Meeting Minutes
Teaching Sustainability Taskforce meeting
16th June 2026

1. **Welcome and apologies**

Attendees: Fiona Devine (Chair), Lexy Cummins, Emma Rose, Fiona Smyth, Emma Wilson, Camden Reeves, Rory Stanton, Anna Goatman, Mario Pezzino, Hannah Cousins, Ben Cawley, Gordon Fraser and Hannah Jordan (Secretary)

Apologies: David Boyd, Julia Dobson, Scott Heath, George Moulton and Alec Severs

Attendance: The group welcomed Gordon Fraser, who attended alongside Camden Reeves as part of transition arrangements, as he prepares to take over the Director of Teaching and Learning role.

2. **Minutes from the last meeting: *for confirmation***

- The minutes of the previous meeting held on 26 February 2026 were presented for confirmation.
- It was noted that an action relating to updating Camden Reeves on matters going to the June Senate had not been transferred to the formal action log. This omission was acknowledged and will be corrected in the official record.
- Subject to this amendment, the minutes were approved as an accurate record.

3. **Outstanding actions**

- The group reviewed outstanding actions, including discussion of the faculty contribution and costing model. It was noted that work on this area is unlikely to progress further within the Taskforce, due to ongoing discussions regarding the potential introduction of a single University wide model.
- Members discussed that progressing a faculty specific approach at this stage could result in duplication of effort if a new model is introduced shortly afterwards.
- The Chair noted the ongoing challenge of whether to make interim changes within the faculty to improve consistency, particularly where different systems (e.g. points based and hours-based approaches) are currently in place, or whether to wait and align with a future University model.
- CR highlighted that an action from the February meeting regarding the June Senate deadline had not been recorded in the action log which had perhaps contributed to some uncertainty about deadlines.

Action Log - Taskforce.xlsx

4. **RAID**

- The group received an update on the RAID log. It was confirmed that some risks will transition into business-as-usual activity, particularly those relating to delivery of the Course Unit Framework and communications.
- It was noted that further updates to the Languages RAID log would be progressed following recent discussions at the Languages Subgroup. Members had discussed whether some risks should move from amber to green, where mitigations have now been implemented and greater assurance can be provided. Julia Dobson will be providing suggested updates to the RAID in relation to Languages as actioned in the sub-group.

5. **Chair's Update**

- The Chair confirmed that recent Senate business relating to programme withdrawals had been approved.
- An update was also provided on wider governance arrangements, including the routing of some programme amendments through AQSC in other faculties due to timing constraints.
- It was clarified that this did not relate directly to the Languages proposals currently being managed within Humanities, but concern was raised about potential inconsistency in governance approaches.

- Members noted a growing risk that central committees may become involved in detailed programme scrutiny, which could undermine Faculty level management and decision making.
- It was agreed that further discussion with central colleagues would be required to ensure appropriate governance routes are maintained. Fiona Smyth and Fiona Devine noted they would pick this up separately.
  Action FS/FD

6. **British Academy Report**

- The group received a detailed presentation and discussion on the British Academy SHAPE data.
- It was noted that the dataset has several critical limitations, including differences between external subject classifications and internal University structures, the use of full-person equivalent data rather than headcount, reporting only on UG home students, and increased volatility when working with smaller subject areas.
- The data indicated that, while the sector appears broadly stable overall, there is considerable variation beneath the headline figures, with some subjects experiencing growth and others decline.
- Within the University, overall performance appears slightly ahead of the sector, but this is uneven across subjects. Growth is evident in some areas, while others continue to face challenge.
- Members discussed the extent to which the data reflects actual performance, noting that inconsistencies in classification and the presence of joint honours programmes can distort interpretation.
- It was emphasised that the data must not be used in isolation to drive strategic decisions and should instead form part of a broader evidence base.
- The group reflected that institutional strategy plays a significant role in shaping outcomes reflected in the data, including decisions on recruitment targets, grade requirements, and the balance between home and international student numbers.
- It was suggested that greater value could be achieved by combining the British Academy data with other datasets, including admissions trends, competitor intelligence and participation rates, to build a more complete strategic picture.
- Members cautioned against excessive disaggregation of data where this does not provide meaningful insight and risks reducing reliability.
- Concern was also raised about how such data is communicated more widely, with a reminder that headline figures can be misinterpreted if shared without appropriate context and explanation.

7. **Reviewing the Portfolio under BAU**

- The group discussed proposals to embed minimum recruitment thresholds into business-as-usual processes following the dissolution of the Taskforce as the project comes to a close.
- It was noted that the Taskforce had previously agreed normal minimum entry thresholds of 25 for undergraduate programmes and 15 for postgraduate taught programmes.
- The proposed approach is to integrate monitoring of these thresholds into existing processes, including Student Number Planning and annual continuous monitoring, rather than creating a separate standalone process. This would allow early identification of programmes falling below threshold and enable schools to provide contextual narrative about performance, alongside proposed actions.
- It was emphasised that falling below threshold should not automatically result in programme closure but should prompt informed discussion about sustainability or potential changes.
- Members agreed that primary responsibility for these discussions should sit with schools and departments, ensuring local ownership and use of detailed subject knowledge.
- Faculty oversight will provide assurance and challenge where required, particularly in cases where exceptions are proposed.
- Faculty Executive will be made aware of programmes that do not meet the agreed thresholds, with Heads of School expected to develop and bring forward plans for how those programmes will be managed going forward.

- The importance of maintaining ongoing awareness of portfolio performance was highlighted, to avoid the need for future large-scale interventions.
- The group discussed the role of longer-term trend data, noting that improvements to data systems and dashboards will support more effective monitoring.
- The need to balance consistency with flexibility was recognised, particularly where programmes may be strategically important despite lower recruitment.
- The position of Languages was discussed separately, recognising the complexity of joint honours provision and the need to consider subject level sustainability as well as programme-level metrics.
- It was agreed that a similar approach for Languages should be developed but using potentially different numbers for the thresholds. This could come to the next Languages Subgroup meeting to be discussed. HJ will schedule this on and HC can attend to talk to the paper. **Action HJ/HC**
- The proposals will be refined and included in the Teaching Sustainability update to Faculty Executive on 30 June 2026. **Action HC**

8. **Course Unit Framework**

- An update was provided on the Course Unit Framework, including ongoing discussions across the faculty and within AQSC.
- It was noted that management responses had been developed following submissions from Schools and that engagement continues through appropriate governance routes.
- The group acknowledged a range of perspectives across the faculty and the need to continue constructive engagement.
- Discussion highlighted concerns about ongoing informal engagement outside standard governance structures.
- It was agreed that while colleagues should be supported to raise concerns, sustained discussion should take place through established governance processes, including Heads of Department, School Boards and relevant committees.
- The importance of maintaining clarity around representation and decision making authority was emphasised.

9. Communications

- An update was provided on communications relating to programme changes and the wider Teaching Sustainability work.
- It was confirmed that communications to affected students had been issued and that Schools had been engaged where relevant.
- Work is ongoing to ensure that key resources are accessible via internal platforms, including StaffNet and SharePoint.
- It was agreed that where data is shared, it should reference original sources to ensure appropriate context is retained.
- The group discussed emerging sector activity, including increased use of early engagement approaches such as “strategic clearing”.
- It was noted that this reflects a more competitive environment and that further work is needed to understand both the practice and any implications for the University.

10. AOB

- The final Taskforce meeting will take place on 23 July 2026.
- An interim progress report will be submitted to Faculty Executive on 30 June 2026.
- The final completion report will follow in September, to allow time for evaluation activity to be completed.

Summary of actions and decisions

ACTION/DECISION	DESCRIPTION	OWNER	DEADLINE

Action 160626-001	The missing action relating to the June Senate update from the previous meeting minutes will be revised and updated.	HJ	Next meeting
Action 160626-002	Fiona Smyth to follow up with relevant central colleagues to confirm and maintain the appropriate governance routes for programme-related matters, ensuring alignment with established Faculty and University processes.	FS	Next meeting
Action 160626-003	HC to update the paper reflecting the points raised in the meeting. This should include greater clarity on the proposed process and further consideration of how the approach would apply to Languages.	HC	Next meeting
Action 160626-004	HJ to schedule the revised paper on transitioning the process into business-as-usual arrangements for discussion at the next Languages Subgroup meeting. HC to attend the meeting to talk to the paper.	HJ/HC	Next meeting