

Board of Trustees Minutes
Thursday 12 February 2026, 15.00-18.00
Senate Chamber, Room S219 Paul Webley Wing And Microsoft Teams

Attendance	
Voting Members	
Michael Hastings	Chairman
Nizam Uddin	Vice Chair
Jo Beall	Vice Chair
Richard Millward	Honorary Treasurer
Adam Habib	Vice-Chancellor
Khadir Meer	DVC Finance and Operations and Clerk to the Board
Joanna Newman	Provost and DVC Education
Laura Hammond	DVC Research and Knowledge Exchange
Jenny Greenshields	External Trustee
Kersti Börjars	External Trustee
Cedric Ntumba	External Trustee
Joanna Hotung	External Trustee
Alan Duncan	External Trustee
Sally Townsend	External Trustee
David Willey	External Trustee
Tom Yoritaka	External Trustee
Steven Pfeiffer	External Trustee
Yaa Ofori-Ansah	External Trustee
Lindiwe Dovey	Senate representative
Shirin Rai	Senate Representative
Graeme Earl	College Dean Representative, and Dean of College (CoHum)
Dan Roberts	Chief Information Officer, and Professional Services Representative
Sam Hardy	SU Representative
Charlie Oubridge	RSA Student Union Representative
In Attendance	
Shona Aitken	Chief of Staff
Justin Smith	Chief Finance Officer
Donna Fong	Director of Legal and Governance
Angelique Tjen	Head of Governance (minutes)
Apologies	
Richard Brown	External Trustee

Opening Administration

[B 25/26 3 02 Welcome and Apologies](#)

The Chair welcomed everyone who joined the meeting in person and online and noted apologies from Richard Brown.

The Chair also mentioned the following for Trustees to note:

- A reminder of the regular newsletter circulated on events within the University, should Board members wish to attend.
- A reminder that Graduation in 2026 is 8-10 September with a strong encouragement for trustees to attend a ceremony.
- The Bangladesh elections are underway and SOAS academics have been asked to comment on it.
- LinkedIn mentions SOAS scholarships and in proportion to the size of SOAS, the institution offers a lot of scholarships.

[B 25/26 3 01 Board of Trustees Presentation](#)

Professor Antonio Andreoni and Professor Ha-Joon Chang gave a presentation on the Centre for Sustainable Structural Transformation. The presentation is available below:

[SOAS BoT 12 Feb 2026 - CSST Presentation.pptx](#)

Board members were very interested and pleased to hear that this is a growing area for SOAS with further opportunities progressing. SOAS is building the institutional footprint as well as the competitive advantage in this area and also making an impact through involvement on various boards as well as continuing the research.

The Board thanked the speakers.

[B 25/26 3 03 Declaration of Interests](#)

There were no declarations of interest pronounced at this meeting.

[B 25/26 3 04 Confirmation of the Agenda](#)

Committee members confirmed the items on the agenda.

General Business

[B 25/26 3 05 Previous Minutes](#)

Minutes of the meeting on 21 November 2025 were approved as an accurate reflection of discussions.

[B 25/26 3 06 Action Log](#)

The Committee reviewed the action log and noted the closure of 2 actions related to the Approval of Wood Green Hall as both have been completed:

Chief Finance Officer to provide paper to RPC on repayment schedule and funding source and following RPC review, a note to Board of Trustees confirming assurance of these arrangements.
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Director of Legal and Governance to add to the Strategic Risk Register, a risk related to SOAS' acquisition and transition of student accommodation and to ensure mitigations are in place particularly to cover student rental strikes and impact on rental income.

B 25/26 3 07 Annual Schedule of Business

The Committee noted the annual schedule of business of future items to be discussed by the Committee.

B 25/26 3 08 Vice Chancellors Report

The Vice-Chancellor presented key points from the Vice-Chancellors report. The key areas covered in the Report are:

1. Institutional Scorecard 2025/26
2. Teaching and Learning
3. Foundation College
4. International Higher Education Report
5. Research
6. Recruitment and Marketing
7. Estates
8. Equitable Partnerships
9. Sustainability
10. Finances
11. International Visits and Fundraising

The following points were highlighted:

- To note the Student enrolment target has not been met this year, SOAS' financial targets overall have been met.
- It was noted that the University had just concluded the examination period in the new semesterised format, and that the new Education Strategic Plan is now in place
- There is a level of re-structuring at SOAS affecting the Foundation College. A full review of this will be undertaken in 2027/28.
- The International Education Strategy was discussed at the Senate Strategy meeting and will be covered further in the Joint Board of Trustees and Senate meeting on 14th May 2026.
- In Research and Knowledge Exchange, it was reported that we have also recently secured several prestigious research grants across the University, including major awards to Dr Bhrigupati Singh (Templeton Foundation, £890,000), Dr Daniel Mulugeta (UKRI Future Leaders Fellowship renewal, £565,000), Prof Wen-Chin Ouyang (Leverhulme Major Research Fellowship, £155,000), Dr Yannis Dafermos (Open Society Foundation, £131,000), Dr Mehroosh Tak (Tiny Beam Fund, £378,000), and Prof Uli Volz (three FCDO-funded grants totalling approx. £400,000). Development of Equitable partnerships are progressing well and the issue with Saudi Arabia payments being late is being resolved with the help of the UK government. Alan Duncan will be discussing this further with the Vice-Chancellor to see if he is able to support and help expedite payments to SOAS from Saudi Arabia.
- Joanna Hotung was thanked for hosting an alumni and fundraising event in Hong Kong for SOAS, and thanked for attending a signing ceremony on behalf of SOAS.
- Career counselling was discussed as a way to capitalise further on the US market for students and as way of increasing international student numbers at SOAS, and it was noted that SOAS

has regularly hosted over the past 10 years career counsellors from the US to visit our campus . The focus on NSS will also help with improving student retention and increase numbers.

- With the increased visits abroad and the potential for more students, SOAS also needs to extend the scope of online teaching to reach new markets.
- There has been positive advancements in sustainability, where SOAS rankings are up 90 places in the People and Planet League table, and a move to 261 (from 401) on the QS Sustainability Rankings

Part A: Items for Discussion

B 25/26 3 09 Annual EDI report (PSED) and approval of EDI&W Strategy

Background

The DVC RKE and Head of EDI and Wellbeing presented the Annual EDI report (PSED) and EDI&W Strategy. The previous Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy ended in 2025, providing an opportunity to create a new plan:

- reflecting on the current SOAS context and external climate for EDI&W;
- ensuring we are compliant with the Equality Act 2010;
- aligning with the SOAS strategy 2026 – 2030, and revised People Strategy with the vision to create: "One SOAS: Diverse by nature, inclusive by design".

It should be noted that the EDI&W Strategy supports the main SOAS Strategy 2026 builds on previous successes in the Race Equality Charter and Athena Swan accreditation and seeks to embed EDI&W in the organisation. A demographic "deep dive" of the student body and staff has also been done so that there is a better understanding of diversity within SOAS.

Committee Discussion

Key highlights from committee discussions included:

- the request to include the definition of "Wellbeing" in the EDI&W Strategy.
- the request by the Student Union representative for EDI&W work and training to be shared with the Student Union staff so that there is a consistent whole SOAS approach.
- scale is important in managing EDI&W and It affects all areas like recruitment so each department needs an awareness and should be working on EDI&W.
- endorsement for the "catchy" vision which also summarises what SOAS is seeking to achieve.

Decisions and Outcomes

The Committee approved the EDI&W Plan.

B 25/26 3 10 Relaunch of Online Distance Learning

Background

The Provost and DVC Education presented the update on the Future of Online Learning Strategy and the relaunch of SOAS Online in March 2026 (for enrolments in Sep 2026). Following the conclusion of its partnership with the University of London in 2023, SOAS is relaunching SOAS Online as part of its Future of Online Learning strategy, approved in 2024, to stabilise and grow online student numbers and income. A reimagined, cost-effective delivery model, aligned to the on-campus academic calendar, will underpin a new portfolio of online PGT programmes launching for September 2026 entry. The relaunch is supported by curriculum, pedagogic and digital ecosystem renewal, an enhanced employability focus, and sector-informed marketing activity. Income growth is projected from 2027/28, with SOAS Online contribution to institutional costs increasing significantly by 2029/30. The relaunch of "SOAS online" refreshes existing programmes to avoid duplication and uses market

intelligence to determine more realistic fees and introduces "stackable accreditation" which enables work to be planned and programmes taken at the convenience of the student, which in turn increases income.

Committee Discussion

Members discussed and raised the following points:

- Benchmarking was done related to price points with comparison to other UK HEI competitors.
- A comparison with Open University was suggested due to their teaching model.
- An enquiry if students are required to be on campus for a 1 year's Masters, which the Provost confirmed her team are exploring
- Clarification on the thresholds to determine viability of the programme. The Provost replied that an estimated 300 new joiners are expected, and that we are currently 'teaching out' the student cohorts in the current programme
- Whether there are any execution risks including support to students. This was responded to with activities which focus on marketing ; following up on student support requirements; to continually review and refresh content
- SOAS should determine what its targeted countries are for online distance learning.
- SOAS should decide the margin or point that a programme will be considered not profitable or not working.

Decisions and Outcomes

The Committee noted and approved the continuation of activities and the relaunch and marketing of SOAS online.

Part B: Items for Noting / Approval

B 25/26 3 11 Research Integrity Annual Statement

Background

The DVC RKE presented the Research Integrity Annual Statement. SOAS has been issuing annual integrity statements since 2020, in order to comply with the terms as per the UK Concordat to Support Research Integrity. Overall, this forms part of SOAS' reporting requirements to demonstrate compliance with industry standards on research integrity. The statement for academic year 2024/2025 provides an overview summary of actions and activities that have been undertaken to support and strengthen research integrity across SOAS, across all level of academic researcher. Some of the actions have arisen from the UNIAC Audit undertaken in Feb/Apr-2025, others to ensure that the University's frameworks are aligned to take account of Health and Social Care research now being undertaken. This Statement has been approved by Executive Board and Senate.

Decisions and Outcomes

The Committee approved the Research Integrity Annual Statement.

B 25/26 3 12 Standing Order Updates and Schedule of Delegation

Background

The Director of Legal and Governance presented the updated Standing Orders and the Schedule of Delegation for approval by the Board of Trustees to enable publication and adoption by the University. Over the last few years, the SOAS constitutional documents have undergone various reviews to reflect changes to institutional structures and priorities, including the updates to the Charter of Incorporation and Articles as approved by the Privy Council. Over time, this has led to some inconsistencies and

contradictions throughout the documents that could potentially impact good governance and decision-making. Therefore, in late 2025 comprehensive review of the constitutional documents (Standing Orders and Standing Order Annexes only) was carried out to address areas of potential ambiguity to clarify accountability, responsibility and authority. This review has also been essential to the development of the Schedule of Delegation, which is a simplified presentation of the authorised decision makers in the University's governance structures. A Schedule of Delegations is a document that outlines the specific decision-making powers and responsibilities that are delegated to various committees, individuals, or sub-committees within an organisation. It serves to clarify where key decisions are made and to whom these decisions have been formally delegated. The document also provides guidance on the processes relating to these delegations, including limits on delegations and relevant approval routes.

Decisions and Outcomes

The Committee approved the updated Standing Orders and Schedule of Delegation.

[B 25/26 3 13 Wood Green Hall](#)

Background

The DVC Finance and Operations and the Chief Finance Officer gave a verbal update on the Wood Green Hall acquisition. It is the first time in years that SOAS has acquired student accommodation. This diversifies SOAS' estate portfolio and enhances its marketability. From 14th January, all rent received is allocated to SOAS. The maintenance and management of the accommodation is outsourced. The funds for the acquisition were provided through an unsecured loan. The loan is being repaid through a "sinking fund" (or allocated funds) to enable more flexibility.

It was recognised that a lot of good work from the Finance and Estates teams enabled this to successfully happen, together with governance from the Resources and Planning Committee.

In discussion it was noted:

- That rental income would be incoming from 14/01/2026
- That covenants would be reported to the Resources and Planning Committee twice a year

Decisions and Outcomes

The Committee noted the update.

[B 25/26 3 14](#)

[B 25/26 3 15](#)

[B 25/26 3 16](#)

The minutes of the Senate, Resources and Planning Committee and Audit and Risk Committee were noted by the Board of Trustee members.

[B 25/26 3 17 Governance and Nominations Committee](#)

The minutes were noted by the Board of Trustees. It was also noted that Kersti Borjars tenure as a Board of Trustee member would end on 31st July 2026. This is after 8 years serving on the Board. The Committee thanked Kersti. It was also noted that the tenure of Steven Pfeiffer, Cedric Ntumba and Tom Yoritaka has been extended for another term. Finally it should be noted that the Board of Trustees' sub-committees will have more external trustees as members in the future.

B 25/26 3 18 Remuneration Committee

A verbal update was provided in relation to the meeting held in the previous week, where the Committee took a update report on Executive Remuneration from sector experts, which will be used to inform Executive remuneration decisions in July.

Any Other Business

There was no other business raised at this meeting.

Meeting Close

The meeting concluded at 18.00 and Committee members noted the date of the next meeting as the Joint Board of Trustees and Senate meeting at 15:00 - 18:00 on Thursday 14th May.