

**COUNCIL**  
**Tuesday 7 October 2025 from 14.00-18.00**  
**02ATI02 and Teams**  
**MINUTES**

*Sections marked Commercial in Confidence are claimed as exempt from publication under Section 43 of the Freedom of Information Act on the grounds of commercial sensitivity.*

<b>Members:</b>	Chair – External member	Mr Charlie Geffen
	Treasurer - External member	Mr Nigel Jones
	President & Vice-Chancellor	Prof Stephen Jarvis (to 25/141)
	Provost and Senior Vice President	Prof Tim Dunne
	Chief Operating Officer	Mr Will Davies
	President, Students' Union	Mr Matt Aikin
	Member elected by Senate	Dr Femi Adeyemi-Ejeye
	Member elected by Senate	Dr Charo Hodgkins
	Member elected by Senate	Prof Jin Xuan
	External member	Prof Dame Julia Buckingham
	External member	Mr Nick Gatfield
	External member	Ms Pam Jestico
	External member	Ms Pam Powell
	External member	Sir Philip Rutnam
	External member	Dr Helen Turner
	External member	Mr Philip Whitecross
	External member	Dr Linda Wilding

**In attendance:** Ms Ros Allen, Head of Governance Services (secretary)  
Ms Martine Carter, Vice-President Strategic Growth  
Mr Patrick Degg, VP Global  
Mr Matthew Knight, Chief Financial Officer  
Ms Sarah Litchfield, University Secretary & Legal Counsel

**By invitation:** Prof Roberto La Ragione, PVC & Executive Dean of FHMS (25/139)  
Ms Sarah Leggett, Director of HR (25/141)  
Prof Bob Nichol, PVC & Executive Dean of FEPS (25/138)

#### INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

**25/129 Preliminaries**

- .1 There were no apologies. Femi Adeyemi-Ejeye and Stephen Jarvis were welcomed to their first full meeting of Council.

**25/130 Declarations of Interest**

- .1 Council were reminded that Julia Buckingham has a conflict of interest with respect to GIFT City.

**25/131 Minutes**

- .1 Council **approved** the minutes of the Council meeting held on 29 July 2025 for publication. Council **approved** the minutes of the Council meeting held on 19 September 2025, but not for publication given their confidential nature.

**25/132 Matters Arising**

- .1 The updated actions log was noted. MK had provided the requested information on capex.

**STANDING ITEMS**

**25/133 Chair's items**

- .1 The Chair provided a briefing on pre-meeting discussions. The main focus was on the new academic year and sector-wide issues.

**25/134 Vice-Chancellor's Report on strategic matters and sector context**

- .1 The VC presented the paper.
- .2 He drew out several items of particular note:
- The Education White Paper was due shortly and included potential changes to funding and the introduction of an international student fee levy. The latter could be at least partially offset by a possible increase to the home fee. The impact of the levy will grow with an increase in international student numbers.
  - The University had a strong student recruitment round, particularly for international students. But the hard work needs to continue.
  - The first Executive Board (EB) awayday later in the week would consider the strategy to deliver the priorities for the year.
  - EB now meets weekly and the Senior Leaders Forum monthly. There is a new proforma for EB papers being trialled which will be extended to other committees in due course. The VC proposed to move from Convene to Board Intelligence.
- .3 Whilst Surrey compares well with its peers for continuation rates, there is room for improvement. The importance of enabling students to succeed and complete their degrees was recognised. There is not a significant correlation between Staff: Student Ratios (SSR) and student performance. However, there is a strong correlation between student engagement and performance.
- .4 Surrey's league table performance is negatively impacted by the lower proportion of good degrees. Whilst there is a need to avoid grade inflation, there should be a strong correlation between entry grades and outcomes, and Surrey does not award as many good degrees as its average entry grades would suggest. The University may have overcorrected when there were issues with too many good degrees being awarded a few years ago.
- .5 Surrey needs more applicants to be able to drive up quality and the average entry tariff. Student recruitment is driven by brand and reputation.
- .6 The University would still be compliant if potential changes to visa compliance requirements were brought in. However, process changes would be made to ensure continued compliance, including carrying out financial checks on international students before providing the documentation to enable them to apply for a visa.

**25/135 Strategy Scorecard and Performance Monitoring**

- .1 Martine Carter presented the report.
- .2 Council noted the progress against the strategy and discussed the following areas:
  - .2.1 Research – Because of funding uncertainty last year, there was a pause in funder decision-making. There has also been a shift towards funding research linked to government strategy. There is an increasingly competitive environment for less funding. The potential that research funding will be channelled towards top tier universities was noted. The bidding profile is strong, but award rates need to increase. There are Central and Faculty teams who provide support to academics, as well as a peer support programme. Council asked to see the five-year trends for bid and success rates. There is currently a deep dive into this area led by the PVC Research and Innovation.  
**Action: MC to include information on 5 year trends for research in future reports.**
  - .2.2 Reciprocal partnerships – The University is evaluating its current position with a view to taking a more proactive approach to developing a limited number of more strategic relationships.
  - .2.3 Staff morale – The biennial People Survey is currently taking place and the results, including engagement and satisfaction scores, will be reported to Council in November. It was suggested that there should be consideration of conducting interim pulse surveys. Staff response to events such as all staff presentations is informally gathered and seems very positive. The Council-Senate meeting had been positively received, and it was suggested that it could be repeated, potentially to a wider cohort.

**25/136 Management Accounts**

- .1 Matthew Knight gave a presentation.
- .2 Council noted the draft 2024/25 outturn. *REDACTED AS COMMERCIALY SENSITIVE* It was noted that there had been no change to the treatment of creditors.
- .3 Council were updated on the impact of pensions, noting that last year, a pension deficit was written off across the sector. The USS pension scheme may be carrying a minor surplus, but this is not reflected in the University's accounts.
- .4 *REDACTED AS COMMERCIALY SENSITIVE*

**25/137 Cash release update**

- .1 WD and MK presented the papers
- .2 *REDACTED AS COMMERCIALY SENSITIVE*

**25/138 Transnational Education (TNE) Opportunities**

- TD introduced the item.
- .1 *REDACTED AS COMMERCIALY SENSITIVE*

## ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION AND/OR APPROVAL

**25/139 FHMS Programme Review**

- .1 Roberto La Ragione attended to give a presentation.
- .2 The trend for students on vocational programmes to wish to lessen their debt by living at home and studying a shorter course was recognised. The Faculty offer some vocational part-time master's programmes.
- .3 The vocational programmes such as Nursing and Veterinary Medicine have statutory requirements for external placements as part of the degree course. For other programmes, such as Biosciences, all students have the opportunity to do a Professional Training Year (PTY) at the end of Year 2. Whilst the PTY does not currently enable students to register with the professional body, there is consideration of opportunities to change this. The University is looking at opportunities for students to do shorter term placements and internships, whilst maximising participation in the PTY.
- .4 Vet School international student numbers are comparatively low. The School only recently was accredited by the European and US registration bodies. Not all of the vocational programmes have US accreditation. But international numbers on nursing are growing.
- .5 There are already some cross Faculty programmes such as Biomedical Engineering, but there is consideration of other opportunities, such as Pharmacy with FEPS.

**25/140 University of Surrey Students' Union (USSU)**

- .1 ***Annual USSU Oversight Report***  
Council noted the report.
- .2 ***USSU Priorities for 2025/26***
  - .2.1 MA presented the paper
  - .2.2 Council noted the four themes, each of which has a SU goal, a University goal and a partnership goal and congratulated the SU on a very clear representation of priorities.
  - .2.3 University of Surrey students do not currently benefit from the London weighting for their maintenance loans; Royal Holloway students do receive the London weighting, as they are part of the University of London. The SU are meeting the Guildford MP to lobby on the issue.
  - .2.4 Assessment and Feedback remain an issue for some courses. Issues include clarity of feedback. The turnaround time issue appears to have been largely dealt with.

**25/141 REDACTED AS COMMERCIALY SENSITIVE****25/142 Governance**

- .1 ***Innovate Surrey Ltd – Appointment of Chair***  
CG presented the paper. Council approved the appointment of SJ as Chair.
- .2 ***External Member of Council appointment***

CG presented the paper. Council **approved** the appointment of Sarah Miles to Council.

**.3      *Audit and Assurance Committee Terms of Reference***

LW presented the paper. Subject to removing the reference to expenditure, Council **approved** the ToRs.

**25/143      Items for future meetings**

**.1** Council noted the paper. It was recognised that there was a very long list of items for the November meeting, that may not all be able to be covered. Suggestions for future Council briefings would be welcomed.

<b>C</b>	<b>ITEMS FOR INFORMATION ONLY</b>
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<b>25/144</b>	<b>Health and Safety Report</b>
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<b>.1</b>	Council noted the paper.
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<b>25/145</b>	<b>Cyber Security Annual Report</b>
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<b>.1</b>	Council noted the report. There was concern regarding performance and it was <b>agreed</b> that it should be discussed at the next Audit and Assurance Committee.
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**Action: RA**

<b>25/146</b>	<b>ECCTA and FIRS update</b>
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<b>.1</b>	Council noted the report.
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<b>25/147</b>	<b>Committee reports</b>
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<b>.1</b>	Council noted the reports from Executive Board and Finance Committee.
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<b>25/148</b>	<b>Information Pack for Reference</b>
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<b>.1</b>	Council noted the pack.
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<b>D</b>	<b>CLOSING ITEMS</b>
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<b>25/149</b>	<b>Any Other Business</b>
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<b>.1</b>	It was suggested that items for note should not appear on the Council agendas; they should either be discussed or removed.
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**Action: RA to review.**

<b>25/150</b>	<b>Date of next meeting</b>
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	20 November 2025
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**Mr Charlie Geffen, Chair**