

IMPERIAL

SENATE

Confirmed Minutes of Meeting held on 22 April 2026

Present: Professor Peter Haynes (Chair); Professors Ashby, Bluck, Ferguson, Gandy, Jenkins, Kingsbury, Lupton, Muggeridge, Riley, Spivey, Todd; Wiesemann; Drs Craig, Malhotra, Rutschmann, Tennant, Keeling, Tsiampousi; Ms Hogas, Mr Henry, Mr Martin, Ms Bannister, Ms Omisore, Ms Webster (Secretary), Mr Tucker (Minute Secretary).

Apologies: Professors Brandon, Constantinides, Craig, D, Craster, Matar; Dr Costa-Pereira, Ms Burrows

In attendance: Ms Carole Hobden (for minute 2984)

2980 Minutes

Received and confirmed: The minutes of the Senate meeting held on 10 December 2025 were confirmed as an accurate record (Paper Senate/2025/07).

2981 Apologies for Absence

Reported: The Chair welcomed members to the third Senate meeting of the academic year, noting that the meeting scheduled for February 2026 was cancelled. Apologies for absence were noted as above.

2982 Matters Arising

Reported: The Senate noted that there were no substantive matters arising that were not otherwise covered on the agenda.

2983 Provost and Deputy President's Report

Received: A verbal update from the Provost and Deputy President on current strategic and operational developments across the university.

Reported: (1) A summary of key institutional priorities and developments, including progress against strategic objectives, sector developments, and matters relating to education, research and student experience.

2984 Update of the Teaching Excellent Framework

Received: A presentation from the Director of Planning and Insight on the Teaching Excellence Framework and the Office for Students consultation on the future approach to quality regulation.

Reported: (1) The update set out the Office for Students' proposals for a revised approach to quality regulation, including the integration of targeted condition B3 assessment activity with the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF). It outlined the emerging direction of the TEF, including potential changes to metrics, assessment processes and the relationship between excellence and baseline quality requirements. The paper highlighted the intention to create a more streamlined and coherent regulatory framework, bringing together quality, outcomes and student experience measures. It also set out the anticipated timetable for consultation and implementation, and the implications for the university's preparation, including the need to review institutional metrics, align data sources, and ensure readiness for revised assessment methodologies.

Considered in discussion: (2) Members discussed the proposed integration of the assessment of condition B3 with the TEF, noting the potential for a more unified approach to quality assurance and enhancement. The Senate reflected on the implications of this integration for institutional processes and the need to ensure that the university's approach remained coherent and proportionate in response to regulatory expectations.

(3) The Senate considered the relationship between Teaching Excellence Framework metrics and the Access and Participation Plan, noting the importance of aligning institutional data and performance indicators across the regulatory framework. Members highlighted the potential benefits of a more integrated approach, while also recognising the complexity of ensuring consistency across different reporting requirements.

(4) Members emphasised the importance of closely monitoring further developments in the methodology underpinning the TEF and B3 assessments. It was noted that changes to metrics and their interpretation could have significant implications for the university's performance profile and external scrutiny. The Senate therefore supported a proactive approach to horizon scanning and sector engagement.

Agreed: (5) The Senate noted that the Vice Provost (Education and Student Experience) would convene a group to review the university's metrics and consider their implications for the TEF and the emerging quality regulation framework. Members welcomed this approach as an appropriate mechanism to ensure institutional readiness and informed decision-making.

Action: Vice Provost (Education and Student Experience)

2985 Office for Students Consultation on Consumer and Student Protection

Received: A paper from the Director of Academic Quality and Standards on the Office for Students consultation on a new approach to consumer and student protection.

Reported: (1) The paper provided an overview of the Office for Students' proposals to reform the regulatory approach to consumer and student protection, noting that these were intended to address concerns regarding fragmented information, inconsistent application of protections, and limited student awareness of their rights. It set out proposals for strengthened expectations around transparency, student protection plans and continuity of study, together with the implications for the university's policies and processes. The paper

also outlined the proposed approach to developing the university's response to the consultation, including coordination with relevant stakeholders.

Considered in discussion: (2) Members discussed the potential impact of the proposals on academic provision, noting concerns that enhanced regulatory requirements could limit flexibility and constrain innovation in programme design and delivery. The Senate agreed that the university's response should emphasise the importance of maintaining agility in programme development, whilst ensuring that students are appropriately informed, consulted and protected in relation to modifications.

(3) The Senate considered the framing of students within the consultation, with members expressing concern about the characterisation of students as consumers. It was suggested that a framing based on fairness would be more appropriate, and that this should be reflected in the university's response. Members noted the importance of engaging with the Students' Union to ensure that student perspectives were appropriately represented, including in relation to value for money and emerging issues such as the use of artificial intelligence in education.

(4) Members discussed the opportunities for the university to influence the language and direction of the consultation, both through its formal response and broader engagement with the Office for Students. It was noted that concerns regarding terminology could be raised through institutional channels and sector engagement, and that there would be value in contributing to shaping the evolving regulatory discourse.

(5) The Senate noted the role of institutional data in informing responses to the regulatory framework, including the use of complaints data and existing monitoring mechanisms.

Agreed: (6) The Senate agreed that coordination of the university's response to the consultation would be taken forward by the Director of Academic Quality and Standards, in liaison with the Registrar and University Secretary, and the Head of Regulatory Compliance.

Action: Secretary

(7) Members discussed the importance of maintaining an overview of compliance with the conditions of registration and associated risks, to support an informed and coordinated response. It was agreed that the existing university overview risk register against all conditions of registration, maintained by the Legal and Regulatory Affairs Team, should be noted at a future Senate.

Action: Secretary

2986 Mitigating Circumstances Policy Review

Received: An update from the Director of Academic Quality and Standards on the review of the Mitigating Circumstances Policy and Procedure.

Reported: (1) The update outlined proposals to separate the current Mitigating Circumstances Policy and Procedure into two distinct documents, with the policy articulating overarching principles and the procedure providing a clearer, more student-focused articulation of definitions, deadlines and processes, including signposting to support services. The revised procedure was intended to promote greater consistency

across the university while retaining appropriate flexibility for departments in relation to local implementation, including the composition of Mitigating Circumstances Boards and operational timelines. It was noted that the proposals also aimed to improve clarity and accessibility for students. The final policy and procedure would be submitted to QAEC for consideration in June 2026.

Considered in discussion: (2) Members discussed the balance between consistency and local flexibility, noting that while a more standardised approach was desirable, variation in departmental structures, particularly in the operation of Mitigating Circumstances Boards, could raise questions about the consistency and fairness of outcomes. The Senate reflected on the importance of ensuring that any revised approach delivered equitable treatment for students across the university.

(3) The Senate considered the student experience of engaging with the procedure, including the need for clearer and more accessible language. Members noted that terminology and presentation should be student-friendly and reduce reliance on informal or external sources of advice. The increasing use of digital tools, including artificial intelligence, by students seeking guidance was also highlighted, reinforcing the importance of ensuring that institutional information is clear, accurate and easily accessible.

(4) Members discussed the importance of digital infrastructure in supporting the effective operation of mitigating circumstances processes. The need for a standardised digital platform to manage claims was emphasised by the ICU representative, alongside the benefits this would bring in improving consistency, transparency and turnaround times for decisions.

(5) The Senate considered specific elements of the procedure, including the treatment of extensions and the relationship between extension policies and mitigating circumstances claims. Members noted the importance of clarity in these arrangements, including ensuring appropriate routes for appeal where relevant. The handling of penalties, including late submission penalties, was also raised by the ICU representative and discussed in the context of consistency and fairness.

2987 Update on the Module Evaluation Questionnaire

Received: An update from the Provost and Deputy President on the Module Evaluation Questionnaire participation rates and results processing

Reported: (1) The update provided an overview of Module Evaluation Questionnaire (MEQ) participation rates for the Autumn and Spring terms, including timelines for the processing and dissemination of data.

Considered in discussion: (2) Members discussed participation rates and noted variation across departments, recognising that timing of surveys and the extent of local promotion had a significant influence on student engagement.

(3) The Senate discussed departmental module and teacher evaluation pilots using the Lambda platform, noting that higher response rates had been achieved in comparison to the MEQ. Members observed that this had in part been attributed to the use of end-of-lecture QR

codes and single sign-on functionality, which facilitated ease of access for students. It was also recognised that increased response rates may have reflected stronger departmental promotion and engagement with the evaluation process.

(4) Members discussed options for future development, including the potential use of Canvas as a platform for module evaluation, and agreed that this would be explored further.

2988 Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee

Received: A report from the Chair of the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee on the meeting held on 1 April 2026.

Reported: (1) The Senate noted that QAEC had:

- a. Considered the 2025 Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) university results analysis. Overall satisfaction increased to 82% but remained below sector and Russell Group benchmarks;
- b. Considered the 2025 Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) university results analysis, noting stable overall satisfaction at 82% and a broadly positive long-term trajectory, albeit with some slippage against Russell Group comparators;
- c. Noted a report from a special meeting of the Postgraduate Research Quality Committee (PRQC) on PRES action planning. The associated university action plan focused on addressing poor supervision and improving clarity around student expectations and progression through better guidance and signposting. QAEC welcomed the clear ownership by ECRI and the defined timelines for delivery;
- d. Noted an update on regulations and policy development from the Regulations and Policy Review Committee (RPRC), including ongoing work on Board of Examiners documentation, digital assessment, and postgraduate regulations;
- e. Approved amendments to Postgraduate Taught entry requirements for 2027, including strengthened academic requirements and limited changes to English language thresholds. QAEC considered potential recruitment impacts and was reassured by modelling undertaken by Admissions;
- f. Approved the acceptance of the Oxford Test of English Advanced as an English-language qualification for a time-limited trial, subject to conditions around test validity, single-sitting score submission and ongoing monitoring. The standard Oxford Test of English was not approved for university entry;
- g. Noted recent sector and regulatory developments, including Office for Students activity related to foreign interference, subcontractual provision, access and participation, transparency requirements and student outcomes;
- h. Noted the revised Procedure for the Assessment of Fitness to Practise Medicine, which had previously been approved subject to recommendations. QAEC discussed observations relating to the length of cases and the importance of maintaining procedural fairness, which would inform any future review of the procedure.

2989 Dates of Terms

Received: A paper from the Academic Registrar on proposed term dates.

Confirmed: (1) The Senate confirmed the dates of terms for the 2027/28 academic session.

Approved: (2) The Senate approved the proposed dates of terms for the 2028/29 academic session.

Noted: (3) The Senate noted the provisional dates of terms for the period 2029/30 to 2035/36.

Considered in discussion: (4) The Senate noted variations in term dates for the 2026/27 academic year, including arrangements for periods spent in industry or abroad by students on named degree programmes.

(5) The Director of Academic Quality and Standards raised the absence of clearly defined principles underpinning the setting of term dates, noting that the requirement to deliver 39 teaching weeks, in part to meet accommodation contractual obligations, had been the primary driver. Members discussed the need for a more explicit framework to guide future decision making.

(6) Members discussed the impact of public holidays and the structure of the academic calendar, particularly in relation to the start of the Spring term. Concerns were raised regarding the timing of term commencement immediately following the winter closure period, especially where this resulted in limited or no gap before the start of examinations. The implications for staff workload were also noted.

(7) The Senate considered the complexity of aligning term dates with external constraints, including the variable timing of Easter and the need to accommodate 11 teaching weeks within the Spring term. Members noted that this could create challenges in certain years, requiring trade-offs between maintaining full teaching weeks, adjusting the structure of terms, or extending into other parts of the academic calendar.

(8) Members also discussed the impact of term dates on students, including considerations relating to international travel, assessment scheduling and student internships. The importance of providing sufficient buffer periods between closure days and the commencement of examinations was highlighted, alongside the need for clear communication to students where departments retained flexibility in timetabling.

Agreed: (9) The Senate welcomed further work to develop a set of guiding principles and options for the setting of term dates, which would be presented to a future meeting of the Senate.

Action: Secretary

2990 Any Other Business

Noted: No other business was reported.

2991 Dates of Next Meetings

Reported: The last Senate meeting of the 2025/26 academic year would take place on Wednesday 24 June 2026 (15:00-17:00).

