APPROVED

Heriot--Watt University

THE SENATE

Minutes: 11 June 2026

In the Chair:	Professor Richard A Williams, Principal and Vice-Chancellor		
Present:	Professor Mushtak Al Atabi	Dr Barbara Keating	Mr Kerim Ovezgylyjov
	Dr Yousef Al Gumaei	Mr Mo Ali Khazali	Dr Stefano Padilla
	Dr Dima Alkawadri	Dr Britta Kalkreuter	Professor Beatrice Pelloni
* denotes partial attendance	Dr Syed Andrabi	Dr Craig Kennedy	Mr Shreyash Phatak
	Professor Lehel Banjai	Professor Angus Laing	Dr Phil Renforth
	Professor Ian Baxter	Mr Andrew Hock Cheong Lee	Dr Lucy Robertson *
	Dr David Brown	Professor Sara Lombardo	Professor Christian Saemann
	Dr Juan Casanova	Ms Jasmine Low	Dr Mohammed Saleh
	Dr David Renato Cavallaro	Dr Jia Lu	Dr Yasaman Sarabi
	Dr Florence Chiao Mei Choong	Dr Stephen Mansell	Dr Florian Scheuring
	Dr Demitrios Cotsovos	Professor Martin McCoustra	Professor Mercedes Sheen
	Dr Ross Curran	Dr Richard McCracken	Dr Hebatallah Shoukry
	Professor Paul Dalgarno	Dr Yvonne McLaren Hankin	Mr Nader Shouly
	Dr Louise Delicato	Professor Heather McGregor	Mr Matt Smith
	Dr Taha Elhag	Dr Ruaraidh McIntosh	Dr Ryad Soobhany
	Dr Rofayda El Hout	Ms Kirsty McKeating	Dr Nazia Talat
	Dr David Ellis	Dr Mubbashar Mehmood	Dr Monica Tamariz
	Dr Carlos Ferreiro Rangel	Dr Hannah Menke	Professor Chris Turney
	Professor Fiona Grant	Dr Thomas Methven	Dr Abrar Ullah
	Ms Judith Gorham	Dr Farnaz Mohsenpour	Dr Marta Vallejo
	Professor Igor Guz	Dr Hendrik Nahler	Dr George Vasdravellis
	Dr Noor Zainab Habib	Dr Shereen Nassar	Dr Robin Westacott
	Ms Joey Hunter	Mr Adrian Nathai	Dr Euan Winton *
	Professor Michel Kaiser	Professor Mehdi Nazarinia	Dr Mesfin Woldetensay
		Professor Tadhg O'Donovan	Mr Soo Wu Ken
In attendance:	Dr Fiona Armstrong	Ms Samantha Kane	Mr Marc Quinn
	Professor Martha Caddell	Dr Maggie King	Ms Megan Morgan (Clerk)
Member apologies:	Ms Ruzanna Abd Rahman	Dr April Henning	Mr Matt Myers
	Dr Karen Alexander	Dr Adnan Illyas	Dr Katie Myhill
	Dr Hassam Chaudhry	Dr Ramon Inglada Florensa	Dr Yasemin Nielsen
	Ms Jenny Coady	Professor Reza Kouhy	Dr Marta Romeo
	Dr Manuel Cresciani	Dr Suzanne Lampert	Dr Rabee Rustum
	Professor Chris Dodd	Professor Mercedes Maroto Valer	Ms Devanshi Sharma
	Professor Joanna Drugan	Dr Alistair McConnell	Mr Matthew Smith
	Dr Erkal Ersoy	Professor Steve McLaughlin	Dr Andrea Sneddon
	Professor Anna Fenge	Professor Gillian Murray	Professor Kathrin Stark
	Dr Yun Ii Go	Professor Senthil Muthukumaraswamy	Dr Hai Chen Tan
	Dr April Henning		Dr Tze Chuen Yap
	Dr Adnan Illyas		
Attendee apologies:	Ms Ruth Moir	Mr Fraser Muir	Ms Kirsty Scanlan

MINUTE REF **ACTION BY** **ACTION DATE**

M26/35 **WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

35.1 The Chair welcomed all present to the in-person meeting and noted the above apologies. The Chair reminded members of meeting protocols, including participation in discussion and the use of live polling for formal decisions. There were no declarations of interest.

M26/36 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (SE-26-35)**

36.1 The Senate **approved** the minutes of the meeting held on 22 April 2026 as a fair and accurate record and reflection of the meeting.

M26/37 ACTION LOG AND MATTERS ARISING (SE-26-36)

37.1 The Senate **noted** the Action Log.

37.2 The Senate noted governance updates presented by the Chair, which included thanks to departing Senators, welcome to new Global Student Representatives, progress on Academic Dean elections, committee nominations, interim chairing arrangements, and the launch of the Senate Effectiveness Survey.

37.3 Under matters arising, the Senate **approved** arrangements for senior academic representation at forthcoming graduation ceremonies, including the use of Deputy Principals and the Senior Deputy Principal as required to provide cover for sickness absence. The Senate recognised the importance of appropriate senior representation at graduation events.

M26/38 REPORT FROM THE PRINCIPAL & VICE-CHANCELLOR AND SENATE PRIORITIES TRACKER (SE-26-37)

38.1 The Senate noted the Principal and Vice-Chancellor's Report and Senate Priorities Tracker, presented by the Chair.

38.2 The Chair outlined the challenging external context facing the higher education sector, including sustained financial pressures driven by rising costs, constrained funding models and increasing regulatory expectations, particularly in Scotland. It was noted that these expectations, including those related to widening access, mental health, and student safety, had not been matched with additional resources from the SFC, which had created ongoing pressure on institutional sustainability and delivery models.

38.3 The Senate noted challenges relating to research funding and productivity, alongside the need to maintain effective cost control. The Chair also highlighted the strategic significance of artificial intelligence, noting both the risks and opportunities it had presented for assessment, delivery, and ways of working across the University.

38.4 An update was provided by the Vice-Principal and Provost (Dubai) on the Dubai campus, where recent regional conflict had impacted student recruitment and progression, resulting in reduced projected intake and continuation rates. The Senate noted that staff reductions had been undertaken to align the cost base with anticipated activity, and that appropriate support had been provided to affected and remaining colleagues. The Senate also noted the ongoing progress in KSA, where engagement had continued with the Ministry of Education, albeit at a slower pace than planned.

M26/39 REPORT FROM THE UNIVERSITY DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE (UDC) (SE-26-38)

39.1 The Senate considered the report from the UDC, presented by the UDC Chair and the Vice-Chair.

39.2 The Senate noted the proposed updates to UDC membership, including revisions to Senate and ex officio representation, and the removal of School Discipline Committee (SDC) Chairs from routine case management meetings in order to address potential conflicts of interest. It was noted that these Chairs would instead contribute through annual strategic and policy meetings, and monthly meetings between with the SDC Chairs and the UDC Chair and the Vice-Chair. The Senate **endorsed** the revised membership proposals and noted that final membership arrangements would be confirmed following ongoing engagement with Schools.

39.3	The Senate considered the proposed updates to the Global Student Academic Misconduct Policy. It was noted that the revisions had clarified that all students, including postgraduate research students (PGR), fell within the scope of Regulation A13, addressing a previous gap where PGR cases had not consistently been referred through UDC processes. The Senate noted that the proposals also addressed inconsistencies whereby some PGR students had previously been subject to separate processes for taught and research components, which had the potential to result in differing approaches and outcomes. The updated policy had aligned definitions and terminology with external requirements, including the SFC Research Integrity Policy, the Concordat, and the University's Research Ethics Policy, in order to ensure institutional compliance.		
39.4	The Senate noted that the proposals introduced a more consistent two-stage approach for the investigation of academic misconduct in line with SFC and Concordat expectations, and that, for PGR students, cases would be managed through a single, robust University process, with investigations conducted through UDC rather than being distributed across multiple routes. It was further noted that this reflected existing practice for taught students and would support consistency, transparency, and fairness in decision-making. The Senate also noted proposals to introduce mandatory research integrity training for PGR students.		
39.5	In discussion, Senators sought clarification on the scope of reportable work for PGR students, including whether this extended beyond final thesis submission, and it was noted that any allegation throughout the process of conducting research would be investigated. A further clarification was sought on the interface between UDC processes and HR procedures where individuals held dual staff and student status. Whilst it was reported that it depended on whether the allegation was part of the person's staff or student's work, it was agreed that this would be clarified further within the policy. Queries were raised regarding the extent of engagement with the Research Degrees Committee in developing the proposals and the need for further consultation.	MN	July 2026
39.6	The Senate also discussed operational and resourcing considerations, including the increasing volume and complexity of misconduct cases, and noted concerns regarding the timeliness of investigations, particularly in non-academic misconduct cases. The potential impact of prolonged processes on student wellbeing, including in high-risk situations, was highlighted. The Senate stressed the importance of maintaining a proportionate, timely and supportive approach while ensuring that academic integrity and standards were upheld.		
39.7	The Senate **approved** the Global Student Academic Misconduct Policy.		
39.8	The Senate **endorsed** the delegation of authority to UDC and University Committee for Research and Innovation to develop the tariffs, for postgraduate research students, which would be sought for approval by the SCIBE in advance of the next academic session.	MN/CT	August 2026
39.9	The Senate noted that the policy represented a key academic requirement, and that further development was required in relation to implementation, tariffs, and guidance for PGR students. It was agreed that further consultation would take place over the summer, including engagement with UCRI and relevant stakeholders, and that updates would be brought back to Senate in due course. The Senate recorded its thanks to UDC for its work.	MN	September 2026
M26/40	**REVISION OF ACADEMIC DEAN CONSTITUENCIES (SE-26-39)**		
40.1	The Senate **approved** the proposed revisions to Academic Dean constituencies, developed following changes to Ordinance L1 to enable		

more flexible and balanced representation aligned to current staff distribution across Primary Academic Units.

40.2 In discussion, the Senate agreed that constituencies should be subject to periodic review, on an indicative three-year cycle. The Senate also noted a further amendment to Ordinance L1 to remove the requirement for Associate Academic Deans to be drawn from constituency groupings, enabling appointments from across all Primary Academic Units, which would be progressed by correspondence. YM/Clerk July 2026

M26/41 PROPOSED NAMING OF THE SCHOOL OF TEXTILES AND DESIGN (SE-26-40)

41.1 The Senate considered the proposal, presented by the Executive Dean (SoSS) and Interim Executive Dean (SoTD). The proposal followed further consultation undertaken in response to the April 2026 Senate discussions and sought to establish a clear identity for the School as it transitioned within the wider SoSS. It was reported that this was an immediate requirement to support external positioning, student recruitment, and staff identity, and formed part of a longer-term ambition to develop a broader design hub across the University.

41.2 In discussion, Senators recognised the strength of the rationale in providing clarity of identity and enhancing external visibility, particularly for the Borders campus, and noted the strong support within the SoTD. The Senate also welcomed the ambition to strengthen design as a cross-cutting theme and to enable greater collaboration across disciplines. Positive feedback was received from Malaysia Senators and student representatives, who highlighted the opportunity to expand the University's design presence internationally.

41.3 Senators also raised a number of considerations. These included the breadth of the term "design" across the University, particularly in engineering and other disciplines, and the need to ensure that the proposal was not perceived as limiting or claiming ownership of all "design" activity. Concerns were also raised regarding the use of the term "School" for a sub-unit within a larger academic structure and the potential for confusion within the University's nomenclature. It was noted, however, that the University already had EBS within SoSS, and other institutions had Design Schools within other academic Schools. In addition, some Senators highlighted the importance of wider engagement as the concept developed.

41.4 The Executive Dean (SoSS) and Executive Dean (SoTD) reported that the proposal did not seek to restrict design to a single academic unit, but rather to establish a focal identity from which wider collaboration could develop. It was confirmed that further consultation across the University would follow, and that the proposal presented represented an initial step within a longer-term process rather than a final position.

41.5 The Senate **recommended** to the Court the proposed name "The Design School".

M26/43 ACADEMIC OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR KSA CAMPUS (SE-26-42)

43.1 The Senate **noted** the Academic Operational Framework for the KSA campus. The framework set out proposed arrangements for academic staffing, programme delivery, professional services and governance within a partnership model, with a focus on ensuring that all provision would meet Heriot-Watt academic standards while enabling local delivery.

43.2 In discussion, Senators explored the practical application of "oversight" within the partnership model, particularly in relation to staff recruitment and potential areas of tension between University and partner priorities. It was confirmed that the University would retain oversight and have veto rights on all staff (especially acaedmic) appointments, and that the framework was designed to operate through a collaborative partnership approach, supported by clearly defined roles and expectations.

43.3 The Senate noted several key considerations, including risks relating to the maintenance of academic standards, accreditation requirements and ongoing staff capability, as well as the resource implications for Schools and professional services. The importance of ensuring that KSA staff were integrated into the University community and fully aligned with institutional processes and culture was highlighted.

43.4 The Senate noted that the framework represented a significant strategic development, designed not only for KSA but as a model for future transnational education (TNE) activity, and that further engagement with Schools would be undertaken as the implementation progressed.

M26/44 SENATE COMMITTEE PRIORITIES PROGRESS DISCUSSION (SE-26-43)

44.1 The Senate held a discussion on progress against Senate Committee priorities, with contributions from Committee Chairs. The Senate noted strong progress across several areas, including increased alignment between research and learning and teaching activity, improved use of data to support performance and impact, and positive movement in student satisfaction metrics. Progress was also noted in academic integrity, including greater emphasis on preventative approaches and student communications, and in the redesign of quality processes aligned to the Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework.

44.2 In discussion, Senators highlighted areas requiring further focus. These included the need to ensure effective alignment of resources with institutional priorities in a constrained operating environment, greater coordination across Senate sub-committees where remits overlapped, and the increasing complexity and volume of academic misconduct cases, particularly in the context of AI. A brief discussion also noted concerns regarding declining student attendance and engagement, with ongoing work through relevant committees noted.

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44.3 The Senate queried the resourcing of professional services supporting misconduct processes, given the scale and importance of this work, and emphasised the need to ensure appropriate capacity. It was agreed that capacity would be kept under review. The Senate also noted the importance of improving student awareness of academic integrity expectations and ensuring clear communication of potential consequences.

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44.4 The Senate also welcomed feedback on the effectiveness of in-meeting polling and noted the potential to extend this approach to all other committees. The Senate noted the discussion and agreed that Senate Committee Chairs would develop priorities for 2026-27 in advance of the Senate Planning Meeting.

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M26/45 REPORT FROM SENATE COMMITTEE FOR INTERIM BUSINESS AND EFFECTIVENESS (SE-26-44)

45.1 The Senate **noted** the report.

M26/46 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

46.1 17 August 2026; 09:00-11:00 (UK Time) Microsoft Teams; Senate Induction
14 September 2026; 09:30-12:30 (UK Time); In Person; Senate Planning Meeting