3 The Strategy had been developed in alignment with the UK Industrial's Strategy and focus on eight high-growth areas (IS-8 sectors) to ensure focus on attracting government and industry investment. A review of previous industrial strategies and related documentation had also been undertaken to provide assurance that the current government focus was sufficiently future-proofed. This had reaffirmed that there was a consistent focus on these sectors which remained critical to the UK's future competitiveness in a global economy;

40.6.4 It would be helpful to consider giving greater prominence to the role AI in enabling research;

40.6.5 That further reflection could be given to providing greater support and recognition to the innovative contribution of education and scholarship staff, especially in light of the strategic importance of CPD, Degree Apprenticeships and executive education to enabling real-world changes and contributing to societal impact;

40.6.6 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Business Engagement and Innovation) was working in collaboration with the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) at the University of Leeds to facilitate wider dialogue within the Russell Group and consider opportunities to uniformly embed business engagement and innovation in academic promotion criteria to help incentivise a wider focus on external industry engagement activity across the sector;

40.6.7 Across the strategic priorities, pillars and enablers there was quite an extensive list of priority actions, and it would be helpful to consider whether there were further opportunities to streamline the number of priorities;

40.7 That the new Research & Innovation Strategy was intended to enable the University to respond to an uncertain Higher Educational environment and rapidly evolving research funding landscape. Whilst the updated version of the Strategy built upon elements of good practice in the previous strategy, the latest version had been evolved to show a clearer interconnection between research, business engagement and industry, along with greater clarity surrounding the key areas of specialisation required to ensure strategic response and long-term financial sustainability and resilience over the next 5 years;

40.8 In relation to The Digital Research Infrastructure (DRI):

40.8.1 The DRI project was designed to integrate high-performance computing, research data storage, and secure research environments into a resilient, scalable and sustainable ecosystem;

40.8.2 Modernising the University's Digital Research Infrastructure was essential to enable research excellence, improved research, reputation and sustainability, and help secure Exeter's position at the forefront of global research and innovation. The previous computing capability was end of life technology and the new infrastructure would be expanded beyond computer science, physics and engineering to encompass all research disciplines.

AGREED: To endorse the draft Research and Innovation Strategy 2026-2031 and to reschedule for final Council approval on 29 April 2026.

ACTION: To consider the development of additional initiatives to help support and facilitate undergraduate student engagement in research activities and involvement in solving research problems.

ACTION: To develop a clearer set of metrics to enable Council to monitor progress in the implementation of the new Research & Innovation Strategy and delivery of key actions across the strategic priorities, pillars and enablers.

ACTION: To develop a detailed implementation plan with clear timelines to help with prioritisation and delivery of actions.

41. Remuneration Committee Annual Report 2024/25 (CNL/58/25-26 and CNL/58a/25-26 Strictly Confidential)

41.1 The Chair invited the Pro-Chancellors and Independent Class II members of Council to remain in the meeting for a confidential report from the Chair of the remuneration Committee. The Remuneration Committee Annual Report summarised the key decisions and issues considered by the Remuneration Committee in 2024/25;

41.2 The annual report also set out the context and principles which informed the Committee's decisions to ensure that these aligned with the University's strategic goals and sector standards, ensuring robust governance in remuneration practices.

42. Curriculum for Change (CNL/59/25-26 and CNL/59a/25-26 Strictly Confidential)

42.1 The University's Strategy 2030 set out the aim to 'challenge and inspire a community of learners from every background to thrive, develop the skills they will need for the future and lead the change the world needs'. The Curriculum for Change (C4C) Programme was designed to ensure that the University achieved the Strategy 2030 aim, in the context of the prevailing funding environment, and thereby deliver excellent experience and outcomes for all our students. It also complemented Project 90 that was focused on achieving significant NSS improvement

- through consistent adoption of university policy and best practice;
- 42.2 Providing undergraduate students with enhanced support for Belonging and Transition, comprehensive application of the Exeter Skills Framework, and offering access to skills-focused minors and improved placement opportunities remained critical to delivering a distinctive model of education at Exeter that improved equity and enhanced the employability of graduates;
- 42.3 Curriculum for Change (C4C) was a significant, institution-wide curriculum transformation programme focused on the undergraduate portfolio. The three-core objectives of the programme were to:
- 42.3.1 Deliver a distinctive model of education at Exeter that improved equity and enhanced the employability of the University's graduates;
- 42.3.2 Create a sustainable model that allowed the University to deliver programmes within the constraints of the Undergraduate Home fee;
- 42.3.3. Optimise the use of our infrastructure and ensure readiness for the future.
- 42.4 In relation to the Teaching Excellence Framework:
- 42.4.1 The Office for Students (OfS) was proposing a new quality assessment system that would integrate the existing assessment activity with the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF). This new system aimed to provide a clear view of the quality of teaching and learning delivered by every registered university and college;
- 42.4.2 The OfS's strategy for 2025-30 (as detailed in Part II, CNL/77/25-26) included developing a more coherent and efficient quality system that drives continuous improvement across the sector.
- 42.5 The main focus of the QS Reimagine Education Awards & Conference held in December 2025 had been on exploring the growing divide in higher education between institutions that embraced innovation and those falling behind, which reaffirmed the importance of the University's focus on driving educational innovation and evolving the future of learning to Enhance student outcomes and graduate employability.
- 42.6 In relation to NSS performance:
- 42.6.1 It was recognised that the current NSS performance was not consistent with TEF Gold and that it would be critical to accelerate significant improvements through a whole institutional focus on delivering a consistently excellent experience for all students and to secure a 90% NSS score by 2027/28;
- 42.6.2 That there would only be 3 remaining cycles of NSS data to influence the next TEF and that achieving 90% in an NSS score by 2027/28 would require an 8% increase in NSS KPI over the next 3 cycles, and at least a 2.7% improvement in KPI by 2025-26.
- 42.7 In relation educational innovation:

- 42.7.1 It was highlighted that outside of HE there had been a number of unique educational learning innovations which had developed more personalised education and learning, including Sparx Maths for students aged 11-16 which was now being utilised by c. 2,500 secondary Schools. It was recognised that recent enhancements in technological innovations could further optimise teaching and learning and radically enhance educational delivery and pedagogical approaches;
- 42.7.2 Whilst the Academic Development Team had recently been reshaped to enable a greater focus on educational innovation, it was nevertheless acknowledged that there were further opportunities to invest in learning innovations to improve education;
- 42.7.3 In the current constrained funding environment there were competing demands for financial resources and so there were no current plans for significant investment in further pedagogical innovations, especially in light of the need for an institution-wide focus on implementation of the curriculum for change programme, delivery of project 90, and improving performance in boost departments.
- 42.8 In relation to communications:
- 42.8.1 An external marketing partner (Mammoth) was being utilised to develop the University's communications campaign for Curriculum for Change and to highlight the positive enhancements that had been introduced in response to student feedback;
- 42.8.2 That it would be important to continue to enhance communications in collaboration with the Exeter Students' Guild and Falmouth & Exeter Students' Union, especially in relation to developing proactive communications to prevent potential misunderstanding and to maintain transparency and trust.
- 42.9 It was noted that the Academic Governance, Education and Student Experience Committee had affirmed that the format of Curriculum for Change reports should continue to be improved to provide enhanced visibility of progress against key workstreams and timeframes for delivery, benefits realisation, teaching cost recovery, and rag rated reporting on key milestones to more clearly highlight progress against implementation. Council re-affirmed that it would be important to have strategic oversight surrounding the implementation of the Curriculum for Change programme and to also be provided with greater clarity surrounding the linkages between Curriculum for Change, TEF, NSS and other student surveys. It was also noted that this more detailed level of visibility on progress with the Curriculum for Change programme would also help prevent the potential for scope creep within the project.
- 42.10 That whilst Curriculum for Change and Project 90 had separate strands of activity, it would be important to ensure these were connected and to provide greater clarity to Council surrounding the linkages between these strategic initiatives.
- 42.11 In relation to Team Teaching:
- 42.11.1 It was recognised that the move towards Team Teaching would require a culture shift in some parts of the University, but would be beneficial in helping to embed a collaborative approach

and leverage the combined expertise across the University to enhance the learning experience for students. In addition to helping to improve student learning outcomes, fostering greater collaboration and communities of best practice, Team Teaching would also enable greater flexibility for staff and minimize workload.

42.12 In relation to embedding institutional best practice:

42.12.1 It was highlighted that it would be helpful to develop a set of case studies and templates to help instil a consistent approach to assessment and feedback (including mark sheets and moderation) and to ensure this was viewed informed by student feedback and expectations.

43. Academic Assurance 2024/25: Quality and Standards (OfS B Conditions) (CNL/60/25-26 and CNL/60a/25-26 Strictly Confidential)

43.1 As part of the University's Regulatory Framework, there was a requirement to ensure compliance with the OfS B Conditions of registration which related to the quality and standards of the provider;

43.2 The report provided outcomes focused assurance for the 2024/25 Academic Year that the University continued to comply with the requirements of the OfS as they related to the quality of education;

43.3 The report detailed a summary of key education actions undertaken in 2024/25, a RAG-rated analysis of performance in key measures of the Quality of Education, and a summary of key education actions in progress in 2024/25;

43.4 Council noted that the RAG-rating reflected an assessment of the progress in meeting the University's strategic ambitions (particularly associated with the National Student Survey) and was not intended to suggest that the University was at risk of non-compliance with the OfS B Conditions of Registration.

44. Reports from the Presidents of the Students' Guild and the Falmouth and Exeter Students' Union (CNL/61/25-26, CNL/62/25-26, CNL/62b/25-26 Strictly Confidential)

44.1 The President of the Exeter Students' Guild presented their report to Council and highlighted that the following key priorities for the 2025/26 academic year had been informed by the Guild's Data Insights and student feedback:

44.2 *In relation to the Cost of Belonging Crisis:*

44.2.1 In last year's 'Your Way, Your Say' Survey, 54% of students had reported they were struggling to engage with activities outside of their studies due to the additional money, time and social capital required. The importance of increasing student involvement in extra-curricular activities and eliminating barriers to engagement was highlighted as a critical priority to help enhance the sense of belonging and enable better long-term student outcomes;

44.3 *In relation to the Cost-of-Living Crisis:*

44.3.1 There remained a continued focus on addressing the impact of the Cost-of-Living Crisis on students by expanding the food voucher scheme for vulnerable students.

44.4 *In relation to International Student Belonging:*

44.4.1 It was noted that in a recent collaborative survey with other Russell Group Student Unions, 1 in 3 international students had admitted to experiencing racism in the UK. A key Guild priority was on enhancing international student belonging in Exeter by working with local partners in the city and across the wider region to provide a welcoming environment to students from all backgrounds and to help counter hostile narratives surrounding international migration;

44.5 *In relation to AI Integration and Policy:*

44.5.1 The student community had expressed curiosity about the potential use of AI, but there remained some concerns surrounding data privacy, the impacts on graduate employability and the environment. The ethical integration of AI into the curriculum in alignment with a clearly understood AI Policy was therefore a key priority to avoid the potential of disadvantaging any marginalized students;

44.6 *In relation to Employability:*

44.6.1 68% of undergraduates had reported that they needed to undertake paid work during term time alongside their studies and that this impacted their ability to engage in wider opportunities. There was a key focus on enhancing flexible opportunities for students and highlighting the importance of engaging in extra-curricular activities;

44.7 *In relation to Classicism:*

44.7.1 It was recognized that Classicism continued to be a prevalent issue experienced at the University and that a key area of focus was working with student societies to tell positive stories and tackle class bias, prejudice and harmful stereotypes;

44.8 The Guild priorities survey had received c. 4,200 responses and proved beneficial to developing an understanding of the underlying data and an early indication of NSS scores. The Love Exeter campaign had been expanded with the aim to build strong relationships across every Department;

44.9 The following in relation to student academic representation in Departments:

44.9.1 Work had been initiated by the Exeter Guild of Students to review the academic representation system to improve consistency of Academic Representative across Departments and improve student voice scores in NSS;

44.9.2 That there was a further need to enhance coverage of student academic representation in Project 90 Boost Departments. It was noted that it had proved especially challenging to engage student representatives in the Department of Sport and Exercise Science, particularly as they were often otherwise engaged in sporting activities;

- 44.9.3 The importance of normalising speaking directly to students to ascertain real-time feedback or undertaking pulse surveys on a weekly basis.
- 44.10 The Exeter President of the Falmouth and Exeter Students' Union drew attention to the following student priorities for the 2025/26 academic year:
- 44.10.1 It was noted that there had been a number of changes to the bus travel pricing and ticket bundles available in Cornwall for the 2025/26 academic year which had presented financial challenges and accessibility difficulties for both staff and students. Joint communications had been issued with Falmouth University and a working group had been established to lobby Cornwall Council, bus companies and the local MP for the reinstatement of cheaper capped fares. A limited supply of bus tickets had also been provided to students in need via the Students' Union advice service.
- 44.10.2 The Students' Union was working to enhance trans inclusion across all elements of the student experience to enhance student belonging and provide appropriate support.
- 44.10.3 The provision for neuro diverse students had been reviewed, and work was underway to create and adapt suitable study spaces for neuro diverse students.
- 44.10.4 The Students' Union had started development of the new 2025-2030 Strategic Plan. This would be launched at the end of November with the aim of reaffirming the important role of the Students Union as a trusted local partner in Cornwall.
- 44.10.5 A Getting Started Survey had been undertaken for all first-year students in Cornwall in Welcome Week to identify common themes within the student experience which has been utilised to help identify key areas of focus and projects. This academic year had seen the highest response rate with over 1,100 student responses (a 200% increase from the previous year). Approximately 24% of Exeter students had indicated they were working alongside their studies, with 14% of postgraduate students and 7% of Undergraduate students indicating that they were currently working c. 10-30 hours a week alongside their studies. 42% of students had also indicated that they had struggled to find part time employment either on campus or in the local community. Discussions were ongoing with FX Plus to try and identify further employment opportunities on campus for students to support them during their studies and gain valuable work experience.
- 44.10.6 There were now approximately 150 reps for Exeter in Cornwall.
- 44.11 The importance of the following was noted in discussion:
- 44.11.1 Exploring opportunities to widening the distribution of part-time paid student roles in the Exeter Students' Guild and the Falmouth & Exeter Students' Union to maximize impact and provide enhance employability skills across the student community.
- 44.11.2 Enhancing the sense of belonging amongst the student community and promoting the value of cultural diversity to the University community.

44.11.3 Identifying creative ways for delivering teaching and assessment (including integrated placement opportunities) to simultaneously ensure students were able to actively engage in learning and development opportunities and develop wider experience.

44.11.4 Fostering collective sense of student community and belonging through interconnected activities and co-ordinated communications that span across student societies, academic societies, student representatives, advice services and wider social activities.

45. Colleague Experience Survey: Overview of Results (CNL/63/25-26 Strictly Confidential)

45.1 The latest Colleague Experience Survey (conducted over 3 weeks from 3 June 2025) had covered Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), Wellbeing, Engagement, and Change, with additional questions about current sector context and bespoke questions for Faculties and Professional Services.

45.2 Key findings from the latest survey indicated small improvements in wellbeing questions relating to Workload, Mental Health Disclosures, and Organisational Support. These improvements were encouraging in the context of the current HE sector-wide challenges and alongside the timing of surveys during a period of significant institutional change, including the second round of the University's Voluntary Redundancy Scheme.

45.3 However, there had been declines in relation to Staff Growth, Career path and Career Progression Scores.

45.4 The main areas of focus and action planning were in relation to Growth, Workload, Fair Opportunities, Belonging, and Colleague Wellbeing.

45.5 In relation to the construction, design and frequency of the Colleague Experience survey tool:

45.5.1 The Colleague Experience Surveys were constructed in house and a third-party provider (Peakon Workday) was utilised to run the survey tool. The tool typically utilised questions from a suggested set of questions based on organisational psychology research and best practice, but there were also opportunities to utilise custom question sets as needed;

45.5.2 The question setting exercise was led by the Wellbeing, Inclusion and Culture Committee (WICC), with final sign-off of the questions by the University Executive Board. A consistent set of questions had been run each summer, with a series of termly pulse surveys also utilised with different question sets;

45.5.3 The survey was sent via email to all staff, with a direct link and regular reminders from the Workday tool. A kiosk set up was also available for non-desk-based staff;

45.5.4 That Professional services leaders and managers were able to see their own team feedback, providing the size of their team was above 7 FTE;

45.5.5 The PeakOn system clearly highlighted particular areas of concern or issues to be addressed via interactive dashboards.

45.6 In relation to Career Progression:

45.6.1 The survey scores reflected the fact that there were not the same promotional opportunities in Professional Services careers or mechanisms to be promoted within your current role. It was also recognised that in the challenging financial environment a number of vacancies had been removed and leadership positions had not been replaced.

45.6.2 There had been sustained institutional focus on development of tools to assist career progression including creation of a digital skills hub and AI library.

45.6.3 An internal talent development programme (TIDE – Talent, Innovation, Discovery and Engagement) for Professional Services colleagues working up to Grade E had also been introduced to help staff develop strategic awareness, learn and refine skills and network with colleagues across the University.

45.7 In relation to Workload:

45.7.1 Some colleagues had indicated that they felt excessive workloads and a lack of recognition were sources of stress and that the University needed to prioritize workload management. A workshop session was being held with the Professional Services Divisional Leadership Team (PSDLT) to develop improved guidance to support staff on a range of workload issues, including clearer signposting to tools, resources and digital solutions.

45.8 The following was noted in discussion:

45.8.1 That it would be beneficial for Council to be provided with a more detailed breakdown of feedback in specific Departments and Faculties to enable them to monitor the implementation of strategic change across the organisation and to help ascertain if there were any specific areas of concern.

45.9 In relation to survey response rates:

45.9.1 The response rate for Professional Services colleagues was 70% (up from 63% in May 2024) and 36% of Academic colleagues (up from 30% in May 2024). This reflected the general trends at other institutions where there tended to be a lower response from academic colleagues than in Professional Services;

45.9.2 Whilst it was recognised that there were clear communications, regular reminders and strong encouragement issued to staff to complete the Colleague Experience Survey across a wide range of forums (including Faculty Executive Board, Divisional SLT and Departmental meetings), Council affirmed the need to enhance the overall response rates amongst academic staff above 36% to ensure there was increased awareness and insight into staff concerns especially during a period of significant sector-wide uncertainty, transformation and strategic change. It was noted that there was no clear indication that the low response rate signified indifference or dissatisfaction, but it was affirmed that an increased level of response would provide more deep-seated understanding and awareness of key issues in the wider academic community;

45.9.3 That it would be helpful to explore the possibility of further segmenting the analysis of response rate according to different age groups to consider the possibility of enhancing response rates through specific targeted communications campaigns, identify any generational gaps and potential opportunities to enhance response rates and feedback through segmentation;

45.9.4 That improving the feedback loop and institutional communications surrounding impactful actions and enhancements introduced in response to staff feedback could incentivise completing the survey and improve the levels of participation and overall response rates.

45.10 In relation to experience surveys in other educational settings:

45.10.1 It was highlighted that there was precedent in large multi-academy trusts schools (including primary, secondary and special schools) of significantly increasing the level of completion of staff surveys from c. 56% to closer to 94-96% and that in spite of the historic sector-wide rates of low completion amongst the academic community there should therefore be a sustained focus on increasing response rates;

45.10.2 Other similar themes had emerged from surveys in schools, including: workload, progression, professional development, and teaching and teaching support.

45.11. In relation to potential enhancements to the Staff Surveys and analysis:

45.11.1 That it would be useful to consider optimising utilisation of micropolls (including shorter and more targeted surveys) to avoid survey fatigue and to facilitate focused interventions at particular groups or areas of the staff community. It was recognised that enhancing this approach could be useful to quickly gather feedback to gauge the views of the community, identify specific areas for improvement or monitor effectiveness;

45.11.2 That it would be helpful to explore widening visibility of management data sets (including staff sickness, absence data and attendance trends, or spectrum life trends and general feedback) at a more localised level to help develop a more in-depth analysis of particular areas of concern.

ACTION: To incorporate an annual report on the Colleague Experience Survey within the Council Schedule of Business.

ACTION: To update the format of the report to include a more detailed overview of feedback across specific Departments and Faculties.

ACTION: To maintain a sustained focus on enhancing the levels of engagement and response rates to the survey amongst the academic staff community.

46. University Mental Wellbeing Strategy (CNL/64/25-26, CNL/64a/25-26 and CNL/64b/25-26 Confidential)

46.1 The University continued to place the mental health of the student and staff community at the heart of its mission. The Mental Wellbeing Strategy was a key enabler of Strategy 2030 with

its focus on enabling health, wellbeing, social justice and inclusion.

- 46.2 The vision, strategic aims and objectives for mental health aligned with a whole University approach informed by best-practice guidance from Universities UK, the University Mental Health Charter, the Health and Safety Executive Management Standards (Mental Health) and internal research.
- 46.3 The University Mental Wellbeing Strategy had four pillars of delivery (Live, Support, Learn and Work) which summarised the University's commitments in relation to mental health and wellbeing for the whole community. An Equality Impact Assessment had been undertaken to ensure that all protected characteristics had been appropriately considered and no issues were identified.
- 46.4 The Committee commended the comprehensiveness of the work undertaken to develop the University Mental Wellbeing Strategy and the widespread consultation and engagement. It was agreed that the language utilised in the Strategy should be simplified in certain areas to ensure it was more accessible and could be easily read and assimilated, especially with current and prospective students in mind;
- 46.5 The Committee also noted that further consideration was being given to the development of an additional suite of materials (including digital content, videos and social media campaign) to help maximise engagement with a wider audience.
- 46.6. The following was noted in discussion:
- 46.6.1 That new students joining the University community had increasingly complex mental health issues which reflected a wider sector trend and growing mental and growing health crisis in higher education which had seen a continued decline in recent years and many adverse effects as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic (including anxiety, depression and stress);
- 46.6.2 The University actively monitored any students that presented with significant mental health issues on arrival to actively support their transition to the University and put in place any appropriate support measures. This included Individual Learning Plans (ILP) which were put in place to support learning and identify any recommended reasonable adjustments required by the Department or Faculty;
- 46.6.3 There was an increasing focus on tailoring support services to the diverse needs of the student community, enhancing wrap-around support and building resilience, and fostering greater collaboration and partnership with external agencies, including the NHS, charities and providers to enhance access to integrated support and provide a holistic approach to wellbeing.
- AGREED:** That a set of metrics would be developed to help enable Council to monitor progress against implementation of the Mental Wellbeing Strategy 2030.

APPROVED: The Mental Wellbeing Strategy 2030 approval, subject to inclusion of a quotation from the President and Vice-Chancellor in the foreword to the Strategy.

47. University Annual Reports

a) Approval of the Annual Report and University Financial Statements to 31 July 2025 **(CNL/65/25-26 and CNL/65a/25-26, Confidential)**

- 47.1 The Annual Report and Financial Statements (Year End 31 July 2025) had been reviewed and endorsed by the University Executive Board, Audit and Risk Committee and Finance and Investment Committee. Following final approval by Council they would be signed by University officials and KPMG prior to being submitted to the Office for Students as part of the annual accountability process.
- 47.2 The Annual Report and Financial Statements to 31 July 2025 would be published on the University's website within 2 weeks of being signed.
- 47.3 Council commended the hard work undertaken by colleagues in preparation of the financial statements and the senior leadership team for effectively enabling strategic change and securing a positive financial position in a challenging sector-wide landscape.
- 47.4 In relation to carbon emissions:
- 47.4.1 Council noted that Scope 1 and 2 emissions had increased by 44% compared to 2023/24 which was due to the 6-month break in the zero-carbon tariff which could potentially result in reputational risk and a communications challenge. However, it was noted that this could be mitigated by the progress made on the other scope emissions and positive narrative around energy consumption for the year which had seen a 2% reduction compared to 2023/24, which indicated continued progress towards energy efficiency despite operational growth. Lessons learned from the issues surrounding the 6-month break in tariff were being discussed and considered by the Climate and Environmental Crisis Board. External assurance had also been secured on the sustainability data which would be presented to Audit and Risk Committee for endorsement on 26 March 2026 prior to final sign-off by the Chair of Council.

b) External Auditor's Report (CNL/65b/25-26, Confidential)

- 47.5 No significant issues or errors were reported following audit of the consolidated financial statements for the year ended 31 July 2025. A final review would be conducted when the accounts had been finalised and signed.
- 47.6 In relation to the Going Concern section:
- 47.6.1 The Going Concern section was a standard addition to external audit reports based on the significant financial challenges faced across the sector. No specific concerns had been identified;
- 47.6.2 That the institutions that faced significant issues in relation to Going Concern tended to publish their annual reports and financial statements late in the cycle. There were currently only a small sample size of institutions that had already published their annual report and financial statements (Year End 31 July 2025), but it was clear that there was a mixed mixed picture emerging in terms of financial performance across the sector. One key trend across the sector was that institutions recognised globally in the Top 50 in the QS World University rankings had been less impacted by the sector-wide international student

recruitment challenges and therefore demonstrated stronger financial performance;

47.6.3 Council noted that a more detailed benchmarking exercise would be undertaken comparing financial performance across the Russell Group and wider comparator institutions which would be presented to Council for discussion at the forthcoming meeting on 25th February 2026.

47.7 No unadjusted audit difference had been identified as a result of the audit in relation to account balances or disclosures. A small amount of disclosure misstatements had been identified as a result of the audit.

c) **Letter of Representation (CNL/65c/25-26, Confidential)**

47.8 Council noted the letter of representation. It was affirmed that no specific representations had been requested in addition to the areas normally covered by the standard representation letter for the year ended 31 July 2025.

d) **Going Concern Briefing (CNL/65d/25-26, Confidential)**

47.9 The Going Concern had been updated to include additional information on covenants, and specific detail on the covenant with the least headroom.

47.10 The Committee noted that Appendix 2 of the briefing provided an overview of covenant headroom provision and it was affirmed that this would be delivered within 2025/26.

47.11 Council noted the accounts had been prepared on a going concern basis and was assured that it demonstrated the University's medium-term financial sustainability and with continued strong cash balances was confident in being considered a going concern.

e) **Contingent Liabilities (as at 31 July 2025) (CNL/65e/25-26, Confidential)**

47.12 The Committee was referred to Note 27 in the Annual Report and Financial Statements that detailed the University's financial guarantees and commitments with third parties that had not been quantified as the likelihood of them being realised would be remote. The two key commitments in place as at 31 July 2025 were detailed as:

47.12.1 The University acts as guarantor, jointly with Falmouth University, on the FX Plus Ltd bank loans. This was considered unlikely to be realised due to the University's control over the situation.

47.12.2 The University underwrites the rental income charged to INTO University of Exeter LLP for the use of academic and residential buildings. This was considered unlikely to be realised due to detailed oversight of financial performance.

47.13 Council was assured there were no immediate concerns in relation to the two contingent liabilities outlined.

f) **Financial Covenants 2024/25 (CNL/65f/25-26, Confidential – Commercial in Confidence)**

47.14 The Committee was provided with assurance that all covenant tests had been passed for 2024-25 as at 31 July 2025 financial year end and noted the outlook detailed in Section 2 of the forecast compliance with all covenants.

Closed Minute – Confidential, Commercial in Confidence

e) Value for Money Report (CNL/65g/25-26, Confidential)

47.17 The Value for Money Report provided an overview on the adequacy and effectiveness of the University's arrangements for delivery of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. Whilst a formal statement was no longer required, the Audit and Risk Committee retained responsibility for assurance that the University's activities delivered value for money. The report provided confirmation that the University had continued to deliver value for money across its portfolio of teaching, research and knowledge exchange, and it provided signposts to the initiatives in place to improve value for money where opportunities for improvement had been identified.

47.18 Following consultation and engagement with the Chair of Council and Chair of Audit and Risk Committee, the value for money paper would be further developed beyond the narrow definitions of economy, efficiency and effectiveness, with a focus on wider financial sustainability to ensure the University was able to deliver value into the medium term and for future generations.

APPROVED: The University's Annual Report and Financial Statements to 31 July 2025 for signing.

APPROVED: Delegated approval of Annual Financial Return 2025 (to OfS) to the accountable officer, the President and Vice-Chancellor.

APPROVED: The signing of the Letter of Representation to KPMG.

APPROVED: The Going Concern basis on which the financial statements have been prepared and the accompanying justification and analysis.

NOTED: The significant accounting judgments affecting the 2024/25 financial statements, including the current status of our contingent liability exposure.

NOTED: The University's compliance with debt lending covenants for 2024-25.

48. First Financial Forecast 2025-26 (CNL/66/25-26 Strictly Confidential)

48.1 The Chief Financial Officer presented an update on the first financial forecast for 2025-26 (based on 3 months of actual results and 9 forecast periods).

Closed Minute – Strictly Confidential

49. Risk Report 1: Academic Year 2025-26 (including Horizon Scanning) (CNL/67/25-26 Strictly Confidential)

49.1 Council were presented with the first risk report of the 2025/26 risk management cycle, following prior consideration by Compliance Committee, UEB and Audit and Risk Committee.

49.2 Notwithstanding the scale and complexity of the institution and the breadth and scale of activity being undertaken, it was nevertheless acknowledged that the current version of the

risk register (which contained 77 corporate risks), made it challenging to effectively monitor and maintain oversight of the current risk landscape. It was noted that a comprehensive and in-depth review of the corporate risk register was scheduled to be undertaken by UEB and informed by Audit and Risk Committee discussion on 6 November 2025 to streamline the number of risks included on key corporate risks.

- 49.3 That the 'Student Experience' risk theme in Appendix 2 had been updated to include reference to the new corporate risk, CR117(Student Academic Experience, failure to achieve Gold rating in TEF).
- 49.4 That following the development and endorsement of risk appetite statements, a further review of the top risks on the corporate risk register would be undertaken.

50. Annual Report of Audit and Risk Committee (CNL/68/25-26 Strictly Confidential)

- 50.1 The report outlined the work of the Audit and Risk Committee in the period from 1 August 2024 to 31 July 2025 and provided the Committee's opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the University's arrangements for:
- 50.1.1 Risk management, control and governance;
- 50.1.2 Economy, efficiency and effectiveness (value for money);
- 50.1.3 Management and quality assurance of the data submitted to the Higher Education Statistics Agency, the Student Loans Company, the Office for Students, Research England and other bodies;
- 50.2 Council noted that a copy of the Annual Report would be included in the University's annual accountability return to the Office for Students.
- 50.3 The internal audit assessment provided by PwC was one of 'reasonable assurance / moderate assurance' and it was noted that no other institutions in the HE sector had received an assessment of 'substantial assurance' on the basis of the size and complexity of Universities.

APPROVED: The final version of the Annual Report of the Audit and Risk Committee (Academic Year 2024-25).

51. Verbal Update from Chair of Audit and Risk Committee

- 51.1 The Chair of Audit and Risk Committee provided a verbal update following the meeting held on 6 November 2025:
- 51.2 In relation to the Internal Audit programme for 2025/26:
- 51.2.1 The Committee endorsed the proposed approach to the internal audit of the UUK Accommodation Code of Practice in May 2025, including an increase in the number of mandatory elements from 84 to 252 to ensure a comprehensive review;

51.2.2 The Committee also deferred the Degree Apprenticeships internal audit in 2025/26 in light of the fact a recent satisfactory Ofsted inspection had been completed and the changes profile;

51.2.3 The internal audit of the Import / Export License review had been prioritised within the internal audit programme for 2025/26;

51.2.4 The Governance Part 2 internal audit report resulted in low-risk findings. The review had examined the impact and effectiveness of changes implemented to University Executive Board (UEB) sub-committees following the part 1 review that had been completed in October 2024. The Part 2 review concluded that the executive governance framework at the University operated in line with the revised UEB and sub-committee arrangements, and each committee was in alignment with its purpose and remit as identified in its updated Terms of Reference;

51.2.5 The IT and Digital Third Party Software Management had resulted in a medium risk report with four medium risk findings. The findings included absence of a software licence management framework, lack of centralised tooling and software inventory, inconsistent licence review process, and weaknesses associated with procurement and budgetary planning.

51.3 The Committee had held 2 deep dives on CR29 (International employment law, international support staff, global mobility) and CR32 (Philanthropy: Failure to meet financial and volunteering targets).

52. Health and Safety Annual Assurance Report (CNL/69/25-26 Strictly Confidential)

52.1 The University continued to maintain its management system approach to Health and Safety by adhering to the steps set out in the Health and Safety Executive's Management Standard.

52.2 A deep dive review of Health and Safety held in September 2025 had enabled Audit and Risk Committee to further explore and seek assurance on the current arrangements in place.

52.3 The University had robust oversight mechanisms in place, including: policies, procedures, training, advisory and audit monitoring processes to ensure the University continued to operated in accordance with requirements.

52.4 There were a total of 52 Health and Safety standards policies in place, which were owned either by the Health and Safety Team, Estates or Occupational Health. As detailed in section 3.4.1 of the paper, a number of improvement projects had been implemented across Faculties and Professional Services.

53. Draft University Term and Academic Calendar 2026-27 and Provisional Dates for Academic Year 2027-28 (CNL/70/25-26, CNL/70a-70c/25-26 Confidential)

53.1 The University continued to maintain its management system approach to Health and Safety by adhering to the steps set out in the Health and Safety Executive's Management Standard.

53.2 The proposed initial first draft of the University Terms and Academic Calendar 2026-27 and

committee dates were still subject to final confirmation following feedback from UEB and final endorsement by Senate (11 March 2026) and Council (29 April 2026).

- 53.3 That following consultation with Chairs of Council Committees, Governance Services would circulate provisional outlook diary calendar holds to all members of Council for the Academic Year 2027-28.

ENDORSED: The Council and Council Committee dates Academic Year 2026-27 (Appendix 1), subject to final consultation with the Chairs of Council Committees.

54. Chair's Closing Remarks

- 54.1 The Chair of Council thanked members for their contribution to the meeting and advised that the next meeting of Council would be held on 25th February and 26th February 2026.

55. Part II – Items

Governance:

- 55.1 In accordance with agreed practice, the Chair confirmed that the following governance items in Part II (For Decision) had been formally **APPROVED** by Council, including:

55.1.1 Council Committees: Terms of Reference for the Academic Year 2025-26 (CNL/71/25-26)

55.1.2 Modern Slavery Transparency Statement (CNL/72/25-26)

55.1.3 Honorary Nominations (CNL/73/25-26)

- 55.2 The following items were received in Part II by Council for information and assurance:

55.2.1 Prevent Monitoring Accountability and Data Return (CNL/74/25-26)

55.2.2 Assurance Reports on OfS Conditions of Registration:

55.2.2.1 Condition E6 (Misconduct and Sexual Harassment) (CNL/75/25-26)

55.2.2.2 Freedom of Speech Update (CNL/76/25-26)

55.2.3 The OfS Strategy 2025-2030, Roadmap and Letter to Chairs (CNL/77/25-26)

55.2.4 Affixing the Seal (CNL/78/25-26)

Financial:

- 55.3 In accordance with agreed practice, the Chair confirmed that the following financial items in Part II (For Decision) had been formally **APPROVED** by Council, including:

55.3.1 Financial Regulations (CNL/79/25-26)

- 55.4 The following items were received in Part II by Council for **INFORMATION AND ASSURANCE:**

55.4.1 Annual Report on Investments (CNL/80/25-26)

Research:

55.5 In accordance with agreed practice, the Chair confirmed that the following research items in Part II (For Decision) had been formally **APPROVED** by Council, including:

55.5.1 Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers: Signatory Annual Report 2024-25 (CNL/81/25-26)

55.5.2 Annual Research Integrity Statement (CNL/80/25-26)

Academic, Education and Student Experience:

55.6 In accordance with agreed practice, the Chair confirmed that the following Academic, Education and Student Experience items in Part II (For Decision) had been formally **APPROVED** by Council, including:

55.6.1 NSS Update: Project 90 Presentation and feedback from Senate, Academic Governance, Education and Student Experience Committee (CNL/83/25-26)

55.6.2 Academic Assurance Plan (CNL/84/25-26)

55.7 The following items were received in Part II by Council for **INFORMATION AND ASSURANCE**:

55.7.14 Student Protection Plan (CNL/85/25-26)

55.7.15 Annual Report of Senate (CNL/86/25-26)

55.7.16 Academic Promotions Report (CNL/87/25-26)

Annual Reports:

55.1.17 Internal Audit Annual Report (CNL/88/25-26)

Committee Reports and Minutes:

55.1.18 Audit and Risk Committee Minutes (29 September 2025) (CNL/90/25-26)

55.1.19 Strategic Investment Committee Report (CNL/91/25-26)

55.1.20 Capital Management Group Report (CNL/92/25-26)