

COUNCIL

UNRESTRICTED Minutes of the meeting held at 10.00 a.m. on Wednesday 26 November 2025 in the Teaching and Learning Building, Carmarthen campus

UWTSD and UW Council Members:

Emlyn Dole (Chair)
Professor Elwen Evans KC (Vice-Chancellor)
Timothy Llewelyn
Nigel Roberts
Dr Liz Siberry

In attendance:

Gavin Bessant, Director of Financial Services
Vanessa Cashmore, Acting Principal, Coleg Sir Gar
Sarah Clark, University Secretary and Clerk to the Councils
Sharon Lusher, PVC (FE)
Peter Mannion, Chief Operating Officer
Dr Chris Marshall, Chief of Staff
Professor Conny Matera-Rogers, PVC (International)
Jane O'Rourke, Chief People Officer
Professor Mirjam Plantinga, PVC (Education)
Lynwen Davies (Translator)
Margaret Williams, Secretary

UW Council Members:

Dr Stuart Robb
Iwan Thomas

UWTSD Council Members:

Richard Bills (online)
Dr Tracy Cruickshank
Gwyneira Davies
Dr Deborah Hughes
Rowland Jones
Jacqui Kedward (online)
Chris Martin
Richard Norton
Jonathan Pugh
Emlyn Schiavone (online)
Katrin Shaw
Jennifer Taylor

Observer:

Tianran Liu (SU)

Minute	Main discussion points
25.98 Apologies	Apologies for absence were received from Professor Kyle Erickson, Geraint Evans, Geraint Roberts and Deris Williams.
25.99 Declarations of interest	Council RECEIVED an update to the Register of Interests 2025/26 to include new members of Council ((JCO428).
25.100 Chair's report	<p>Council RECEIVED the Chair's report (JCO429).</p> <p>The Chair welcomed the following new members of the UWTSD Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jacqui Kedward, independent member and Chair of Coleg Sir Gar/Ceredigion Boards • Chris Martin, independent member • Richard Norton, independent member • Jonathan Pugh, academic staff member <p>The Chair expressed his thanks to John Edge, the outgoing Chair of CSG/CC Boards, for his many years of leadership and for his contribution to the work of the Council.</p> <p>The Chair welcomed Sharron Lusher, who had recently joined the Senior Leadership Team as Pro Vice-Chancellor (Further Education).</p>
25.101 Vice-Chancellor's report	<p>Council RECEIVED an oral report from the Vice-Chancellor.</p> <p>The Vice-Chancellor reported on a range of matters, including:</p> <p>(a) senior staff changes, including the appointment of a new Chief Financial Officer; the resignation of the PVC (Commercial and Business Relations) who would continue to work for the University on a project basis; and the departure of the Director of Marketing and Recruitment. The COO would oversee this area in the interim;</p> <p>(b) strategic discussions within the sector and Medr's development of the new regulatory framework;</p> <p>(c) the establishment of two working groups with CSG/CC, one to focus on Lampeter, discussions with Ceredigion County Council and the needs of Ceredigion as a region; and the other to review the current Group structure, reporting to the CSG Board and the Council;</p> <p>(d) her chairship of Universities Wales and membership of the Boards of UUK and Advance HE.</p>

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25.102 RPC reports	<p>Council CONSIDERED the reports of the RPC meetings held on 13 October and 15 November 2025 (JCO431).</p> <p>Presenting the reports, the Chair of RPC drew members' attention in particular to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the financial update, which was presented to Council as a separate agenda item; (b) the proposed new Strategic Plan 2025/30, which was presented to Council as a separate agenda item, and work in progress on the associated measures of success and alignment with the KPI framework; (c) progress with the delivery of the Annual Plan; (d) Fee and Access Plan monitoring; (e) a range of estates matters, including the successful relocation from the Swansea Business School to SA1; progress at Westferry, in particular the securing of full planning for educational use of the second floor and a satisfactory final settlement of dilapidations for the University's exit from the Kennington Oval site; and concerns in respect of the condition of Hen Goleg building at Carmarthen, which was set out in detail in the supporting papers. He also emphasised the importance of ongoing investment in building maintenance; (f) the Committee's annual report 2024/25. <p>Council RECEIVED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the KPI monitoring report (JCO469); (b) the update on key estates initiatives, including the capital budget report (JCO470); (c) the Annual Plan monitoring report (JCO471); (d) the Governing Body Assurance Statement (Fee and Access Planning) and associated documents and APPROVED their inclusion in the Annual Assurance Return (JCO472); (e) the Committee's annual report 2024/25 (JCO432).
25.103 Financial update	This is a RESTRICTED ITEM and reported within the restricted minutes of the meeting.
25.104 Strategic Plan 2025-30	Council CONSIDERED the proposed Strategic Plan 2025-30, the approval of which had been recommended by RPC (JCO435).

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	<p>The Vice-Chancellor reported on the extensive consultation that had underpinned the Plan's development. The University's mission would remain unchanged, but the Plan offered an opportunity to reposition the University within its strategic, operating and regulatory environments and was intended to drive priorities and activities through sub-strategies and plans across the institution.</p> <p>Council commended and APPROVED the Strategic Plan 2025-30.</p>
<p>25.105 ARC reports</p>	<p>Council CONSIDERED the reports of the ARC meetings held on 20 October and 17 November 2025 (JCO436).</p> <p>Presenting the reports, the Chair of ARC drew members' attention in particular to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the updated Risk Register and proposed changes to the Risk Management and Assurance Policy; (b) recommendations in respect of the appointment of auditors; (c) the External Audit report and draft financial statements 2024/25, which were presented to Council as a separate agenda item; (d) the update on cybersecurity and anti-fraud controls presented in the biannual Transparency report. <p>In respect of procurement, Council noted that ARC had received an update from the COO on a proposal to bring forward expansion work on the Westferry campus, London and to use a single tender exercise to ensure that the work was completed in readiness for a 2027 student intake. The justification had been discussed with the procurement team and the Chair of RPC. In the context of its responsibilities relating to compliance, ARC had confirmed that it was comfortable with the proposed route of action</p> <p>Council noted that ARC had considered the GER recommendation that the scope and purpose of the Transparency Report should be reviewed. It had supported the Clerk's proposal that the report should be retained but the title be amended and content be streamlined to remove any duplication with other reports.</p> <p>Council RECEIVED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the Corporate Risk Register and appendices (JCO465); (b) an extract from the Transparency Report relating to cybersecurity (JCO466); (c) the Committee's Annual Report 2024/25 (JCO437).

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	<p>Council APPROVED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the revised Risk Management and Assurance Policy (JCO464); (b) ARC's proposal that the External Audit tender be deferred by 12 months, on the assumption that plans for the 2026/27 audit cycle would be finalised in early 2027; (c) ARC's proposal to extend the current Internal Audit contract until 31 July 2027, on the understanding that this would be the final extension.
<p>25.106 Financial statements 2024/25</p>	<p>Council CONSIDERED the External Audit report and opinion on the financial statements 2024/25 (JCO438b), together with the audited annual report and financial statements for the University and its subsidiaries (JCO439b).</p> <p>Council noted that the documents had been considered in detail by ARC.</p> <p>Council APPROVED the signing of the annual report and financial statements, subject to the completion of any outstanding items.</p>
<p>25.107 ASSUR statement</p>	<p>Council APPROVED the University's annual ASSUR Statement, which was part of the suite of documents due for submission to Medr as part of the Annual Assurance Return (JCO440).</p> <p>The DFS explained the calculations and noted the progress made since the last statement.</p>
<p>25.108 NGC report</p>	<p>Council CONSIDERED the report of the NGC meeting held on 16 October 2025 (JCO441).</p> <p>Presenting the reports, the Chair of NGC drew members' attention in particular to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the Committee's discussion of the recommendations of the Governance Effectiveness Review (GER) and the action plan prepared by the Clerk, a draft of which was presented to Council as a separate agenda item; (b) the Committee's consideration of the Gillies report on the University of Dundee, which included some observations on challenge and financial literacy that Council would wish to consider in the context of the GER report and the planned 're-induction' of members; (c) progress with the recruitment of new independent members.

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	<p>Council RECEIVED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the Complaints Annual Report 2024/25 (JCO467); (b) the Committee's Annual Report 2024/25 (JCO442). <p>Council NOTED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the Gillies Report on the University of Dundee (JCO468) and AGREED that further reflection would take place in the context of the GER action plan; (b) that Chair's action had been taken to approve the recommendations for subsidiary directors' appointments set out in the Committee's report.
<p>25.109 Governance Effectiveness Review 2025 action plan</p>	<p>Council CONSIDERED the proposed Governance Effectiveness Review 2025 action plan (JCO443).</p> <p>Council noted that the draft plan had been discussed in detail at NGC at its October meeting, and that the version presented reflected the outcomes of its deliberations. An implementation time scale was included. NGC's discussion had taken account of the Gillies report and Advance HE's recently published report 'Shaping the future of HE governance'.</p> <p>Council APPROVED the action plan, noting that implementation would be monitored through NGC.</p>
<p>25.110 Students' Union report</p>	<p>Council RECEIVED the Students' Union report (JCO444).</p> <p>Presenting the report, the Student President (Carmarthen) referred to a range of matters, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the work of the Student Opportunities and Student Advice departments (b) Student Voice's work relating to academic representation (c) The Annual Quality Report 2026, the theme of which would be 'Academic Communities' (d) Sabbatical Officer objectives for the year ahead.
<p>25.111 Senate report</p>	<p>Council RECEIVED the reports of the Senate meetings held on 17 September and 12 November 2025 (JCO445a).</p>

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25.112 Professor of Practice	Council APPROVED Senate's recommendation that Mrs Helen Wadley be appointed as an Honorary Professor of Practice (JCO445b).
25.113 Senate Annual report	<p>Council CONSIDERED the Senate Annual Report 2024/25 (JCO446).</p> <p>Council noted that the report was the first of several items that would normally have been presented to the Academic Committee in the first instance but were being put to direct to Council in the light of the cancellation of the Committee's autumn meeting.</p> <p>Council noted that the format of the report had been modified for 2024/25. It provided assurance in a range of quality areas, summarised on page 4, to support Council in making the Annual Assurance Return to Medr.</p>
25.114 Academic strategy annual monitoring reports	<p>Council RECEIVED annual monitoring reports as follows (JCO447):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Academic Success Strategy; (b) Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy; (c) Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
25.115 Annual Survey Report	<p>Council RECEIVED the Annual Survey Report (JCO448).</p> <p>Members noted that the report provided key insights from the student surveys undertaken in 2024/25 including the NSS, Academic Experience Survey, Postgraduate Taught and Postgraduate Research Surveys. It provided assurance to Council that the survey outcomes had been scrutinised and that action plans, developed in partnership with the student body, were in place and implemented to address any issues raised. It also included the subject level action plan requested by Medr in one subject area.</p>
25.116 Annual Student Statement and University response	<p>Council RECEIVED the Annual Student Statement (Annual Quality Report) 2024/25, the theme of which was 'Academic Timetabling', and the University's response (JCO449).</p> <p>Council noted that the documents had been considered and endorsed by Senate in September and November 2025 respectively.</p>
25.117 Welsh Language Strategy	Council RECEIVED an update on progress with the priorities of the Welsh Language Strategy (JCO450).

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25.118 Welsh Language Standards Monitoring Report 2024/25	Council APPROVED the Welsh Language Standards Monitoring Report 2024/25 (JCO451), which would be published on the University's website by the end of January 2026.
25.119 International update	<p>Council RECEIVED an update on international matters, comprising the International Office performance report November 2025 and the International Risk Register 2025/26 (JCO452).</p> <p>The PVC(International) reported that the International Office had successfully delivered the key objectives of Phase 1 of the International Student Recruitment Plan, which included the reorganisation of recruitment and admissions processes and the strengthening of partnerships in India and China. Officers were now focusing on Phase 2, which introduced a more advanced and integrated approach to international recruitment. She outlined the key challenges and opportunities.</p>
25.120 Minutes	Council APPROVED the Minutes of the meeting held on 18 September 2025 (JCO454).
25.121 Prevent annual report	<p>Council CONSIDERED documentation relating to the University's compliance with its responsibilities under the Prevent Duty as follows (JCO456):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Annual Accountability Return (b) Annual Data Return (c) Prevent Action Plan (d) Prevent Risk Register <p>Council APPROVED the signing of the Annual Accountability Return and Annual Data Return prior to submission to Medr.</p>
25.122 Chair's action report	Council RECEIVED the report on Chair's action since the last meeting (JCO457).
25.123 Use of University Seal	Council RECEIVED the report on use of the University Seal since the last meeting (JCO458).
25.124 Declarations of Interest	No additional declarations of interest were reported during the course of the meeting.
25.125 Date of next meeting	22 January 2026

Meeting terminated 1.10