

Senate
Minutes of the meeting held on 22 October 2025 at 13:30
Treetops, Wates House
MINUTES

Members	President & Vice-Chancellor	Professor Stephen Jarvis
Ex-officio:	Chair: Provost & Executive-Vice President	Professor Tim Dunne
	Secretary: Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Education	Professor Annika Bautz [interim]
	Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Research & Innovation	Professor Lisa Collins*
Nominated (FABSS):	Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Executive Deans (x3)	VACANT
	Vice-President, Global	Professor Bob Nicholl
	Associate Vice-President, External Engagement (International)	Professor Roberto La Ragione
	Associate Deans, Education (x3)	Mr Patrick Degg
	Associate Deans, Research & Innovation (x3)	Professor Amelia Hadfield*
	Chief Student Officer	Professor Mark Ashton
	Director of Academic Performance, Quality and Governance	Professor Charlotte Foreman
	Director of Research, Innovation & Impact	Professor Dynatra Subasinghe
	Director, Institute of Sustainability	Professor Glenn Parry
	Director, Institute of People-Centred AI	Professor Jin Xuan
	President of the Students' Union	Professor Deborah Dunn-Walters
	VP Voice of the Students' Union	Ms Emma Rowsell [interim]
		Mr Nick Moore
		Mrs Gill Fairbairn
		Professor Ravi Silva [interim]
		Professor Adrian Hilton
		Matt Aikin
		Luana Vasconcelos
Nominated (FABSS):	Music and Media	Dr Femi Adeyemi-Ejeye
	Law	Claire Lillywhite
	Economics	Prof Ricardo Praca Cavaco Nunes
	Hospitality and Tourism	Dr Marion Karl
	Literature and Languages	Dr Charlotte Mathieson
	Music and Media	Dr Chris Wiley
Nominated (FEPS):	Sust, Civ and Env Eng	Dr Ana Andries*
	Computer Science & Electrical Engineering	Dr Rizwan Ashgar
	Sust, Civ and Env Eng	Dr Lirong Liu
	Mechanical Engineering Sciences	Prof Mahmoud Shafiee
	Chemistry and Chemical Engineering	Dr Michael Short
	Computer Science & Electrical Engineering	Dr Nick Frymann
Nominated (FHMS):	School of Biosciences	Dr Mohammad Asim
	School of Biosciences	Dr Terri Grassby
	School of Psychology	Dr Charo Hodgkins
	School of Psychology	Dr Eleanor Ratcliffe
	School of Veterinary Medicine	Dr Giovanna Nalesto
	School of Veterinary Medicine	Dr Charlotte Maile

Nominated (PGR Student)	PGR Student	Oliver Cory
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In attendance:	Governance Officer [minute taker] Senate Open Observer Seat	Kelley Padley Kirill Shaknov
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* denotes absence

** denotes absence, but represented by an alternate

1 INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

25/001 Apologies for absence

- .1 Apologies were received from Lisa Collins, Amelia Hadfield, Ravi Silva and Ana Andries.
- .2 The Chair welcomed the following to Senate:
 - Stephen Jarvis – President & Vice-Chancellor
 - Marion Karl – academic representative FABSS
 - Charlotte Mathieson – academic representative FABSS
 - Chris Wiley – academic representative FABSS
 - Nick Fryman -academic representative FEPS
 - Oliver Cory – PGR student representative
 - Matt Aikin – SU President
 - Kirill Shakhov – Open Senate Observer Seat

25/002 Minutes of the last meeting(s)

- .1 The Board approved the minutes of the meetings held on 6 June 2025 and 23 June 2025.
- .2 The Chair confirmed the proposed changes to the Academic Promotions Process and the Academic Pathway Transfer Process as noted in the minutes of the 6 June have been implemented in the Framework(s).

25/003 Vice-Chancellor's Welcome – Update and Performance Report

- .1 The VC thanked colleagues on Senate for the warm welcome he had received at Surrey since commencing in post. Senate received his Update and Performance Report, discussing the following areas in more detail.
- .2 Index-linked domestic UG fees and Quality Ratings
Senate noted that further to publication of the Vice-Chancellor's Update and Performance Report, the Government had confirmed a commitment to two further consecutive years of index-linked increases in domestic undergraduate fees: academic year 2026-27 and 2027/28. The Government had also made a commitment to having the conversation re index linked fee setting, indicating that fee indexation would be linked explicitly to quality and value for money whereby only universities that achieve 'quality ratings' will be allowed to charge the maximum fee.
- .3 Whilst the quality threshold / measurements to be deployed by Government in assessing 'quality ratings' was yet to be announced, Senate noted Surrey's strong graduate outcomes and robust approach to ensuring the quality of its education and emphasised the need for Senate, given its

remit to oversee the academic mission of the University, to keep abreast of developments in this area.

.4 Senate also noted the likelihood that the International Fee Levy would be confirmed at a rate of 6% and noted this would offset much of the income received from the increase in the domestic fee.

.5 **UK's Modern Industrial Strategy**

Senate noted the integral role that universities have in enabling successful delivery of the Government's Modern Industrial Strategy. Senate acknowledged, in recognition of this direction of travel, the need for university's to amplify their contribution and to demonstrate the role they fulfil in society.

.6 **Research Funding**

Senate acknowledged the potential change in research funding to universities signalled by Patrick Vallance's comments voicing concern that research funding is being spread too thinly and that universities are not being sufficiently strategic about the research they underwrite. Vallance's thoughts on research funding were voiced at the recent UUK meeting in Exeter. Senate noted the importance of keeping abreast of, and ahead of, any plans to change the concentration of research funding into designated providers.

.7 **Sustainability**

Senate discussed sustainability and the University's net zero ambitions. SJ advised that in his previous Institution he had led on a Smart Campus project in partnership with Siemens and it was acknowledged that there were further inroads in this area that could be made at Surrey over time. Senate appreciated that a larger surplus would be required in order to facilitate the upfront investment in widescale improvements.

.8 In summary, SJ noted that Surrey had worked hard over the past two years and, in the face of significant challenges to the sector, had reversed a negative budget to post a small surplus and to reach a more sustainable position. However, as noted in the discussion, the sector was facing further changes and Surrey could not afford to stand still: agility, endeavour and creativity would be key to successfully moving forwards in the sector.

25/004 SU Update

.1 The President of the Students' Union, Matt Aikin, presented the Union Priorities 2025-26. The priorities are set out in 4 themes and, for each theme there is a:

- Students' Union Goal.
- University Goal (something the SU hope to lobby the University to work on).
- Partnership Goal (where the SU would like to deliver in tandem with the University).

Senate noted that progress towards the themes outlined is monitored at the University/Students' Union Committee (USUC).

.2 The themes for 2025/26 are:

- Academic influence and engagement
- High quality campus experience
- Student led sense of belonging and wellbeing
- Impactful Representation

.3 The VP Voice advised the SU were working closely with Course Representatives on promoting completion of the NSS and the MEQs advising that the SU could support courses with low response rates by offering focus groups etc.

25/005 Chair's Action/Business

.1 The Chair updated Senate on the following appointments:

- Professor Bebhinn Donnelly-Lazarov – appointed as interim Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Executive Dean (FABSS) effective from 01/11/2025.
- Dr Abhijit Sengupta – accepted in principle the position of Dean for the University's new campus on GIFT City

.2 Senate noted that Chairs Action had been taken on 10 July 2025 to approve minor and technical amends to Student Regulations for 2025/26. The amends had been drafted in collaboration with the SU and endorsed by the Quality Enhancement Committee and the University Education Committee.

.3 Senate ratified the convene resolution passed on 30 August 2025 to approve the appointment of Femi Adeye-Ejeye as Senate Representative on Council.

25/006 Feedback from Council

.1 Charo Hodgson, Senate Representative on Council, provided verbal feedback on the meeting of Council on 7 October 2025. Senate were advised that Council:

- Welcomed new members Prof. Stephen Jarvis and Femi Adyeme-Ejeye.
- Received an update on the external and internal context.
- Considered progress made towards the Strategy Scorecard.
- Received a detailed presentation on the Management Accounts and discussed opportunities to optimise University assets with a view to supporting future strategic growth plans.
- Discussed current and future TNE opportunities.
- Received an update on the FHMS Programme Review.
- Received an update from the President of the Students' Union.

2 ITEMS FOR APPROVAL

25/007 Honorary Degree Nominations [CONFIDENTIAL]

.1 The VC presented the paper. The Honorary Degrees Committee were endorsing to Senate five nominees for the award of Doctor of the University. This endorsement followed robust consideration of each nominee and due application of the University's criteria. The VC confirmed the presented nominees had been shortlisted from a longer list of proposed nominees. Senate approved the nominations for recommendation to Council.

.2 The VC advised Senate that the Honorary Degrees Committee, a sub-committee of Senate, proposed to give consideration to revising:

- the process for proposing nominations.
- the terms of reference of the sub-committee itself.
- the articulated criteria to be applied when adjudging awards.

- .3 Senate confirmed it would welcome a review of the Honorary Degree Process noting the University should better optimise the benefits associated with awarding Honorary awards: shared marketing of the Honorary, association with the esteemed individual to benefit both parties (University and Honorary), ongoing contribution and support of the Honorary for the University.
- .4 Senators queried whether there was a web page that showed which Honorary Graduates the University had. PD advised there was but acknowledged that under the current website this required some navigation and was not readily / easily accessible.
- .5 The VC advised consideration would be given to use of a webform for nominations and to the potential to co-locate all nominations within a one-stop-shop approach to nominations – i.e. nominations for prizes, fellowships, honorary awards being put forward via a streamlined and easily accessible process.
- .6 Refreshed criteria would be submitted to the next meeting in January 2026 for consideration.

Action: SJ (VC and Chair of the Honorary Degrees Committee)

25/008 Research Integrity Annual Statement 2024/25

- .1 Gill Fairbairn, Director of Research and Innovation, presented the statement. Senate noted the statement had been endorsed by the University Research and Innovation Committee (URIC) and that the annual statement would, in accordance with the requirements of 'The Concordat to Support Research Integrity', be made publicly available via the University's website.
- .2 Senate discussed Section 3 Addressing Research Misconduct. The sector is in the process of reviewing research misconduct and GF advised that a review of the University's Code of Practice on Handling Allegations of Research Misconduct had commenced in August 2025. The revised Code would be received by Senate. It was noted that a key focus of the revision was on improving the initial, early stage of potential misconduct as a recent case had highlighted that initial investigations can, at times, be lengthy, bureaucratic and overly formal.
- .3 Senators welcomed the review and advised that a review of the entire process, beyond the initial stage, would be beneficial. It was noted that cases often overlap with HR processes and procedures and can become lengthy.
- .4 Senate discussed the list of policies provided under Section 2 of the statement noting the absence of a policy governing AI and research integrity. GF acknowledged the gap and advised this area was being further explored by the University Ethics Committee.
- .5 Senate approved the Research Integrity Annual Statement 2024/25.

25/009 Academic Quality Assurance Annual Report 2024/25

- .1 Nick Moore, Director of Academic Performance, Quality and Governance, presented the report. Senate noted the report had been endorsed by the University Education Committee (UEC) and provides an overview of how core academic governance and quality assurance processes have operated during 2024/25 to demonstrate maintenance of the baseline requirements of the ongoing OfS conditions of registration B1-B6.
- .2 Senate noted the following:
 - Significant work undertaken in response to condition E6.

- Institutional Quality Review undertaken on Farnborough College of Technology (FCOT).
- Next TEF likely to be in 2028/29.
- 34 validations undertaken in 2024/25.
- 97% of undergraduate External Examiner Reports received to date (a considerable improvement in number of reports received, secured following the introduction of an online EE form).
- 98 accreditation updates in 2024/25.
- Surrey weak position of 103rd and 110th in the Guardian League table for value added over the last two years. A position affected by the comparatively low proportion of good degrees awarded, relative to students' entry tariffs, at the institution.

.3 Senate queried para 5.10 and the fact that the Degree Outcome Statement relates solely to Level 6 First Degree awards excluding the outcomes of the integrated Masters' programmes. NM explained this is the OfS requirement for University Degree Outcome Statements and reassured Senators that the University does internally review *all* degree outcomes.

.4 Senate approved the Academic Quality Assurance Annual Report 2024/25 for recommendation to Council.

25/110 Changes to Quality Framework – Senate Governance

.1 Senate noted that UEC had introduced two new sub-committees: Academic Partnership Sub-Committee (APSC) and Regulations Sub-Committee. URIC had introduced one new sub-committee: People, Culture & Environment Committee (PCEC). GF confirmed that the title of the new committee would be retained and was not dependent on the REF terminology deployed.

.3 Senate explored where trusted research fits within the structure noting that: from a Senate governance perspective it sits under the Research Integrity and Governance Committee; from an Executive Board corporate governance perspective it sits under the Partnerships and Reputation Committee (PRC).

.4 Senate discussed the governance of TNE noting the introduction of the Academic Partnerships Sub Committee reporting via UEC to Senate. Consideration would be given as to whether the Dean of GIFT City (and other TNE campuses) should be ex-officio members of Senate.

.5 Senators queried whether there was a link between the Doctoral College and the newly introduced People, Culture and Environment Committee. GF confirmed there was both a Doctoral College representative and a PGR Student Representative on the People, Culture and Environment Committee.

.6 Senate approved:

- Updated Senate Governance chart
- Updated University Education Committee (UEC) terms of reference
- University Research and Innovation Committee (URIC) terms of reference

25/111 Changes to Quality Framework – Changes to Regulations

.1 Change to A4 Regulations 2025/26 – Academic Dress
Senate approved the amendment to the A4 Regulations introducing a pink trim to the hood for BSc and MSc awards. The CSO Directorate and Students' Union had submitted the proposed

change in response to student feedback that it was unfair the BSc/MSc hoods did not have a coloured trim when all other awards had one.

.2 Exceptions to A2 Regulations 2025/26

NM explained that publication of the new UKRI Terms and Conditions for Training Grants (Version 15) had been delayed. However, Universities will be expected to comply with Version 15, published on 1 October 2025, from academic year 2025/26. The University expects that some modifications to the A2 regulations will be required to accommodate the new UKRI TGCs but, due to the delay in publication, there has not been time to review, update and approve appropriate changes. Therefore, Senate were asked to approve the following approach be adopted to process exceptions to the current A2 Regulations for UKRI-funded PGRs during academic year 2025/26:

- Exceptions to be considered and approved by the Admissions, Progression and Examinations Sub-Committee (APESC).

.3 Exceptions to the A2 Regulations will only be required for academic year 2025/26. The A2 Regulations for Research Degrees will be reviewed and amended as required to ensure the full alignment with the UKRI TGCs from 2026/27.

.4 Senate approved the process for approving exceptions to the current A2 Regulations for UKRI-funded PGRs during academic year 2025/26.

3 ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

25/112 NSS Strategy

.1 Annika Bautz, Interim Pro-Vice-Chancellor Education, presented to Senate.

.2 AB explained the rationale for upgrading from an 85 Plan to an 87 Plan. Surrey's overall score had improved by 0.9% to 85.6% in the NSS 2025. Despite an improved overall score Surrey's ranking had dropped 4 places to rank 15: some competitors in the sector are improving at a greater rate. To maintain a top 15 ranking in 2026 Surrey needs to be aiming for higher than the 85% named in the 85 Plan – if Surrey achieves 87% and sector results continue on the current trajectory Surrey would secure a top 10 rank in 2026.

.3 Senate noted Surrey's relative performance across the different sections: Surrey came 60th for assessment and feedback and it was acknowledged that this was a key area that required addressing. Following discussions with the Students Union, and based on intelligence gathered from students, some measures were being introduced to ensure assessment is clearly explained thereby addressing the perceived lack of clarity on assessments set. This included the introduction of videos (a different format which also enables students to easily revisit assessment requirements) and the provision of exemplar assessments.

.4 AB explained a flagging system had been developed to identify, and prioritise, subject interventions. Out of the identified subjects, priority will be given to the six subject areas with the largest student numbers: those areas contain 30% of Surrey's student population and will have the largest impact on university-level KPIs.

.5 Senate noted the importance of maintaining satisfaction in the face of increasing student numbers and the potential strain that can place on delivery of multiple services across the University. AB

confirmed there were Faculty 87 Action Plans in place and also an overarching Professional Services 87 Plan led by the CSO. Senate noted the importance of open, constructive discussion in which potential areas contributing to student dissatisfaction can be surfaced and in which all individuals can unguardedly consider what they could improve / what lies within their control and remit to address in order to support the University's 87 plan.

25/113 Freedom of Speech Code of Practice

- .1 Josh Andresen, Associate Professor of National Security and Foreign Relations Law and member of the Senate Sub-committee Academic Freedom and Freedom of Expression (AFFE), joined Senate to present the University's Draft Freedom of Speech Code of Practice.
- .2 The Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023 came into force on 1 August 2025 and imposes upon Universities duties to:
 - Secure freedom of speech within the law for staff, students and visiting speakers.
 - Secure academic freedom of academic staff.
 - Issue a Code of Practice on freedom of speech and secure compliance with the Code.
 - Promote the importance of freedom of speech and academic freedom in the provision of higher education.
- .3 JA advised that the Act had not changed the meaning / definition of either freedom of speech or academic freedom but rather had placed a requirement upon HEI's to ensure they secured both freedoms by stipulating compliance with a Code of Practice securing those freedoms within the law.
- .4 Senate noted the new duties impact upon some of the University's existing policies and procedures and were advised that the content of these key procedures had been reviewed and clauses, where required, relating to academic freedom and freedom of speech inserted. JA explained that the requirements of Speaker Events Policies had been articulated in the Act and provided a summary: the baseline assumption is that events will go ahead; security costs must be borne by the University and may only be passed on in exceptional cases (and these circumstances must be articulated in both the University's Freedom of Speech Code of Practice and in its Procedure covering speakers events); University reputational costs are not legitimate considerations for declining an event.
- .5 Senate noted the University may lawfully restrict or regulate speech in the following three cases:
 1. Where the speech interferes with the University's essential functions (teaching, learning, research, admin function and resources required).
 2. Where the speech interferes with the free speech of others.
 3. Where the speech is unlawful (e.g. unlawful harassment, unlawful incitement to hatred or violence, threatening speech, encouraging terrorism, defamatory speech).
- .6 Senate confirmed that the Code would apply to any partnerships the University establishes in the UK but that it would not apply to overseas partnerships.
- .7 Senate noted the Code would also apply to Student Union events held on University of Surrey premises. It was noted that during 2024/25, the President of the SU, CEO of the SU and interim CSO had been involved in the Academic Freedom/Freedom of Speech Task and Finish Group responsible for drafting the Code. They had also worked with the Head of Events responsible for the Events, VIP Visits and External Speakers Procedure. The Students' Union Events Process had been considered at that time to review its alignment with the University's procedure.
- .8 Senate noted the next steps:

- Final checks completed to ensure related Policies and Procedures are consistent with the Code.
- Council to approve the Code on 20 November 2025.
- Launch / Communication of the Code both externally and internally.
- Internal training / support for core areas to ensure potential flashpoints resolved.
- FAQs and other resources to be provided.

.9 Senate noted the FAQs could include some guidance to help individuals navigate the line between the EDI agenda and its definitions (for instance, of harassment) and the protection of academic freedom and freedom of speech duties and its definitions (for instance, *lawful* harassment).

4 ITEMS TO NOTE

25/114 Emeritus Professorships conferred

.1 Senate noted the paper.

25/115 Student Surveys

.1 Senate noted the paper.

25/116 Research and Innovation Report.

.1 Senate noted the report.

25/117 Senate Sub-Committee Minutes

University Education Committee, 3rd June

Senate Nominations Committee, 9 June and 23 July

.1 The minutes were noted.

25/118 Items for future meetings

.1 The paper was noted.

25/119 UEC and URIC approved sub-committee terms of reference

.1 The terms of reference were noted.

5 CLOSING ITEMS**25/120 AOB**

.1 None.

25/121 Dates of next Senate meetings 2025/26

21 January 2026

22 April 2026

24 June 2026