



**The Senate, 24 June 2026**

## **President & Vice-Chancellor's Report**

### **Main Report**

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This Report provides summary information on current and forthcoming developments, both internal and external, for the information of Senate members. The President & Vice-Chancellor will introduce the Report at the meeting and members will have the opportunity to raise questions. This report is structured around the University Vision's four Pillars and their respective Priorities, after a section about the external environment. Where information relates to more than one Pillar or Priority it is included under the most relevant theme. Where appropriate, reference is made to other papers that appear separately on the Senate agenda. The report now comprises two parts, the main report and a supplementary report with additional information and updates, available in the Reading Room.

#### **1. EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT**

##### **1.1 The Labour Party leader and Prime Minister is expected to change, which potentially puts government 'on hold' in the short term, and the sector is anticipated to remain low on the priority list of the next Prime Minister**

- Whilst there is not yet a formal Labour leadership challenge, the contest to replace Keir Starmer as Labour party leader and Prime Minister has effectively begun. There is anticipated to be a leadership contest regardless of the outcome of the Makerfield by-election, in which Andy Burnham is standing for Labour in his first step in attempting to become PM.
- The immediate impact on the University is likely to be a delay in decisions taken by the Government and policy development is put on pause, as power within the Parliamentary Labour Party ebbs away from both Starmer and Ministers who cannot be guaranteed to continue in post under a new leader.
- The higher education sector is anticipated to remain low on the priority list of whoever the new Prime Minister may be, with the sector behind other priorities such as economic growth, balancing the nation's books, cost of living issues, NHS, the delayed Defence Investment Plan, welfare reform, housebuilding, and the courts backlog to name a few.

##### **1.2 Sector remains under financial pressure and speculation mounts that EU students will be granted home fee status as part of closer UK ties with EU**

- An Office for Students [report](#) shows that more than four in ten institutions are expecting to record a deficit this academic year, as the sector remains under continued pressure due to volatile student recruitment patterns and rising costs. The OfS believes the sector

is overly optimistic about future student recruitment. Alongside this a Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI) report argues [many universities have taken too many financial risks](#). The financial situation facing the sector is likely to be compounded in the short term by the Government's prioritisation of [closer ties with the EU](#) which may see the Government make concessions on lower tuition fees for EU nationals in order to secure agreement with the EU on other issues.

- The government plans to include legislation to introduce the International Student Levy in the autumn Finance Bill, but its commitment to legislate for an automatic annual inflationary increase to the undergraduate home tuition fee cap, which would mean additional income for the University, risks not being granted legislative time. The Government is less likely to legislate on this the closer it gets to the next general election. A change of leadership also raises questions about decisions the Government may take on these issues, particularly where they relate to commitments not in the 2024 Labour Manifesto (like the international student fee levy, though its link with the partial reintroduction of maintenance grants makes it politically challenging to drop) The University will work to secure the inflationary fee increase legislative change, particularly given that putting the levy 'tax' on the statute books but not the fee increase arguably breaks Labour's manifesto pledge to act to create a secure future for higher education. This is made more challenging in the context of the current political and media debate on student loans.

### **1.3 Political pressure about the 'fairness' of student loans grows, as questions continue to be raised about the value of a degree and from some quarters about fraudulent use of the student loan book; the Government responds with short term measure to cap interest charged to graduates.**

- There has been growing [political pressure](#) on the Government around the 'fairness' of student loan repayments, including from the Government's own backbenchers. The Treasury Select Committee is part way through its inquiry on "Student loans and taxation of graduates". It received more than 52,000 responses to its survey, one of the highest response rates to a select committee inquiry ever recorded, including over 49,000 responses from graduates who had taken out a student loan. There has also been political pressure about who taxpayer money is being used for, with Rupert Lowe, Restore Britain MP, campaigning about "[industrial fraud](#)" from foreign nationals claiming student loans. Questions continue to be raised about the value of a degree and the associated costs following publication of this year's [British Social Attitudes survey](#), which found that 34% of people in 2025 believed a university education "just isn't worth the time and money" - this was up from 14% in 2005; and 36% believe people who go to university end up being a lot better off financially - this is down from 50% in 2005.
- The Government has announced that interest on Plan 2 student loans (for undergraduates starting between 2021-2023) and on Plan 3 student loans (for postgraduates) will be capped at 6% instead of RPI+3%. This is only a short term measure from the Government to avoid further political pressure as inflation is expected to rise as a consequence of the conflict in Iran. Pressure on the Government regarding graduate repayment levels is therefore expected to continue, and this pressure may affect its decision making on honouring its inflationary fee increase commitment . The

University will continue to make the case for the benefits of a university education to individuals, to the economy and to wider society.

#### **1.4 International student visa regime tightened from 1 June and Government introduced a 'Visa Brake' which refuses student visa for applicants from four countries**

- The [government has tightened student visa compliance metrics](#) (visa refusal, enrolment and course completion rates) and introduced a Visa Brake in a bid to stop non genuine students using the student visa route. Regarding the metrics from 1 June, for example, institutions are required to have a visa refusal rate of less than 4% to retain a 'green' status under a new RAG rating system. Those with just one metric below the new compliance thresholds will attract an Amber rating, resulting in a cap on an institution's CAS allocation (i.e. the number of visas it can sponsor). Only a Green rating in all three metrics will mean an institution can increase its CAS allocation. Institutions' RAG rating will reflect their lowest rated metric.
- The sector has warned the government that the RAG rating could harm the reputation of institutions that are within the thresholds, but rated Amber, with the perception among potential applicants that this means the institution is non-compliant. The government is urged to use Amber as an internal warning, rather than public rating with punitive consequences.
- A [survey of postgraduate enrolments at universities in January 2026 by the British Universities International Liaison Association \(BUILA\)](#) suggests enrolments from those perceived as 'riskier' under the new system are already declining, arguably in line with Home Office objectives, but in contradiction to [government advice to diversify international recruitment](#), reducing reliance on a single country like China (where compliance is generally high).
- The Government has applied a '[Visa Brake](#)' from 26 March meaning nationals of Cameroon, Afghanistan, Myanmar and Sudan will not be granted student visas. This follows high numbers of nationals from those countries on student visas later applying for asylum. The government's International Education Champion Sir Steve Smith has said [more countries will likely be added to the visa brake list](#), and this is a [call being made by politicians](#) following media reports of [abuse of the asylum system](#).
- The University has a limited number of offer holders from the four visa brake countries but is analysing the impact of both policies on potential future recruitment. The University is working with the Russell Group to press for an exemption to the Visa Brake for UK government sponsored prestigious Chevening scholars, given their importance to UK soft power. The University has worked with its constituency MP, Abtissam Mohamed, for her to raise this through a [Parliamentary question](#) to the Home Office.
- A Labour leadership contest may result in a more liberal approach, though student visa compliance metrics would likely be low priority for change for a new incoming Prime Minister.

#### **1.5 Free Speech Act implementation of complaints scheme for staff and speakers, and a new condition of registration which could see fines up to £500k, whilst court rules in favour of Sussex against OfS fine over free speech duties.**

The Government has [announced](#) it plans to bring into force the following elements of the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023:

- The complaints scheme for staff, external speakers and non-student members on 1 September 2026, but the Government will not be commencing the complaints scheme in relation to students, on the basis that students have access to the complaints scheme at the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.
- The mandatory OfS initial and ongoing conditions of registration from 1 April 2027, with failing to protect free speech [punishable with a fine of £500,000 or 2% of university income, or in the most serious cases deregistration](#).

The Government will keep commencement of the measures to tackle foreign interference via funding under review.

The Labour Government paused the implementation of the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023 in July 2024 shortly after winning the general election. Following a review it [brought into force some of the Act's provisions in their original form from 1 August 2025](#) and said it would amend or repeal the remaining provisions in the act. The decisions outlined above show how free speech in universities is still a live political issue which, whilst not a priority for the current administration, the Government has decided to take action in light of political pressure from opposition parties.

Meanwhile, the University of Sussex [won a High Court challenge against the OfS](#) over a ruling that it breached free speech duties. The regulator had fined the university £585,000, arguing its trans and non-binary equality policy created a “chilling effect” on free speech. However, the court found the OfS had acted unlawfully, with the accusation of bias in the process upheld. The judge ruled the regulator acted beyond its powers and with “a closed mind”. The OfS has confirmed that it will [not appeal](#) the decision.

## **1.6 Prime Ministers says universities expected to publish the scale of antisemitism and actions they take**

- Sir Keir Starmer said in a speech at an antisemitism summit that universities will be [expected to publish](#) the scale of antisemitism on campus as well as the specific steps taken to clamp down on it, with the government having “zero tolerance for inaction”. A No. 10 spokesperson later said that the next steps in terms of compliance would be set out “[in due course](#)”. The University monitors all forms of harassment and discrimination and has mechanisms for identifying trends, which will be kept under review as expectations on this are developed by government.

## **1.7 OfS announces consultation and proposals to protect students' rights as consumers through anticipated new condition of registration**

- The OfS announced a [consultation on protecting students rights as consumers](#), including proposals for a new ongoing condition of registration. The proposals include a series of new expectations about how students' expectations are managed through contracts,

policies and communication. This includes expected practices, clauses, and information and prohibited practices, clauses, and information. The OfS state this is “to rebalance students and providers relationships by improving information for students about what and where to study and their rights and entitlements”.

- It is proposed to remove two of the existing conditions of registration: Guidance on consumer protection law (C1) and Student protection plan (C3) for all registered providers and replace these with one new ongoing condition: Treating students fairly (C6). The OfS applying the proposed new ongoing condition to all registered providers was anticipated as it had already introduced this requirement for institutions registering with the OfS.

### **1.8 It is not anticipated that the University will be significantly affected in the immediate term by changes at Sheffield City Council following the local elections.**

- The results saw a number of wards change party with the Green Party and Reform UK making gains. Labour remains the largest party on the City Council, and Labour and the Greens have agreed to form a joint administration for 2026/27, with Labour’s Fran Belbin the new Leader of the Council. In the immediate term, the changes are not anticipated to significantly affect the University given Labour retains the leadership.

## **2. EDUCATION**

### **2.1 ADMISSIONS AND RECRUITMENT**

#### **2.1.1 Undergraduate**

- As at 15 May, the university home application (37,605 / +4%), offer (28,255 / +5%) and early acceptance (7150 / +15%) position is ahead when compared with the same point last year.
- From a widening access perspective, home applications from IMD Quintile 1 & 2 have increased by +32% and from those on Free School Meals by +10%.
- Undergraduate overseas similarly shows growth in applications (11,651 / +13%), offers (8394 / +10%) and acceptances (1260 / +44%). It is important to note that in recent cycles, prospective international undergraduates typically apply to a wide range of countries and make late decisions post acceptance on their preferred option. Student visa related Confirmation of Acceptance for Study (CAS) issued data from June onwards will help illustrate emerging student behaviour this year.
- All undergraduate UCAS applications, submitted by the UCAS Equal Consideration Date of 15th January, were reviewed within 10 working days of having received them. The intention here is to create competitive advantage and foster a strong pipeline for wrap around conversion activity seen through increases in offer holder day attendance this cycle.
- The UCAS deadline for offer holders to make their firm/insurance choice is on 3 June 2026 and as per previous years, it will be during late May/early June that we begin to fully understand the pre-Clearing undergraduate forecast intake position.

#### **2.1.2 Postgraduate Taught**

- Postgraduate Taught Home applications (2023 / +4%), offers (1438 / +18%), and accepts (603 / +10%) reflect the work undertaken to improve the proportion of University of Sheffield graduates progressing from undergraduate to postgraduate study. Market research by MARC identified that our internal progression rate was below sector benchmarks and subsequently set a target to improve from 8% to 15%, which was achieved for the 2025 intake.
- Postgraduate Taught Overseas applications (38,930 / +7%) and offers (31,305 / +23%) continue to illustrate the shift in demand from China (+20%) compared with previous years. However, despite the stronger position relative to the same point in 2025, the significant sector-wide reduction in PGT Overseas demand persists. By comparison, as at 22 May 2023, the University had received 76,281 applications marking a c50% decline over the past three years.
- Postgraduate Taught Overseas acceptances (10,365 / -3%) continue to track slightly below last year aligned with current market insight suggesting that we continue to operate in an extremely competitive environment with decision making expected to be later this year with wider choice both domestically and internationally for these applicants.

### **2.1.3 Student Recruitment & Events**

- Our Higher Education Progression Partnership (HEPP), a collaboration between UoS and Sheffield Hallam, has shared a newly developed partnership planning document with the Higher Education Access and Participation Task & Finish Group. This was well received and is timely recognition for the partnership given the OfS' publication of a Regional Access Partnerships call for evidence.
- Throughout March the Lead Generation team attended 13 UCAS and UKUni search exhibitions across the country and collected 3855 leads (+462 YoY). The team also hosted Sheffield UKUni search in The Octagon, welcoming ~2000 students.
- Combined attendance from our first three offer holder events stands at 3808 offer holders (+111 or 3% on 2025). New for this year, we are also trialling an upgraded campus tour offer on Wed 13 May for any offer holders who booked to attend an in-person offer holder day but did not attend.
- In March we hosted our first “pop up” offer holder event in London where we saw 30 potential students and their guests to give a flavour of Sheffield for those who cannot travel to visit us. We will track outcomes from this event and report in time.
- During March we hosted our first ‘Masters Study Discovery Afternoon’, introduced to complement and differentiate from our PG online events.
- The PGT online open day (29 April) opened for bookings on 16 March and has reached 403 bookings to date (+13% YoY). This reflects increased early email activity compared to last year.

### **2.1.4 Reputation Marketing**

- Advertising campaign phase 1 is now complete (Oct 2025 – March 2026) and achieved exceptional momentum, significantly outperforming sector benchmarks:

- Reach: 16.2M+ total impressions (15.2M paid / 1M organic).
  - Engagement: 0.92% CTR (2x benchmark) and a 52% email open rate, indicating high brand resonance.
  - Conversion: ~6,000 website interactions and 176 high-value data captures.
- We have now moved into phase 2 (started 1 April), and are pivoting toward high-efficiency, localized engagement to drive ROI:
    - LinkedIn Thought Leadership: Leveraging academic profiles for authentic peer-to-peer connection.
    - Market expansion: Launching localized Mandarin content to capture the Chinese market organically.
    - Strategic narratives: Focusing on Energy and Neuroscience themes, supported by industry partnerships with Siemens and Arup to bolster global reputation.

### 2.1.5 Student Recruitment Marketing

- Our **UGO campaign** is delivering at scale with exceptional cost-efficiency across key markets (Indonesia, Türkiye, Saudi Arabia, and UAE):
  - Reach: 108M impressions achieved at a CPM of £0.25 and CPC of £0.06, significantly outperforming 2026 industry benchmarks.
  - Conversion: Top-of-funnel volume has successfully converted into 338 direct UCAS clicks and 270+ qualified registrations to date.
  - Channel strategy: A diverse mix (Meta, TikTok) anchored by Google Search and Performance Max to ensure stable ROI and consistent lead quality.
- Our **UGH campaign** is leveraging a two-tier strategy to build brand equity and secure Open Day bookings for the 2027 cycle:
  - Reach: National launch achieving a 2.5% CTR (double the industry benchmark) with a highly efficient £0.10 CPC.
  - Conversion: Secured 93 Open Day bookings and 16 registrations of interest within the first month.
  - Channel Strategy: Blending high-impact visual awareness (ITVX, TikTok) in London and the South East with high-intent lead generation via Search and Meta.
- Our **PGTO** campaign is successfully converting strong market resonance in Indonesia and Türkiye into a cost-effective, high-quality application pipeline:
  - Reach & efficiency: 14.3M impressions at a £0.08 CPC and £1.19 CPM.
  - Achieving a 1.53% CTR in Indonesia & Türkiye specifically, nearly triple the industry average for PGT targeting.
  - Conversion: 71 direct applications and 200+ registrations of interest to date.
  - Channel strategy: Using Google Search and social platforms to prioritize high-quality applicants over raw volume.
- The **PGTH** campaign has demonstrated immediate impact since its March launch, significantly outpacing engagement norms for the postgraduate sector:
  - Reach: Achieving a 1.96% CTR, more than double the industry average of 0.83%, with a competitive £0.36 CPC.

- Conversion: Successfully secured 11 Open Day bookings and 5 direct application submissions in the initial weeks of activity.
- Channel Strategy: Balances broad awareness through visual channels with high-intent lead generation via LinkedIn and Google Performance Max.
- Our **MBA campaign** is delivering high-volume interest at an industry-leading cost profile across key global markets (India, Saudi Arabia, and SE Asia):
  - Reach: 24.2M impressions generated since February at an exceptional £0.35 CPM.
  - Conversion: Achieved a 1.44% CTR (exceeding the 0.55% benchmark) and £0.02 CPC, resulting in 16 high-intent event clicks and application submissions.
  - Channel strategy: Using an efficient Search and Meta mix to drive low-cost, high-volume engagement within the professional education sector.
- **Conversion email campaigns** in Salesforce Marketing Cloud are showing early positive results. Campaigns are live for UGH, UGO, PGTH and PGTO with segmentation for priority audiences (Access and priority subjects) and overseas markets. The first UGH email achieved an 83% open rate (vs 28% benchmark) and a 53% click through rate (vs 5% benchmark), supporting our strategy of using email to share information and guidance to drive action.

### 2.1.6 China Celebration Events

- Our China celebration events took place at the end of March, with a programme of graduation ceremonies, future student conversion events and alumni engagements across Chengdu, Shanghai & Beijing. The events provided valuable opportunities to celebrate the achievements of our graduates locally, strengthen relationships with our alumni network, support conversion of prospective students through in-person engagement, and reinforce our institutional presence and reputation in key Chinese markets (see Section 5.2.3, below).

## 3. RESEARCH

### 3.1 RESEARCH EXCELLENCE

#### 3.1.1 UKRI Funding for Research & Innovation

- Since the last report, there has been increased engagement by UKRI with the academic community directly and with senior academic leadership regarding changes to the UKRI funding focus, to bring it into alignment with the Government's economic growth and missions agendas. Some clarity is emerging on the nature of the future funding landscape; it seems likely that very large opportunities will not be 'open to all'. UoS will engage in lobbying to try to ensure there are opportunities in our areas of distinct research and innovation strength.

#### 3.1.2 Innovation

- A triple helix South Yorkshire Innovation Board has been established primarily to allow South Yorkshire to receive up to £30m direct allocation Local Innovation Partnership Funding (LIPF). In the longer term this board will provide strategic guidance and

oversight of innovation investment across South Yorkshire. Professor Sue Hartley will represent UoS as a Board member.

- The University is working closely with SYMCA and Sheffield Hallam University to prepare a portfolio submission to the LIPF of regionally significant innovation projects that seek to catalyse high-potential innovation clusters in South Yorkshire. The focus of the funding will be on near-market opportunities with the potential for significant private investment (there is an expectation of 2:1 private:public money). The funding will be targeted towards advanced materials and manufacturing; preventative health; and child health technology.

## 4. INNOVATION

### 4.1 GLOBAL AND REGIONAL ENGAGEMENT

#### 4.1.1 Global Engagement

##### University of Ghana

In March 2026, the University of Sheffield Neuroscience Institute hosted a delegation of neuroscientists from the University of Ghana, including Professor Patrick Amoateng, Vice-Dean of the School of Graduate Studies, and Dr Claude Fiifi Hayford, Senior Lecturer in Biomechanics. The visit focused on reinforcing existing research partnerships and exploring new collaborative opportunities in areas of shared interest, including drug discovery using zebrafish screening and biomechanics applications in health. The Ghanaian team expressed particular interest in the concept of a virtual institute, similar to the Neuroscience Institute, and discussed how such a model could be adapted and applied to the Ghanaian context to enhance research capacity and interdisciplinary collaboration. Over the course of the week, the delegation engaged with Sheffield researchers through workshops, lab visits, and interdisciplinary discussions, providing a platform for knowledge exchange and laying the foundation for future joint projects that leverage the complementary expertise of both institutions. This visit, like other activities, was supported by the Partnership Development Fund, demonstrating its pivotal role in sustaining and expanding the Sheffield–Ghana collaboration.

##### MOUs Signed

The University of Sheffield signed a number of Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) during the visit to India by the President and Vice-Chancellor, Professor Koen Lamberts.

The University of Sheffield is partnering with Indian institutions to provide accessible, cost-effective pathways for students to earn a dual award degree, with aligned curricula and ongoing support to help them succeed.

The MOUs are designed to establish dedicated cohorts with selected Indian institutions (Bennett University, SGT University and Anurag University). These agreements are generic in nature but signal the University of Sheffield's commitment to partnership, serving as a precursor to more formal recruitment partnership agreements.

- Recruitment partnership agreements signed

In March, 6 new agreements were finalised:

- 1 at the UG level with Advance Tertiary College, Malaysia;

5 at PGT level: National Cheng Kung University, Taiwan; Shandong Normal University, China; VIT Amaravati, India; VIT Bhopal, Bhopal; VIT Vellore, Vellore.

The agreements are spread across 4 Faculties, and has increased the entire portfolio to 54 live Agreements (36 UG and 18 PGT) across 9 countries in Central, East, South East and East Asia.

## **5. ONE UNIVERSITY**

### **5.1 STRATEGY AND PLANNING**

#### **5.1.1 Strategic Planning**

- Over the coming months, academic schools, faculties and professional services departments will reflect on their progress toward their 2025-26 annual action plans and medium term goals. Executive teams will update their risk registers and draft their strategic priorities for the 2026-27 academic year for UEB review and approval in July.

### **5.2 PHILANTHROPY**

#### **5.2.1 Campaign targets, milestones and significant developments (data as of 14 May 2026)**

- Campaigns and Alumni Relations (CAR) has exceeded this year's annual fundraising target of £8 million, raising £11.2 million through a combination of mass fundraising appeals, legacy gifts, major donations, and philanthropic awards. This brings CAR's three-year average 'funds raised' to an impressive £10.2 million.
- CAR's fundraising towards expansion of the Sheffield Institute for Translational Neuroscience (SITraN) has reached our stretch target of £14 million, thanks to a £3 million pledge from an anonymous Yorkshire Family Foundation. It has been a genuine community effort. The cause has appealed to individual donors giving at a wide range of levels as well as from philanthropic Trusts and Foundations.

#### **5.2.2 Fundraising**

- Our latest figures (14 May 2026) include three six-figure gifts from US-based donors, totalling \$1.45 million. Two of the gifts will support medical research. The third is for a Student Union volunteering project.
- We have also secured a five-year donation from a US-based donor and legacy pledger of \$500,000. The gift is to enable collaboration between SITraN and the University of Washington.
- Fundraising for the University's new Access to Sheffield Scholarship is going well, attracting gifts from and multi-year pledges from new donors as well as existing supporters. These include a six-figure gift from an alumni donor who previously supported scholarships for home undergraduate Master's students. Fundraising was boosted by an event in London for alumni and friends, showcasing the importance of

scholarships. Panel members included students, donors, VP for Social Sciences, Prof Ruth Blakeley, and staff from the S&AS Student Fees and Funding team.

- Over 440 staff, students and supporters have signed up for [The Big Walk 2026: Saving Young Lungs](#). Funds raised from this year's event will support the Insigneo research institute. Donations for the Big Walk up to £75,000 will be doubled, thanks to a match-funding gift.
- The late Professor Paul White, former Deputy Vice-Chancellor, has donated £10,000 via his Will to set up a new prize in Geography. Paul joined the University in 1974 and became Professor of European Urban Geography in 1997, inspiring students with entertaining lectures and leading field classes across Europe.

### **5.2.3 International Recruitment**

- My March visit to China, alongside academics from SUMS and Engineering and colleagues from CAR, MARC, GE and Careers, achieved excellent alumni engagement and reach. The trip involved joint alumni / offer holder events in three cities (Chengdu, Shanghai and Beijing). Alumni also joined Graduation ceremonies for Chinese alumni from the past 10 years in Shanghai and Beijing. Over 300,000 views of photos were shared on the day in Shanghai and over 100,000 views of the live stream of the ceremony. Approximate attendance numbers are as follows:
  - Chengdu = 120 - alumni, offer holders and guests
  - Shanghai graduation = 360 - alumni and guests
  - Shanghai reception = 450 - alumni, offer holders and guests
  - Beijing graduation = 260 - alumni and guests
  - Beijing reception = 350 - alumni, offer holders and guests
- An online forum for International Alumni Group leads on 6 May, hosted by Malcolm Butler and coordinated by CAR, was attended by 28 global representatives. The event featured a spotlight from our Japan group, which has now been running for almost a year. We currently have 10,000+ members across all of our international alumni groups, with 42 groups covering 27 countries. The groups provide an excellent way to grow our pool of warm volunteers for recruitment activity.

## **5.3 REPUTATION**

### **5.3.1 League Tables**

- The University of Sheffield was ranked 46th most international university in the world and 16th in the UK by the Times Higher Education.

## **5.4 MEDIA COVERAGE AND IMPACT**

- [BBC Look North](#) broadcast from the Sheffield Varsity Ice Hockey Final, showcasing the University's sporting profile and bringing the student experience to life in support of recruitment.
- Public Health expert Professor Andrew Lee commented on the meningitis outbreak in Kent across major national outlets, including Sky News (clip [here](#) and [here](#)), [Channel 4 News](#), [The Guardian](#), [BBC News](#), [The Telegraph](#), [BBC Radio 4](#), Times Radio ([here](#) and [here](#)), [LBC News](#), [Daily Mail](#), [Hits Radio](#) and [The Sun](#).
- A University-led project that has created a 'Quilt of Welcome', celebrating the many languages spoken in the city while sending a welcoming message to others was covered by BBC Radio Sheffield ([here](#) and [here](#)) and [The Sheffield Star](#).
- News that the University will lead a £12.5m national centre for next-generation semiconductor systems was covered extensively in trade and industry press, including [Semiconductor Today](#), [Electronics Weekly](#), [New Electronics](#) and [Silicon Semiconductors](#), reaching key audiences to support further investments and partnerships.
- The Shaped in Sheffield campaign, in close collaboration with UKRI, showcased how our complex research translates into compelling human stories and was featured across billboards, transit ads and digital media. The campaign showcased world-firsts pioneered at the University, including safer lung scans for children and regenerative cell therapy for sensorineural hearing loss.
- Clean energy research highlighting how green hydrogen could fail as a sustainable alternative to fossil fuels if supply chains aren't rapidly decarbonised was featured in [The Week](#), [Economic Times India](#) and [Business World India](#), as well as regional ([Yorkshire Post](#)) and trade publications including [Energy News Live](#) and [The Institute of Materials, Minerals and Mining](#). The Yorkshire Post also published an [op-ed](#), amplifying the study's findings and calling on global decision-makers to act on them.
- The groundbreaking clinical trial testing a device designed to help stroke patients regain arm strength was covered in [BBC News](#), BBC Tech Now ([clip 1](#) and [clip 2](#)), as well as [BBC Radio 4](#).

## 6. FINANCE

### 6.1 WORKFORCE

#### 6.1.1 Industrial Action update

- We have received the outcome of UCU's ballot for industrial action which closed on Thursday 26 March. UCU has obtained a mandate for both strike action and ASOS for a 12-month period from 26 March 2026 to 25 March 2027.
- The turnout for the ballot was 50.44% of their membership, meaning they marginally surpassed the 50% threshold required for a legal mandate. This is a slightly lower turnout than in their previous ballot, which achieved votes from 52% of members. Changes in the law from the Employment Rights Act will remove this threshold before the next time UCU seeks a mandate for industrial action.

- In terms of the proportions in favour of action, 67.6% of voters (503 people) were in favour of strike action and 75.4% of voters (560 people) were in favour of action short of strike. This equates to 34.1% of total UCU members in favour of strike action and 38% in favour of action short of strike.
- Our usual Incident Management Team continues to manage the University's preparations and response to any industrial action. Our focus during any period of disruption will remain on ensuring we minimise the impact on our students and that they receive the teaching that we have committed to delivering and the qualifications they work to obtain.
- UCU notified the University of six days of strike action, which took place on 7,8,11,12,13 and 14 May. They also notified of a period of continuous action short of strike, commencing on 7 May, which took the following forms:
  - not covering for absent colleagues, vacant posts, or posts that are discontinued due to change management;
  - not rescheduling lectures or classes cancelled as a result of strike action;
  - not undertaking any voluntary duties;
  - not undertaking duties which are not commensurate with the grade of the post;
  - not using personal devices to conduct work;
  - not sharing materials relating to lectures or classes cancelled as a result of strike action (from 26 May onwards).
- The University withheld pay from around 50 staff who refused to replace lectures or classes cancelled as a result of strike action during the period 18-22 May, in line with the University's position that partial performance is not accepted.
- The Sheffield branch of UCU passed a motion to call on the national UCU to formally censure the University in response to the position taken regarding pay deductions for staff who were breaching their contracts of employment as a result of their participation in ASOS in the form of not replacing teaching lost due to strike action. The Sheffield branch passed a further motion to call on UCU's Higher Education Committee to approve an academic boycott of the University in relation to the same issue. On 29 May 2026, UCU informed the University that it was calling for a global academic boycott, which will be calling on "members, trade unionists, and supporters worldwide not to undertake the following:
  - Speaking at or organising academic or other conferences at the University of Sheffield
  - Giving lectures at the University of Sheffield
  - Accepting positions as visiting professors or researchers at the University of Sheffield
  - Accepting new contracts as external examiners for taught courses at the University of Sheffield"

UCU's 29 May letter is publicly available on its website.

- So far, the impact of this has been limited, with some speakers refusing to speak at conferences at Sheffield, and some existing external examiners resigning their posts (despite that not being called as part of the boycott). We are not expecting the boycott to impact on provision of education to students or to create further disruption to their education.
- It is anticipated that there may be further strike action during the early part of the 2026/27 academic year.
- The University continues to engage with the campus trade unions through regular negotiating meetings, and through restructure consultations covered below.

### **6.1.2 Academic Restructures**

- Approval was previously given by Council to undertake a restructure of academic staffing in three areas: East Asian Studies within the wider School of Languages, Arts and Societies; Chemistry within the wider School of Mathematics and Physical Sciences; and Materials Engineering within the wider School of Chemical, Materials and Biological Engineering.
- Restructure launch meetings took place with in-scope staff across these three areas in the week commencing 18 May 2026, where detailed proposals were shared with affected colleagues and trade unions. The consultation period will now run for 90 days in line with University procedures, concluding on 17 August 2026. A voluntary severance scheme is available to staff identified as being at risk of redundancy. The aim of offering voluntary severance is to achieve the restructure and financial savings required without the need for compulsory redundancies.
- If there are insufficient applications for voluntary severance, a compulsory redundancy selection process will be required.

### **6.1.3 Senior Recruitment**

#### University Secretary

- Following a competitive recruitment process, we have appointed Riley Power as our new permanent University Secretary. Riley will join us from the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service (SCTS) where, as Executive Director for the Judicial Office for Scotland, he provided strategic advice and support in the management of the judiciary and in its interactions with the Scottish Parliament, Scottish Government, and other justice agencies. Previously he has worked in governance roles at several universities, including Queen Margaret University, Glasgow Caledonian University, and the University of Bradford where he served as University Secretary. Riley will take up the role of University Secretary from 17 August 2026.

#### Vice-President for Education

- We have appointed Professor Graham Gee as our new Vice-President for Education. Graham has been part of the University for many years, having been based in the School

of Law where he holds a chair in public law and was previously Head of the School. Graham has also served as Faculty Director of Education in Social Sciences and is currently the interim Vice-President and Head of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities.

- Graham will take up the role from our current Vice-President for Education, Professor Mary Vincent, whose tenure will come to an end on 31 August 2026.
- Thank you to Mary for her many years of outstanding leadership in this vital area.

#### Interim Faculty Vice-President for Health

- Professor Tracey Moore’s appointment as Interim Faculty Vice-President for Health has been extended to run until 31 August 2027.

#### AMRC CEO

- Professor Ben Morgan has been appointed to the role on a permanent basis, starting 16 February 2026. Professor Morgan had held the interim role since January 2025.

#### Head of Finance Operations

- Emma Holland has been appointed to the role on a permanent basis, starting 31 March 2026. Emma was previously Group Director Shared Services at Turner & Townsend.

## 6.2 RESEARCH AWARDS

- The values and number of new research awards in the last 12 months compared to the same period in previous years are shown in the table below. The main changes are:
- A decrease in the number (-55) and value (-£13m) of awards on C&AT (excluding AMRC) compared to this time last year, with increases in Research Councils, and EU Framework awards and reductions in UK Government, Charity, Industry and Overseas & Other funding categories.
- Average award values are similar to the same point last year. The number of large RCUK awards over £1m have increased but the number of Charity awards over £1m has reduced from 12 to 3. There is a 15% reduction in the number of small awards (below £20k) compared with 12 months ago.
- In the 2 months since the last report, there have been 9 new awards over £1m. The largest of these is for £3.9 awarded to the Faculty of Health from Advanced Research + Invention Agency

Research awards for the last 12 months		May-26	May-25	May-24	25 to 26 Change
Total new awards (excl. AMRC)	£m	£147m	£160m	£154m	-£13m
	number	653	708	735	-55
	>£1m	30	33	33	
	<£20k	183	215	202	
Research Councils	£m	£61m	£55m	£62m	+£6m

	number	156	152	189	+4
	average <i>£k</i>	£389k	£362k	£330k	
	>£1m	17	11	16	
<b>Charity</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£32m</b>	<b>£42m</b>	<b>£40m</b>	<b>-£10m</b>
	number	163	193	218	-30
	average <i>£k</i>	£199	£218	£186	
	>£1m	3	12	8	
	<£20k	57	81	77	
<b>UK Government</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£29m</b>	<b>£36m</b>	<b>£32m</b>	<b>-£7m</b>
	number	135	171	143	-36
	average <i>£k</i>	£212	£212	£223	
<b>EU</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£7m</b>	<b>£3m</b>	<b>£1m</b>	<b>+£4m</b>
	number	12	10	5	+2
	average <i>£k</i>	£566k	£305k	£145k	
<b>Industry</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£6m</b>	<b>£8m</b>	<b>£5m</b>	<b>-£2m</b>
	number	49	49	50	-
<b>Overseas + Other</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£11m</b>	<b>£16m</b>	<b>£13m</b>	<b>-£5m</b>
	number	118	111	100	-7
<b>AMRC (on C&amp;AT)</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£21m</b>	<b>£24m</b>	<b>£26m</b>	<b>-£3m</b>
	number	163	132	166	+31

- The value of the Research Net Contribution is £47.5m for the 12 months to May 26, an increase of £7.5m (18%) from £40.0m for the 12 months to May 25.
- As at May 2026, research grants work in progress (research order book) which excludes capital projects, stands at £310m which is a decrease of £7m on the work in progress figure of £317m recorded in May 2025.

## 7. LEGAL AND REGULATORY MATTERS

### 7.1 REPORTABLE EVENTS

- Since the previous report to Senate in March 2026, there have been no new reportable events provided to the OfS.

## **7.2 OFFICE FOR STUDENTS**

- On 1 April, the University received communications from the Office for Students (OfS) as part of the OfS' routine regulatory monitoring activities. The OfS requested the following documentation to seek assurance about how the University was (i) managing recent developments that have affected students and (ii) ensuring the fair and equitable treatment of students:
  - Senate Minutes from 18 March (see Item 16 on the Agenda of the present meeting), with a particular interest in understanding the University's ongoing response to student compensation following the disruption caused by industrial action.
  - Degree Classification Algorithm Review, to support the OfS' understanding of recent changes to the algorithm underpinning how the University calculates degree classifications. Specific information was sought on what information was communicated to students, how the associated timeline for implementation of the updated algorithm was communicated to students, and whether an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) was undertaken.
- The University has liaised with the OfS in response to this request and provided the documents requested. The OfS responded positively on both elements of the information request, having no further questions or queries and simply requesting that we continue to monitor the position and liaise or report to OfS if necessary.

## **7.3 COMMITTEE OF UNIVERSITY CHAIRS (CUC)**

- On 17 June, the CUC published its new HE Code of Governance. As is usual in such situations, Council will consider a report on the Code to provide assurance of our alignment or, in instances where further action is required to secure alignment, our plans for achieving this. We are also monitoring the OfS' response to the new Code and any subsequent proposals regarding or changes to the regulatory framework.



## The Senate, 24 June 2026

### President & Vice-Chancellor's Report

### Supplementary Report

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Report provides summary information on current and forthcoming developments, both internal and external, for the information of Senate members. The President & Vice-Chancellor will introduce the Report at the meeting and members will have the opportunity to raise questions. This report is structured around the University Vision's four Pillars and their respective Priorities, after a section about the external environment. Where information relates to more than one Pillar or Priority it is included under the most relevant theme. Where appropriate, reference is made to other papers that appear separately on the Senate agenda. The report now comprises two parts, the main report and a supplementary report with additional information and updates, available in the Reading Room.

#### 1. EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

No Supplementary content.

#### 2. EDUCATION

No Supplementary content.

#### 3. INNOVATION

No supplementary content.

#### 4. INNOVATION

No Supplementary content.

#### 5. ONE UNIVERSITY

##### 5.4 Media Coverage and Impact

- Professor Jon Slate was featured on [BBC News](#) highlighting how modern DNA testing techniques helped solve a 1985 cold case.
- Coverage was achieved in trade and industry publications including [Business Link](#) and [The Business Desk](#) highlighting how we are positioned to support the delivery of the UK's newly announced steel strategy.

- New research which revealed how Ethiopia's hyenas combat climate change, save money and prevent disease was featured in [BBC Wildlife](#), along with several scientific trade press publications.
- Research into how social media misinformation may influence perceptions of hormonal contraception was featured in the [New York Post](#), building on in-depth features in [The Independent](#) and [The Guardian](#).
- Research that enabled the construction of a fully functioning family home in just 10 days was featured in leading trade publications including [The Engineer](#), [The Institute of Materials, Minerals and Mining](#) and [Construction Magazine](#), as well as regional press.
- The Sheffield Tab, featured an [article](#) highlighting the University's popularity.
- Dr Chris Montgomery's research (School of English) on improving AI recognition of regional accents and dialects was covered in [Times Radio](#), [Daily Telegraph](#) and [Daily Mail](#)
- New research into World Cup TV betting ads boosting gambling was covered in [The Independent](#), [The i](#), [BBC News](#), [The Herald](#), [London Standard](#), [Belfast Telegraph](#) and regional coverage including [BBC Radio Sheffield](#), [Yorkshire Post](#) and [Hits Radio](#).

#### **5.5 Staff and Student Communications:**

- We held the annual Education town hall where we shared and discussed our vision and strategy for Education at Sheffield, and celebrated achievements from across the University. Attendees took part in table discussions focussed on the use of AI in education.
- Carried out an important incident communications test via email, text and SafeZone to test the channels we would use to communicate urgently with staff and students in an incident.
- Profiled the University's trip to India and how we are [strengthening global ties](#)
- Communicated support for colleagues affected by current events in the Middle East: [Further information and wellbeing support](#)
- Shared information on how to get involved in this years [Big Walk](#) and [Quiz night](#)
- Announced plans to develop a new University strategy for launch in summer 2027: [About the University strategy development](#)
- Following the meningitis outbreak in Kent, we shared health advice and a reminder of the symptoms to be aware of with our students as a precaution.
- Hosted an online Q and A session with our students, where Mary Vincent, Vice-President for Education, and a panel of University leaders addressed their specific questions.
- Announced the outcome of the Sheffield branch of UCU's ballot to seek a further mandate for industrial action beyond March 2026.

## **6. FINANCE**

No Supplementary content.

## **7. LEGAL AND REGULATORY MATTERS**

No Supplementary content.