

Minutes marked Commercial in confidence or confidential have been redacted from the web version

UNIVERSITY OF KENT

Minutes of the Meeting held on 3 October 2025 Hybrid Meeting held at Darwin Boardroom, Canterbury Campus and via MS Teams

Present: The Chair of Council, Mark Preston; The Deputy Chair of Council and Chair of Finance & Resources Committee, Andrew Newell; The Acting Vice-Chancellor and President, Professor Georgina Randsley de Moura; Lay members: Paul Pugh; Julie Kelly; Thomas Hyner; Nick Ratcliffe; Philip Jordan; Carolyn Morgan; President Kent Students' Union, Himadri; Vice President Education, Cláudia Moreira. Acting Deputy Vice Chancellor Strategy and Performance (S&P), Professor Claire Peppiatt-Wildman; Academic Staff Representative, Dr Balihar Sanghera, Professor Shujun Li; Non-Academic Staff Representatives, Jahanara Ahmed, Dr Daniel Knox.

In attendance: Chief Financial Officer, Jane Higham; Financial Sustainability Director, Peter Pentecost; Director of Student Life, Andy Winter (online for item 10) and Deputy Sponsor Strategic Change (K2030), Eddy Hogg (item 10); Interim University Secretary and Director of Governance & Assurance, Dr Jo Wright; Assistant Director (Governance), Sarah Megson; Head of Secretariat, Lanre Folarin (Secretary).

Apologies: Lay Member, Jonathan Steele.

6058 CHAIR'S INTRODUCTION

The Chair noted apologies, welcomed members to the first meeting of the academic year and thanked members who joined the pre-meeting session [**minutes confidential to Council**].

Also, the Chair informed Council of the resignation of Lay Members, Mayuri Lakhani and Dr Mark Downs, and expressed appreciation for their contribution to Council. It was noted that a new Elected Student Representative was yet to be appointed but preparations for this were underway by KSU.

Council was reminded of their duties as trustees.

A member declared membership of USS. No other interests or conflicts of interest declared.

6059 MINUTES

Council approved papers **C2025/001** and **C2025/002**, Minutes of the Meeting held on 29 August 2025 and Minutes of e-circulation decision on 25 August 2025.

6060 MATTERS ARISING

Council noted the updates from the Action Log, **C2025/005**. [**minutes confidential to Council**].

Action: [minutes confidential to Council].

6061 ACTING VICE-CHANCELLOR AND PRESIDENTI'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Acting Vice-Chancellor welcomed everyone to the new term and presented the following updates:

External Matters:

- Appointment of Kent Aluma as the Archbishop of Canterbury Designate – The Rt Revd and Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally
- End of Welcome Week following the resumption of new and returning Students and the importance of supporting the students to grow and thrive.
- Government Cabinet Reshuffle and the move of responsibility for apprenticeship, adult further education, skills training and careers and Skills England from the DfE to DWP.
- Key Announcements at Labour Party Conference: Reintroduction of Maintenance Loans (paid for by the new International Student Levy) and Policy Shift to target that at least 2/3 students obtain university or high standard apprenticeship education. More information expected in the Autumn Statement and the Post–18 Education White Paper.
- TEF Reforms and likely REF Reforms
- Likelihood of the UK re-entering ERSAMUS under current scheme in 2027 rather than 2028, noted.
- Manchester Attack: Sympathies expressed and a letter on this to the University Rabbi. Support also offered to affected staff and students.
- Devolution: Impact of Mayoral Authority on Universities' access to funding. Local Authorities to submit proposals by November and the Kent and Medway Universities have agreed to make a joint input.

Internal Matters:

- Exit of DVCs - Prof Richard Reece (DVC ESES) and Prof Shane Weller (DVC R&I): Appreciation for their contribution to the University in various capacities.
- Ongoing EG Restructure

Council noted the updates provided. Council also noted in response to a question on student CAS/Visas, that the position of the political parties regarding the new student visa guidelines and stricter compliance obligations for sponsors were still being monitored. Also, it was noted that there has been no preferential treatment of any University in this regard.

Reserved Business (confidential to Council) considered.

Shujun Li joined at 15:09hrs.

6062 STRATEGIC PLAN AND CURRENT PERFORMANCE (KENT 2030)

The Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Strategy and Performance) presented a report on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) on strategic portfolios and Kent 2030, and the League table positions **C2025/004**.

The financial position as at the end of the 2024-25 Academic Year was presented, noting that more concrete data, including on student recruitment would be provided later in the academic year. It was reported that targets had been met in the following key areas - Education: Continuation; Research and Innovation: RGCI; Financial Health: YE Cash reserves (Days), Net debt: Adjusted, EBITDA, Current Asset Ratio. The following targets were missed - Education: NSS, Progression (Graduate Outcomes); Research and Innovation: Innovation Income; Finance and Sustainability: EBITDA as percentage of income, Staff costs as Percentage Income; University infrastructure environment: Non-residential Estates.

Additionally, it was reported that the University's position on national league tables published by Guardian and Times had dropped. However, that the aim is to be in the Top 30 UK table ranking and Top 300 International ranking in 2025 and the new Interim Director of Marketing and Recruiting is overseeing this and working with the respective Heads of Schools. Also, that resources were being reinvested to improve student experience.

Through discussion, Council noted as follows:

- In response to a comment that a significant portion of the student recruitment data appeared to have been drawn from UG and PGT records, it was explained that this was due to PGR data being fractional although it was equally being tracked.
- With respect to reporting on PRES (Postgraduate Research Experience Survey) and PTES (Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey) data, it was explained that these are assessed at the School level via EG, with NSS data prioritised for Council Level reporting in line with the University's KPI on education and student satisfaction.
- On capturing the contribution of Schools to the KPI, it was explained that although being tracked by EG, that level of detail would be excessive for Council level reporting.
- Areas for possible research subsidy would be reviewed and **[minutes confidential to Council]**, more effort put towards having holistic conversations to assess the overall built environment (IT and estates inclusive) and identify likely risks and impact on teaching.
- The University has Medway-specific KPIs which are being overseen by EG.

6063 STUDENT RECRUITMENT DATA

The Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor (S&P) presented C2025/005 on Student Recruitment Data.

[minutes confidential to Council].

Through discussion, Council noted that:

- There is a slight difference between enrolment and registration (with the latter indicating confirmed students) and more importantly, that the data for each category were now being tracked although no significant impact was expected. It was confirmed that support and late registration was being offered to enrolled students whose registration were being delayed mostly due to visa delays. It was confirmed that the data presented were the maximum expectation for the academic year, though all numbers remain preliminary until November/December. Council noted that the numbers were relatively good.
- PGR student data formed part of the budget although modestly modelled due to the volumes being fractional and largely grant funded.
- **[minutes confidential to Council].**

Action: *[minutes confidential to Council].*

6064 NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY 2025: OUTCOME AND NEXT STEPS

The Director of Student Life and Deputy Sponsor Strategic Change (K2030) presented a report on the latest NSS outcomes and next steps, **C2025/006**.

[minutes confidential to Council] Accordingly, the University's efforts (working with Heads of Schools and Directors of Education) will now tackle more fundamental issues through 4 work packages: School-level Dashboards, Performance Management, Student Consultation, and Pulse Surveys. The following core areas will be in focus: Assessment and Feedback, Student Voice, Employability, Academic Advising, and Teaching Quality. Council was updated on progress made so far, and it was noted that trackers were being built to track Moodle visibility, Assessment Briefs and Employability Statements, periodic meetings had commenced with HoSs and DoEs to discuss identified issues, new student communications plan developed and collaboration with KSU ongoing, working with the Director of Planning, pulse surveys will be embedded in weekly student communications to drive early insight.

Through discussions, Council noted that:

- The figures, although slightly improved, were unacceptable and should be addressed. The adoption of data monitoring was commended, and it was suggested that solutions be borrowed from more successful counterparts.
- The NSS report and specific commentary have been shared with relevant teams.
- The work packages were aimed at completing the feedback loop and ensuring direct dialogue with students to communicate how feedback is being used. Also,

that the Moodle trackers and data dashboard would enable colleagues to track performance more effectively across schools, departments and directorates.

- Apart from the weekly newsletter, student communications would also be promoted through social media, classes and other CRM tools.
- Consistency of standards and quality is also being prioritized without losing the nuances of respective schools and effort was being made to improve access to academics and details of marking schemes.
- On the other hand, it was noted from a staff perspective that many students were also not engaging with the available structures, noting an example of poor attendance levels at the recent Welcome Week advisee meeting scheduled for Stage 1 UG students. It was noted that it is easier to work with engaged students so ideas around improving student interest in academic advice sessions should be explored, including tracking data inputted by academics on Presco and working closely with schools. It was noted that PGR and returning students were expected to be more engaged.
- KSU is also working on improving student engagement by building relationships and a democracy review was also being undertaken.
- There was need to also acknowledge the context of previous NSS reports, in light of reduced staff morale due to work pressures and the cost of living challenge. It was also noted that the negative scores also contribute to the demoralisation due to their good works not being reflected in the NSS.
- The TOM plans and performance management will incorporate a requirement to address issues highlighted by the NSS.
- The planning and budgeting processes were also being reviewed to enable good decision making by Managers.

6065 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER'S REPORT

The CFO presented paper **C2025/007**, a report on year-end financial position, stakeholder engagement and status of listed projects. The CFO reported that:

- **[minutes confidential to Council].**
- **[minutes confidential to Council].**
- **[minutes confidential to Council].**
- **[minutes confidential to Council].**
- **[minutes confidential to Council].**
- **[minutes confidential to Council].**

Through discussion, Council noted that:

- **[minutes confidential to Council].**
- **[minutes confidential to Council].**
- **[minutes confidential to Council].**
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- **[minutes confidential to Council].**
- **[minutes confidential to Council].**
- **[minutes confidential to Council].**
- **[minutes confidential to Council].**

- [minutes confidential to Council].
- [minutes confidential to Council].

[minutes confidential to Council]

Council **approved** implementation of the staff pay awards this year, subject to FRC endorsement.

Action: *[minutes confidential to Council].*

6066 GOVERNANCE UPDATE

The Interim University Secretary presented and Council noted paper **C2025/008**, an update on the implementation of the Governance Effectiveness Review recommendations.

[minutes confidential to Council].

Council **approved** the suspension of Kent 2030 Assurance Board and agreed to revisit the issue of dissolution of the Board in due course.

Action: *Council Secretariat to upload the GER Report for new Council members.*

Council to revisit the issue of dissolution of the Board in due course.

Jane Higham exited at 17:13hrs

6067 RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

The Chair of Council and Interim University Secretary presented, **C2025/009** Recommendation of the Re-appointment of Kim Lowe as a Lay Member. **[minutes confidential to Council]**

Council **approved** the re-appointment of Kim Lowe.

6068 DVC/PVC Restructure Proposal

Acting Vice-Chancellor verbally reported and Council noted that consultation was still ongoing with the Executive Group so Council would be updated upon conclusion and any changes would be circulated for approval. Paper number C2025/010 retired.

ITEMS BELOW THE LINE

6069 COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

Council approved paper **C2025/011**.

6070 COUNCIL DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY TO THE VICE CHANCELLOR AND PRESIDENT FOR 2025/26

Council approved paper **C2025/012** noting the changes proposed in the UPDATED Schedule of Delegation, paper C2025/013,.

6071 COUNCIL SCHEDULE OF DELEGATION

Council approved paper **C2025/013** the Schedule of Delegation, noting the reviews made to reflect the current university structure.

6072 FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MINUTES, 9 JULY 2025

Council noted paper **C2025/014**.

6073 REMUNERATION COMMITTEE MINUTES

Council noted papers **C2025/015** and **C2025/016**.

6074 COUNCIL FORWARD PROGRAMME 2025/26

Council noted paper **C2025/017**.

6075 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Council approved the inclusion of a Student Voice Report as a standing item in the Forward Programme.

The Acting VC explained in response to a question that new reporting lines for staff who previously reported to the exited DVCs would be resolved following EG consultation.

6076 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Council noted the following dates for forthcoming meetings in the academic session 2025/26 holding at the Darwin Boardroom unless otherwise Indicated:

- 28 October 2025 (Extraordinary, Online)
- 28 November 2025
- 18 December 2025 (Contingency; MS Teams)
- 22 January 2026 (*Strategy day*)
- 20 March 2026 (*likely Medway*)
- 22 May 2026
- 26 June 2026

Notes

1. Papers

Copies are available on the Council e-board portal (Diligent Boards) or on request from the Secretary. Approved Minutes and many of the papers are published on the University SharePoint site at <https://livekentac.sharepoint.com/sites/council>.

2. Queries

Any queries should be addressed to Dr Jo Wright, (Interim University Secretary), (email: j.wright-2062@kent.ac.uk).