



Minutes:	Council
Time and date:	13:00, 7 August 2025
Location:	The Winslow Room, Mount Pleasant Campus, Ring Road South, Buckingham Railway Walk, Buckingham, MK18 1RY/ MS Teams
Present:	Mr Mark Qualter (Chair of Council), Ms Annabel Awosika (Student' Union President), Ms Anthea Bailey (Professional Services), Ms Kristina Church (Independent Member), Professor Harriet Dunbar-Morris (Pro Vice-Chancellor), Mr Andy Dunkley (Independent Member), Mr Kamva Gcaza (Nominated Student), Mr Nick Hillman (Independent Member), Mr Chris Hollis (Independent Member), Mr Graham Jones (Senate Representative), Mr Martin Kersey (Independent Member), The Lord Peter Lilley (Independent Member), Mr Nitesh Magdani (Independent Member), Mrs Sarah Myhill (Senate Representative), Professor Jacqueline O'Dowd (Senate Representative), Dr Adekunle Osibogun (Nominated Alumnus), Professor Göran Roos (Independent Member), Mrs Milly Soames (Vice-Chair of Council), Professor James Tooley (Vice-Chancellor), Mr Phil Wolfenden (Independent Member)
In attendance:	Mr David Cole (Chief Financial Officer), Ms Katie Gunn (Governance Manager), Mr Chris Payne (Registrar and Chief Administrative Officer), Mr Sam Weston (Secretary to Council)
Secretary:	Mr Sam Weston, Secretary to Council Tel: +44 (0)1280 820166 (Internal Ext 2166) Email address: Samuel.weston@buckingham.ac.uk

1 Apologies for absence

There were apologies from Professor Tim Evans, Ms Katie Nykanen and Ms Nadia Strone.

Professor Barnaby Lenon had indicated that he was unavailable to observe the meeting.

2 Declaration of any pecuniary, family or other personal interests in relation to items on the agenda

No declarations of interest were made in respect of items on the agenda.

3 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the Council meeting held on the 19 May 2025 were approved as a correct record, including the proposed redaction for online publication, subject to the following amendment:

That the reference to 'democracy' in bullet 1 of Minute 9 be amended to 'demography'.

4 Matters arising

All matters arising from the previous meetings were to be addressed under the main agenda items.

5 Decisions taken via correspondence

In meeting the requirements of the Office for Students' (OfS) new Condition of Registration E6 on Harassment and Sexual Misconduct, a decision had been approved by Council via

correspondence on Tuesday 29 July 2025, to put in place the following policies relating to the new Condition:

- Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy
- Student Relationships Policy (which included prohibition of any new staff: student relationships at the University).
- Dignity at Work and Study Policy

6 Chair's welcome and introduction

The Chair of Council provided the following update:

- The Council meeting represented a step forward for the University **[Redacted]**. The importance of bringing collective insight and constructive challenge to decision-making was emphasised. The Council would be committed to approaching its work with curiosity, confidence, and clarity, while ensuring that the University remained well-governed and managed effectively.
- It was important to have a pro-active discussion in this area in order to define what 'success' looked like for the University and outline the steps required to achieve it.
- A note of thanks was given to the Council in advance for the energy and commitment given in the meeting's discussion.

7 Vice-Chancellor's update

The Vice-Chancellor provided the following updates:

- A paper had been prepared by the Vice-Chancellor that he had been due to present at the October 2024 Council meeting regarding future investment options for the University. This paper had ultimately been considered at Council's December 2024 meeting.
- The importance of raising funds, identifying a niche market and looking for an external partner were noted.
- Enthusiasm was expressed about the ideas that were being brought to the Council meeting **[Redacted]**
- Congratulations were extended to Mr Nick Hillman in recognition of being awarded an OBE and to Professor Barnaby Lenon in recognition of his recent achievement of being awarded *The Times* 'Education Lifetime Achievement Award'.
- A working group had been created to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the University College Buckingham in 2026. Ideas to celebrate the upcoming milestone and expressions of interest and willingness to participate in the working group were welcomed.
- A new book had been commissioned by the Vice-Chancellor for release next year.
- Following a highly competitive recruitment process, Professor Aida Hajdarpasic had been appointed as the new Executive Dean within the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences.
- Congratulations were extended to Professor Jacqueline O'Dowd who had been appointed as the new Faculty Pro-Dean.

- Thanks were extended to Professor Patrick Leman and Professor Joanne Selway for leading the Faculty in the interim.
- In March, the Senate had commissioned an inquiry into the suspension of the Vice-Chancellor. It was intended that this would be discussed further on in the meeting under 'Any Other Business'.

8 Update reports

Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC)

- An ARC meeting had not been held since the Council met previously on 19 May 2025.
- Action needed to be taken urgently to mitigate risks to the University, and an independent review of Senate was felt to be of urgent importance. This would be a decision for Council as it presented itself as a risk and any lack of funding was not considered a valid justification for failing to carry out such a review.
- Professor Jacqueline O'Dowd, as a member of Senate, expressed that she felt that the majority of Senate would welcome and support this decision from Council.

Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee (FRC)

- **[Redacted]**
- **[Redacted]** Input was welcomed to help shape the direction moving forward and all members were encouraged to contribute to this important discussion.
- **[Redacted]**

President of the Students' Union (SU)

- A number of scheduled events were highlighted with confirmation that they were progressing well. It was acknowledged that the current status of the SU was positive while also recognising opportunities for further improvement.
- The Students' Union elections for 2025/2026 were due to take place imminently with the results to be shared in due course. The names of the candidates involved in the elections were shared with the Council.

Arising from this update, the Vice-Chancellor congratulated the President of the Students' Union and the Nominated Student on the excellent Student Town Hall that was held on Wednesday 6 August 2025.

Elected Senate Representatives

- It was felt that an independent review of Senate was required. It was confirmed that this course of action had been recommended via Halpin's governance review in 2023, but a decision had previously been taken via Senate not to progress the review due to a lack of funding.

- A working group was being established to explore matters relating to the teaching model for how current students wished to learn. Initial views indicated that the current teaching model was embedded in the past instead of the future.
- There was a shared message of collaboration, and it was noted that in recent Senate meetings, there had been a majority view regarding the importance of effective working and collaboration with the Council in the future. It was highlighted that more involvement from Council members would be welcomed at Senate meetings and the University more widely, and it was felt that the more Council members were involved and able to attend events on campus, the more they would see of the inner workings of the University.
- Thanks were extended to Professor Göran Roos who had provided some support to the Faculty of Business, Humanities and Social Sciences with some support around potential new teaching and learning models.

9 [Redacted]

10 Recruitment and admissions update

This item was deferred to a later date.

11 National Student Survey (NSS) 2025

This item was deferred to a later date.

12 Council Strategy and Transformation Sub-Group Impact Record

This item was deferred to a later date.

13 Office for Students – Conditions of Registration Assurance Report

This item was deferred to a later date.

14 Trustee Code of Practice and Council Member Role Descriptions

This item was deferred to a later date.

15-24 Supporting Papers

It was RESOLVED that the following Supporting Papers be noted:

- (a) The Council Registers of Interest
- (b) The Executive Registers of Interest
- (c) The unconfirmed minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee of 7 May 2025
- (d) The unconfirmed minutes of the Finances and Resources Committee of 1 May 2025
- (e) The unconfirmed minutes of the Council Strategy and Transformation Sub-Group of 8 July 2025
- (f) The unconfirmed minutes of Senate of 4 June 2025
- (g) The revised version of the Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom Code of Practice
- (h) The approved Office for Students (OfS) – Harassment and Sexual Misconduct policy
- (i) An update report of the President of the Students' Union
- (j) An update report of the Registrar and Chief Administrative Officer concerning:
 - Academic and Student Services
 - Regulatory Compliance

- Strategy and Transformation
- University Risk Register
- (k) The June 2025 Financial Management Pack and Commentary

Start time of meeting: 13:00

End time of meeting: 17:10

7 August 2025