



GIG  
CYMRU  
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Ymddiriedolaeth Brifysgol GIG  
Gwasanaethau Ambiwylans Cymru  
Welsh Ambulance Services  
University NHS Trust

# ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2025/26

## INTRODUCTION

1. The Trust's Standing Orders and Committee Terms of Reference require that Board Committees evaluate their effectiveness annually and present an annual report to the Trust Board.
2. As the factors underpinning effective governance can change, for example as people leave, organisations restructure, or strategy shifts, regular reviews of Board Committees ensure governance remains fit for purpose.
3. Standing Orders, committee terms of reference, and codes of governance provide that boards should routinely assess the effectiveness of their governance arrangements, of which the board's committees form an integral part.
4. The Academic Partnership Committee (APC) met on 7 October 2025 and, through a facilitated discussion, considered the board committee 2025/26 quality governance review, endorsing the position proposed by the Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee. The outcomes of the discussion on 7 October are described within this report. This Annual Report reflects on the effectiveness of the committee in 2025/26 and proposes changes to its terms of reference.
5. The Trust Board has commissioned an external effectiveness review which will be undertaken in early 2026 by the Good Governance Institute (GGI). The GGI will review the board committee framework within quarter four 2025/26 and quarter one of 2026/27 which may necessitate further changes throughout 2026/27. Although at this stage it is not anticipated that there will be material changes to this committee.

## PURPOSE OF THE COMMITTEE

6. The purpose of the Committee as set out in the 2024/25 terms of reference reflected the maturing University Trust Status (UTS) journey. The committee approached its remit with a mixture of *scrutiny* (particularly with respect to refreshed UTS priorities, obtaining and maintaining UTS status), *partnering* (ensuring the right partners were on the Committee, that appropriate arrangements were in place with partners), *connecting* (existing and new partners to research/programmes of work in WAST), and *inquisitorial* (drilling down into elements of the priorities and other programmes where we are partnering with academic and industry to foster and promote).
7. However, the committee's focus in 2025/26 was solely on the areas delegated from the board in relation to research and oversight of the Trust's research governance framework. This reflects the evolution of the Trust's governance for other committee responsibilities and the achievement of University Trust Status, which was the original purpose of the committee's establishment. Academic partnerships and research are now embedded across multiple areas of the Trust's strategy and planning processes, meaning that the committee's agendas had become less predictable and its business was naturally drawing to a close.

## MEMBERSHIP AND ATTENDANCE

8. In light of this position, it was only necessary for the committee to meet twice in 2025/26 (and was quorate on each occasion). There were four meetings scheduled throughout 2025/26; however, its Members agreed to stand down two of the meetings for the reasons set out in paragraph seven. The committee met in October 2025 and March 2026, respectively.
9. The committee has been supported by the Chair and two Non-Executive Directors as members, and a number of prescribed attendees with good attendance. The chart below illustrates attendance of members and attendees as listed in the terms of reference for 2025/26.

COMMITTEE ATTENDANCE				
Name	07 October 2025	06 March 2026		
Hannah Rowan				
Prof Hayley Hutchings				
Jayne Beeslee				
Estelle Hitchon				
Carl Kneeshaw				
Andy Swinburn				
Jonny Sammut	Keith Dorrington	Keith Dorrington		
Jonathan Chippendale				
Prof Nigel Rees				
James Houston				
Jo Kelso				
Trish Mills	Julie Boalch	Julie Boalch		
Mark Marsden				
Keith Rogers				
Ceri Griffiths				

	Attended
	Deputy attended
	Apologies received
	No longer member

10. There has been one adjustment to the membership in year reflecting the restructure within the Quality, Safety and Patient Experience directorate. The role of the 'Assistant Director of Quality and Nursing' has been superseded by the role of 'Deputy Director of Remote Clinical Care.'

## COMMITTEE'S VIEWS ON EFFECTIVENESS

### Feedback from membership

11. During 2024/25 the ARAC initiated a project to streamline the Trust's governance structures. Key drivers included Non-Executive Director availability, quorum pressures, the high volume of meetings and the transitional status of this committee following the achievement of University Trust Status.
12. The ARAC project group considered a range of options, which culminated in a preferred option to reduce the number of board committees from seven to six by standing down the APC subject to Board approval.
13. The APC met on the 7 October 2025 and considered the 2025/26 quality governance review, endorsing the position proposed by the ARAC to redistribute the committee's current responsibilities as follows:
- 13.1. *Research*: To be transferred to the Finance and Performance Committee (FPC), aligning with Strategic Objective three and enabling integration with technology, commercialisation, and financial sustainability portfolios.

- 13.2. *Partnerships*: Education and training collaborations to move to the People and Culture Committee (PCC), while commercial partnerships will be overseen by FPC.
- 13.3. *University Trust Status (UTS)*: UTS is a designation, not a standalone programme. Oversight should focus on the contributing activities which are to be aggregated and monitored through the IMTP, with FPC ensuring visibility.
14. It was recommended that the APC continue to meet in 2026/27 for oversight of the research portfolio, with its other responsibilities related to education and training partnerships and collaboration transferring to the PCC, and commercial partnerships transitioning to the FPC from 1 April 2026.
15. The direct link to the paper setting out the position is available here: [ambulance.nhs.wales/files/committee-meetings/academic-partnership-committee/papers-7-october-2025/](https://ambulance.nhs.wales/files/committee-meetings/academic-partnership-committee/papers-7-october-2025/).

#### Management of the committee's work programme

16. The committee has a cycle of business that is aligned to its terms of reference. A cycle of business for 2025/26 was not prepared due to the changes to the committee's remit; however, due to the ongoing discussions regarding the board committee framework and the position reached in year (as discussed on the 7 October), the business transacted was deliberately limited to matters regarding research and the research governance framework.
17. The board is kept informed of the committee's oversight of a range of issues by way of an 'Alert,' 'Assure' and 'Advise' (AAA) report to the Board after each meeting. Any issues of concern are escalated to the board in the 'Alert' section, and the chair of this committee presents that report at each board meeting.
18. Other than that which is set out in this report, the substantial detail of the work of the committee in 2025/26 is included in the committee AAA reports which are linked below:
- 18.1. AAA: [7 October 2025](#)
- 18.2. AAA: [6 March 2026](#)
19. The committee is required to promote and support the exploration of opportunities with higher and further education providers, commercial partners, and wider community partners for collaboration. The purpose of these sections 3.1 to 3.3 in the terms of reference and the way in which the committee discharges these were explored in the January meeting.

20. The board received a highlight report from this committee by email circulation following each meeting which included alerts, advice, and areas of assurance. This was also presented to the next public board meeting by the Chair of the committee.
21. All committee papers were published in line with the Trust's Board and Committees Secretariat Standard Operating Procedure.

## **PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE TERMS OF REFERENCE**

22. The changes to the terms of reference for 2026/27 reflect those proposed by the ARAC and as endorsed by the committee on the 7 October 2025. The two areas delegated by the board, which remain in the committee's terms of reference, are to:
- 22.1. Oversee the strategic direction and development of research and innovation activities within the Trust, and to oversee the implementation of the research governance framework in accordance with the Health and Care Research Wales Research Governance Framework,' and
- 22.2. Monitor plans to build capacity for the whole workforce whether they be in a clinical, professional, or corporate role, to participate in research; that opportunities to do so are being promoted; and that the workforce is encouraged to be professionally inquisitive.
23. The remaining changes to the terms of reference align them with updates made to other committee terms of reference and reflect adjustments to membership based on the revised remit. This is partly because the terms of reference were not amended for 2025/26, unlike those of the other committees.

## **COMMITTEE PRIORITIES**

### Priorities for 2025/26

24. The committee did not set priorities for the 2025/26 due to the ongoing discussions regarding the board committee framework and its future role and remit.

### Priorities for 2026/27

25. It is good practice for committees to set priorities for the forthcoming year when they review their effectiveness. However, given the agreed position regarding the committee and the changes to the terms of reference for 2026/27 it has been considered unnecessary to set priorities for the forthcoming year.