



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

Office
Of The
President &
Vice-Chancellor.

The Senate, 17 March 2021

President & Vice-Chancellor's 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.

1. EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

1.1 COVID-19: National lockdown

- The Government announced a third national lockdown on Monday 4 January. As a result, [updated guidance](#) regarding higher education was published with most students instructed to stay where they were and continue with remote learning until at least mid-February. The exceptions are considered to be future critical worker courses. It is expected that additional courses will be added to the exemption list as the national situation improves. It has also been announced that GCSEs and A Levels in England will not go ahead as planned and students will instead receive teacher assessment awarded grades, removing much of the uncertainty for students that had been highly criticised during the 2019/20 academic year.

Following this, the Government laid out its roadmap out of lockdown towards the end of February. As a result, subjects that have a practical component will return to some face to face teaching from Monday 8 March, with most other students not expected to return to campus until at least after the Easter holidays.

- **TUoS interest:** In line with government guidance, the majority of University courses were delivered online in the early part of the year. It is now in the process of planning the expansion of face-to-face teaching in line with updated government guidance on courses with practical elements from 8 March. High quality face-to-face delivery is a central element of our pedagogic commitment across all disciplines, and following the latest government announcement, we welcome the opportunity to increase the delivery of practical teaching on campus from next week.

The University will not charge rent to students who are unable to make use of their University owned or managed accommodation between 4 January and 8 March 2021. Those students who are using their accommodation will continue to be charged rent as usual. We understand that students living in private rented accommodation may have concerns about their rent payments in light of the national lockdown. We have let students know that they can access advice about housing from the Student Advice Centre and we are working with the Students' Union to support their lobbying on the issue.

If students need to return to the University, we expect them to book two Covid-19 tests three days apart at our Testing Centre. This includes those who have remained in Sheffield. We have advised students to minimise all social contact until they have received two negative test results. If students do not take up the offer of a test then they must self-isolate for ten days before they return to Sheffield. Students who are living in an area that offers the use of local community testing should seek to get tested before they return, where this is in line with the locally targeted programmes led by the Director of Public Health.

The University has also published [information](#) regarding its approach to assessment during this period. We will require exam boards to consider performance against previous years' averages to ensure that cohorts are not unfairly disadvantaged by the impacts of Covid-19, as well as providing individual support tailored to student needs. We recognise that this is a very difficult time for many students and continue to offer the full range of support from learning and teaching, hardship and other financial support, and mental health support.

1.2 UK-EU Free Trade Agreement

- On Christmas Eve, it was announced that the UK had agreed a Trade and Cooperation Agreement with the European Union and averted the possibility of a no deal Brexit at the end of the transition period, which expired on 31 December 2020. On issues specific to higher education, the following was agreed:
 - The UK would become an associate member of the Horizon Europe research scheme. The UK will make a contribution towards the Horizon Europe budget in order to secure its participation and there will be limits to the proportion of funding that the UK can secure, namely that it will have to pay back the difference if it secures more than 8% of its contribution for two years in a row. A reciprocal refund mechanism the other way round was not agreed. The UK will continue to have a role in four other research programmes, namely the Euratom nuclear research programme, the ITER project on nuclear fusion, the earth monitoring project Copernicus, and EU satellite surveillance and tracking services.
 - The UK will no longer participate in the Erasmus+ scheme. Instead, the Government [announced](#) it will establish a national alternative, named the Turing Scheme. The Government has announced £100m to fund 35,000 placements and exchanges around the world starting in September 2021. The DfE have said that the new scheme will also target students with disadvantaged backgrounds. It does not, however, have provision for inbound students or for staff exchanges.
 - Data adequacy was not included in the agreement. However, the UK and EU have agreed a temporary arrangement to allow data to continue to be transferred from the EU to the UK from 1 January. This will initially last for four months and is extendable to six months. The EU still has to decide whether to deem the UK's data protection regime adequate.
 - The Agreement also did not include mutual recognition of professional qualifications between the UK and the EU. Agreements will have to be negotiated on a profession-by-profession basis by country. This means that someone with a professional qualification must have their qualification recognised in each EU member state where they want to work, between the relevant registering bodies in each country.

The new immigration system has come into effect from 1 January, with freedom of movement replaced with the new points-based system under which EU and

non-EU citizens are treated equally. The Trade and Cooperation Agreement does not affect these new Immigration rules.

- The response from the sector has been broadly positive. The Russell Group [strongly welcomed](#) the UK's participation in Horizon Europe and the new Turing Scheme, and argued that universities were well-placed to contribute to "Global Britain" through developing new research links and partnerships beyond Europe. Universities UK [expressed](#) disappointment that the UK would not be participating in Erasmus+ and while welcoming the new Turing Scheme, argued that a plan should be put in place for funding inbound students.
- **TUoS interest:** the University's Brexit Coordination Group, chaired by the Executive Director for Corporate Services, met early in January to discuss any issues arising from the Agreement for the University. It was agreed that the Group will continue to meet monthly for the foreseeable future to further discuss any issues that arise and to consider the progress that is being made on those outstanding issues of most relevance to the sector.

1.3 Budget 2021

- The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak MP, delivered the 2021 Budget on Wednesday 3 March. Although there was little of direct relevance to higher education, there were some announcements around research and immigration that would have some impact on universities, including:
 - The Government will carry out a review of R&D tax credits, with a consultation published alongside the Budget.
 - Reiterating the reform of the Global Talent visa, including to allow international prizes and winners of scholarships and programmes for early promise to automatically qualify.
 - The Government is launching the [prospectus](#) for the £4.8bn Levelling Up Fund alongside the Budget.
 - A new £375m fund to help scale up the most innovative, R&D intensive businesses.

The new UK Infrastructure Bank will be headquartered in Leeds, benefiting from the city's position as an established financial hub with excellent transport links across the UK.

- **TUoS interest:** the University welcomes many of the provisions in the Budget, including the commitment to ensuring that high quality academics and researchers can come to the UK. The Levelling Up Fund is also a positive development, but it is concerning that there was a lack of focus on the role of R&D, and by extension universities, in the Prospectus. Universities play a crucial role in supporting the economic development of their local communities and any programme for levelling up the regions of the UK must recognise and support that work. The University, along with other institutions and sector representative organisations, will continue to make that case to Government.

1.4 Post-Qualification Admissions

- The Education Secretary, Gavin Williamson MP, announced in November that universities in England would switch to offering degree places on the basis of actual grades rather than predicted ones, otherwise known as Post-Qualification Admissions (PQA). He had previously said in a written statement to Parliament that the Government would look to make reforms to the admissions system during the course of this Parliament following consultation.

This followed after Universities UK [published](#) the recommendations of its 18-month Fair Admissions Review which also proposed a switch to PQA where applicants express interest in universities, and offers are made to applicants

after they have achieved their qualification. This system would begin in 2023. The recommendations included ending the use of “conditional unconditional” offers (that Sheffield does not use) and guidance on the acceptance use of unconditional offers. The review also recommended that better, and more consistent, information should be made publicly available by providers on their use of contextual admissions to further improve social mobility.

- In January, the Government launched its [consultation](#) on PQA. Although it does not make a clear statement about which system the Government prefers, it does contend that reforms could see students receive and accept university offers after they have received their A Level grades. This came alongside [data](#) from UCAS that showed 79% of 18-year olds in the UK accepted to university with at least 3 A Levels had their grades over-predicted.
- **TUoS interest:** the University accepts that there are strong arguments in favour of PQA in ensuring that all prospective students are treated fairly and have equal access to the highest-quality courses. However, moving to PQA would also have profound consequences for both the admissions process and the academic cycle and these would have to be carefully considered as part of any reform package, with institutions given the right support to manage that transition and ensure that any disruption to students was minimised. The University will respond positively to the Government’s consultation.

1.5 Independent Review of the TEF

- The [Independent Review of the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework](#) (TEF) has been published alongside the Government’s [response](#). The Independent Review was a statutory requirement included in the Higher Education and Research Act 2017, with Dame Shirley Pearce appointed to lead it in January 2019. Although the Review concluded late 2019, its publication was delayed by the 2019 general election and the subsequent Covid-19 pandemic.

The Review suggests very significant changes to the design of the TEF, with the Government accepting most of the proposed changes. It reaffirms that the purpose of the TEF should be the enhancement of quality, and that it should be more clearly part of the OfS’ Regulatory Framework. There will now **not** be a subject-level TEF. The approach of TEF running every year will end and it is expected that it will instead take place every four or five years. There will be four TEF ratings overall, rather than the existing Gold, Silver and Bronze categories. The Government does not consider Student Satisfaction to be an appropriate measure of excellence, and the TEF should use more than just graduate earnings and take account of regional variations as well. There is no reference made to grade inflation, so it is unclear if this will be part of TEF assessments in the future.

The OfS will consult on the new TEF Framework and the Government has suggested that it wants the new TEF in place for assessments to be published by September 2022.

- **TUoS interest:** the University strongly welcomes many of the reforms proposed by the Independent Review and accepted by Government, including the abolition of subject-level TEF, which produced unreliable comparisons between institutions and created a great deal of bureaucratic burden for universities. We also welcome the commitment to improve the proportionality and statistical robustness of the TEF metrics, and to remove measures of Student Satisfaction when considering how best to identify excellence. The timescale for introduction of the new TEF system is very ambitious and it is important that there is sufficient time for a robust consultation process.

1.6 Future of the Augar Review

- The Government published its [Interim Conclusion](#) of the Review of Post-18 Education and Funding, which responds to some of the 53 recommendations of the [report](#) of the independent panel led by Dr Philip Augar published over 19 months ago. The Government's final conclusion to the Post-18 Review will not be set out until the next Comprehensive Spending Review (which is anticipated, but not confirmed, to be in autumn 2021 at the earliest).

The Interim Conclusion calls for a “better balance between academic and technical education” so it is not so “skewed toward degrees above all else.” This is a continuing policy trend that perceives universities and degrees as academic rather than vocational and sets them in opposition to T-levels and degree apprenticeships. The maximum tuition fee cap is to be frozen for a further year at £9,250, further reducing the monetary power of the tuition fee. Crucially, the Government does not rule a future cut in tuition fees as recommended by the Augar Review and it is the Russell Group's understanding that this idea is still under active consideration by the DfE. Broadly, the response states that the core findings of the Augar Review remain “highly relevant” and that issues of student finance terms and conditions, minimum entry requirements to higher education institutions, and the treatment of foundation years will all feature in a major new consultation the Government is set to launch in spring 2021. The Government has also promised further reforms to tackle “low quality” courses.

- **TUoS interest:** The University has made numerous representations to the Government regarding the recommendations of the Augar Review, and the ongoing uncertainty surrounding their acceptance and implementation is concerning. We have been very clear that any reduction in tuition fees must be met with a corresponding increase in the teaching grant to avoid any detriment to the quality of education that students receive. We support the Russell Group's call for the Government to ensure that higher education funding is put on a sustainable footing, closing the increasing gap in funding versus cost for undergraduate courses. The University will respond positively to any consultation regarding higher education reforms that is published in the spring.

1.7 Further Education and Skills White Paper

- The Government has published a [Skills for Jobs White Paper](#), which aims to strengthen the links between employers and further education providers. It sets out how the Government intends to reform further education so that “it supports people to get the skills our economy needs throughout their lives, wherever they live in the country.” Measures include a Lifelong Loan Entitlement, which will make it easier for adults and young people to study flexibly, equivalent to four years of post-18 education from 2025. This is seen as part of a move towards the modularisation of higher and further education in order to build greater flexibility into the system.
- **TUoS interest:** Although much of the White Paper is not specifically relevant to higher education, it is part of a wider narrative that further education has been poorly served in the UK compared to the higher education system. While we support increased investment in further education, as well as greater flexibility and choice for prospective students of all ages, we will continue to make the case for sustained investment in higher education and argue against a zero sum game between higher and further education.

1.8 Teaching Grant

- The DfE has instructed the OfS to ensure that the 2021/22 T grant supports “the priorities of the nation, such as healthcare, STEM, and specific labour market

needs.” The OfS has published its guidance from the DfE, with the key themes of a shift in funding from London to other regions and from “low-priority” to “high-priority” subjects, particularly medical/dental education and STEM. High-cost subject funding for strategic courses will be increased by £85m (+13%) which includes an £11m increase in DHSC funding to expand medical places. Funding for ‘high-cost non-strategic courses’ will be reduced by 50% (-£20m). Those courses include media, art and design, archaeology, music, drama, and the performing arts. It is likely that the medical, dental, and STEM allocation will benefit the majority of Russell Group institutions.

The London weighting in the T grant will be removed, which is currently worth £64m. Although this is likely to generate disagreement among London based institutions, this will be welcomed by institutions in other regions as part of the effort to rebalance funding away from the Capital and support the Government’s levelling up agenda.

- **TUoS interest:** The University will likely see financial benefit from the increase in the T grant for medicine, dentistry and STEM subjects. We do not support the reduction in funding for arts and humanities, as a strong higher education system should support the widest range of subjects that are suited to all kinds of student requirements. It is important that, while ensuring STEM subjects are well-funded and attractive to prospective students, that people are not put off from pursuing other kinds of courses because of the perception that these are somehow “low-value”. The University supports the removal of the London weighting to ensure that teaching grant funding is more equally distributed across the country and ensures that institutions in other regions of the country are not unfairly penalised by their location. There are many separate advantages for institutions that are based in London and it is appropriate that the T grant funding is more equitably distributed.

1.9 UCAS End of Cycle Report

- The first UCAS 2020 [End of Cycle Report](#) shows continued, albeit slowing, annual progress in widening access and participation to full-time undergraduate courses. The most advantaged English school pupils were 4.23 times more likely to enter high education than the most disadvantaged this year, compared to 4.40 times in 2019. The gap would take 332 years to close on the current trajectory. With a projected 90,000 applicants by 2025, with increased competition for the most selective courses, UCAS suggest there is the potential for widening access and participation progress to “stall and possibly reverse.”

The report makes a number of short and medium term recommendations, including increase the number of HE places and apprenticeships so that disadvantaged students do not miss out as a result of increased competition for places. UCAS will publish further insight into the 2020 cycle in early 2021, including analysis of students’ choices and motivations.

- **TUoS interest:** The University is very aware that the Covid-19 pandemic may have significant negative impact on access and participation for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. It is important that the progress we have made in widening access is not reversed. We recognise that Russell Group universities have a particular responsibility to ensure equal access to higher education and our Access and Participation Plan sets out an ambitious programme of work to ensure that students from non-traditional backgrounds are supported to make the transition to higher education.

1.10 Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom

- The Education Secretary, Gavin Williamson MP, has [announced](#) “tougher legal measures” in relation to freedom of speech and academic freedom at universities in England. He once again warns of a “chilling effect” where students and staff feel they cannot express themselves freely. The proposals include:
 - A new free speech condition placed on HE providers, with the OfS having the power to impose sanctions, including financial penalties, for a breach of the condition.
 - A new Free Speech and Academic Freedom Champion with a remit to champion free speech, investigate infringements of free speech in higher education and recommend redress. The new Champion would be appointed to the board of the Office for Students.
 - Strengthen the free speech duty under Section 43 of the Education (No 2) Act 1986, to include a duty on HE providers to “actively promote” freedom of speech. The legal duties also would extend to SUs.
 - A new legal measure to enable individuals to seek compensation through the courts if they suffer loss as a result of breach of the free speech duties – such as being expelled, dismissed or demoted.

The DfE also published a [policy paper](#) which includes government expectations of best practice as the Government wants providers “not to simply do the minimum that is required by law.” The next steps regarding legislation will be set out in due course.

- **TUoS interest:** Statutory protection of freedom of speech and academic freedom already exist in law, as set out in the Higher Education and Research Act 2017. The public interest governance duties, published by the Office for Students, place a duty on Council as the governing body to protect both academic freedom and freedom of speech. These are included in the University’s Regulations under the functions of the Council. Senate will be invited to consider additions to the terms of its Senate Learning and Teaching and Research and Innovation Committee’s to make explicit the existing duty. More generally, the Prevent legislation, hate speech laws, the Counter Terrorism and Security Act and the laws of slander apply. If the Government proceeds with new legislation, as proposed, the University will of course seek to respond as positively as possible, while robustly defending our policies of equality, diversity, and inclusion against unfair and misleading characterisations. Universities UK have convened an Advisory Group to help shape the sector’s response and the University Secretary has been invited to be a member.

2. EDUCATION

2.1. DELIVERY OF THE PORTFOLIO

2.1.1 Undergraduate Admissions

- The UG Home position as of 15 January is showing the effects of the change to the UCAS equal consideration application deadline with applications below the levels at the same date last year. Applications had been roughly in line with the position last year, so we expect to see improvements by the new 29 January deadline. The University remains marginally ahead of the sector position and marginally behind our closest competitor group position. The UG Overseas position is encouraging, despite the change to the deadline, and is expected to increase further by 29 January.
- We continue to engage with the Department for Education and Ofqual consultations, the Russell Group, UCAS and other sector bodies to help ensure clarity on the exam and results position for 2021 in order to inform decisions

about Confirmation and Clearing. However, with applicant behaviour difficult to predict, given the uncertainty about the easing of pandemic related restrictions, and changes to examinations in the UK, the student recruitment effort in the Summer will again be challenging.

2.1.2 Postgraduate Taught Admissions

- PGT Home numbers are positive, although it is early in the cycle for this cohort. PGT Overseas applications remain below last year, but higher than the position two years ago and with marked increases in some areas. This year, close consideration will be given to any Covid-related leave of absence requests, as well as the number of applicants who deferred their place until September 2021 as we manage intake for this autumn.

2.1.3 Postgraduate Research Admissions

- We have seen a drop in the number of PGR applications compared to last year for both Home and Overseas applications, including from EU applicants. There are a number of scholarship deadlines towards the end of January and with all UKRI funded studentships now open to both Home and Overseas applicants it is anticipated we will see an increase in applications over the coming weeks.

2.1.4 Registration

- The annual census point for new registrations is the 1st December. This population is used externally by the OfS and internally for reporting and modelling. After a challenging year, with turbulence in recruitment markets and changing government policy, the University over recruited at UG level against target by 23%, under recruited at PGT by -4% and under recruited at PGR by -24%.
- As of the 1st December 2020 the institutional new student registration position was 6,384 Undergraduates, 7,086 Taught Postgraduates and 611 Research Postgraduates:

Category	2020 Intake Target	Registrations at 1st December 2020	Variance between Target and Registrations
Home (UK/EU) Undergraduate	3827	4642	815
Overseas Undergraduate	1174	1497	323
Home (UK/EU) Postgraduate Taught	2256	2361	105
Overseas Postgraduate Taught	5157	4725	-432
Home (UK/EU) Postgraduate Research	441	389	-52
Overseas Postgraduate Research	359	222	-137

2.1.5 Annual Planning Cycle

- Faculties are working with academic Departments to review performance against the new Strategic Framework that expands on the aims of the University Vision. This activity is focused on assessing academic departments' current position against the Framework and beginning to develop aims and aspirations for the next five years. The outputs will be discussed at a UEB Away Day in March.
- The Provost & DVC and Director of Planning, Projects and Business Intelligence are closely monitoring the progress of the cycle given the pressures on staff stemming from Covid-19. Contingency plans are in place should rescheduling of activity be required.

2.1.6 Statutory Returns

- The University's annual Higher Education Students Early Statistics (HESES) return was submitted in December 2020. The data provides an early indication of the number of HE students in 2020-21 and is supplied to the Higher Education Statistics Agency to inform the allocation of teaching funds for 2021-22.

2.1.7 Student Support Services

- Student Support Services, together with local firms PJ Taste and Regather, produced 1,400 Christmas hampers of locally produced goods for students remaining in Sheffield over Christmas. These were well received.
- The University Health Service has been assisting with the roll out of the NHS England Covid-19 vaccination, providing 2,500 vaccinations to community health and social care staff in January.
- The University Health Service has won Practice Nursing Team of the Year as part of the General Practice Awards 2020.

2.1.8 University Library

- The Information Commons and Western Bank Libraries will remain open throughout the national lockdown announced on January 4th, as per subsequent Dfe guidance, to provide essential study spaces.
- Covid safety measures limit capacity to 440 (out of 2000) across the two buildings. Access to critical print collections not available electronically is available via postal or collection services. Staffing onsite is reduced to the minimum required to ensure safe operations.
- Expenditure on ebooks has increased by more than 200% compared to Semester 1 2019/20; enhancing the Library's online service of almost a million ebooks and more than 60,000 journal titles, alongside the virtual library help and advisory service of specialist librarians.

2.1.9 Strategic Projects

Current strategic project developments include:

- Reducing Non-Critical Workload Project: This project has been established to remove, pause or simplify administrative workloads that are not currently essential, whilst we manage the impacts of the pandemic. The project has worked with Professional Service Directors across the University to identify opportunities and proposals are currently being assessed. It is expected that the identified non-critical workloads will be communicated to colleagues and removed before the start of the second semester.
- Data Warehouse Project: This project is redeveloping and improving management information and reporting services whilst implementing a data warehouse to support this provision. Following Council's approval of University KPIs, the development of associated KPI reporting (including the development of KPI dashboards) is being built into the scope of this project.
- Enabling Programme Level Approach (PLA): This project has supported a key development for learning and teaching and is now drawing to the end of its lifecycle. The work to support the transition of this work into business as usual continues with the aim of transition and project closure later this year.

2.2 EMPLOYABILITY

2.2.1 Careers Service

- In January the Careers Service launched a programme of support for our 'Class of 2021' to provide focused assistance as graduates enter the job market. Despite an overall contraction, many companies are still recruiting and in many cases need new talent and up-to-date skills to help rebuild their businesses, particularly online and digital skills. The Class of 2021 programme will include careers guidance and bespoke webinars and employer events, access to the TUoS 'mySkills' portfolio, 2-day summer workshops, professional networking and peer-to-peer support.

2.3 DIGITAL EXPERIENCE

The following work to support teaching and learning has been undertaken over the past three months:

- Supported the rollout of Google Meet alongside Blackboard Collaborate.
- New online prospectus launched in collaboration with Corporate communications, offering improved look and feel and functionality.
- A successful pilot of Crowdmark, for digital submission and marking of handwritten assessments, was carried out for formative assessments on selected courses in Engineering and Science.
- Outlined a technology enabled product management strategy for all Digital products and services that contribute to teaching, learning and student support.
- Contracted with a third party to deliver student and staff centred service design and user research activity.
- Extended the University Connect for China service to support students who continue to learn from China – c.2000 students engage with this service per week.
- Continue to support the safe and security running of the staff and student digital experience - 1135 secure laptops are on order with 840 being prepared for distribution to staff and some students
- The Christmas period is usually a vulnerable time for Information Security attacks in HE - some significant attempts were made to breach our services and install malware but our defences, including the newly rolled Multi Factor Authentication (MFA) service, blocked the attacks.

3. RESEARCH

3.1 RESEARCH EXCELLENCE

3.1.1 Research Awards

- See section 6, Finance, below.

3.1.2 Research Excellence Framework

- The deadline for submission has been delayed until March 31st 2021. Research England have been taking soundings about a further delay due to the current national lockdown. Our preference is to retain the current deadline; preparations are well advanced and a further delay would be unlikely to materially improve our submission.

3.1.3 Knowledge Exchange

- The University has received an additional £3m of non-recurrent QR funding from Research England from the National Productivity Investment Fund. UEB

has agreed to distribute half of the funding to Faculties according to the usual QR allocation methodology. Approximately £1.3m will be used alongside other knowledge exchange funds to significantly grow partnerships and/or revenue from research activity.

- A new Entrepreneurs' pre-accelerator programme was launched in January for all members of staff, students or recent graduates. The aim is to help participants learn about building a product, service or business through access to mentors, skills development and signposting to connect with the start-up ecosystem in Sheffield and beyond.

3.1.4 Additional Research Funding to mitigate COVID impact

- UKRI has provided £3.6M additional funding for research grants impacted by COVID to enable them to deliver the planned outcomes and outputs and to retain staff. We have invited eligible Principal Investigators to apply.
- UKRI has also provided additional funding to provide PGR students with stipend extensions to enable them to submit their thesis within their funded period. UEB agreed to provide a similar scheme for our own funded students. Phase 1 of this scheme was implemented during 2020; PGRs are making applications during January to a more restrictive phase 2 (for shorter extensions). Phase 2 enables us to take account of individual circumstances such as disability or caring responsibilities.

3.1.5 Research Development

- Open Research - making the processes and outputs of research freely accessible - is a key agenda in the sector. A position statement on open research has been developed for consideration by the Senate Research & Innovation Committee. This will provide a basis from which to raise awareness and share practice more widely. It has the potential to enhance our reputation by widening the reach of research results, enabling new collaborations and a range of other benefits.

4. INNOVATION

4.1 INNOVATION IMPACT

4.1.1 Success and Achievement

- The University of Sheffield received a donation of £5.85 million from alumnus Andrew Lee. The donation will support widening participation and gene therapy research.
- The Institute for Sustainable Food will lead a £6million research project to transform the UK food system.
- Professor Ed Daw, Physics and Astronomy, will lead a UK-wide, multi-million pound project on fundamental physics.
- The University launched a €25.5 million consortium with Pfizer to accelerate the development of Advanced Therapy Medicinal Products.
- University Engineers have collaborated with British Steel on a multi-million pound research and development programme.
- Colleagues from the Department of Chemistry published blueprints for laboratories to make their own specialist microscopes, which have been accessed by scientists across the world.

4.2 SHEFFIELD CITY REGION

4.2.1 Regional Engagement

- In December 2020, Sheffield City Council was successful in its bid for £15.8m of funding as part of the Government's Future High Streets fund. The University supported the Council in its bid to rejuvenate and reinvent Fargate and High Street as social hubs. This included academic input into consultation workshops and the development of the bid, in addition to visualisations from Architecture and Urban Planning students and public engagement events.

4.2.2 Post-Covid recovery

- The University has worked with the Sheffield Culture Consortium to enable over £60k of additional funding to help freelancers in the city. Both the University and Sheffield Hallam University have contributed, working with the Sheffield City Council Business Recovery Group, informed by a mid-term report from the Covid Recovery Project. Freelancers can apply for small grants between £500 to £2000. The University has also submitted its quarterly report on economic spend via the Culture Recovery Fund for the SCR Mayor.

5. ONE UNIVERSITY

5.1 COLLABORATIVE AND SUPPORTIVE CULTURE

5.1.1 People Development

Trade Unions:

We have continued to meet at least weekly with our recognised trade union colleagues throughout the pandemic to explore, discuss, consult and listen to concerns and points raised by them on behalf of staff.

We have also held dedicated Health & Safety focused meetings to ensure we fulfil and exceed our obligations to consult over arrangements for staff health and safety in the workplace. We have worked with our trade union colleagues to review the template Covid risk assessments, in conjunction with the new Director of Health & Safety, Daniel Harrison, in light of the new, more transmissible Covid-19 variant and national lockdown and to address specific concerns.

A collective dispute which was lodged against the University in late 2020 by UCU, Unite and GMB was resolved and has concluded without further action as a result of constructive discussions with trade union representatives and UEB colleagues to work through concerns.

5.1.2 Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

The University has continued to submit furlough claims and up to 31 December 2020 had claimed £5.3m in funding for staff on the main payroll. This is in addition to £269k claimed in the first lockdown in 2020 for eligible staff on the casual payroll.

There continues to be conflicting guidance from central government and the Department for Education over eligibility for furlough claims. We remain confident that we are claiming appropriately and not excessively under the scheme. An internal audit process was carried out in late 2020 to reassure that this was the case and will be reported from Audit Committee in due course.

A total of 155 staff are currently furloughed (as at January 2021), mainly from Sport Sheffield, Accommodation & Commercial Services and some Estates roles. The scheme is due to end in April 2021. The Government continues to fund 80% of salary for hours not worked, up to a monthly cap, with employers paying National Insurance and pension contributions.

The Job Retention Bonus scheme will now not be paid on its original timetable due to the extension of furlough. This was a proposed one-off taxable payment of £1000 for each eligible employee furloughed and kept continuously employed until 31 January 2021, subject to qualifying criteria. Early estimates were that this was likely to yield £630-770k.

5.1.3 Covid-19 update

The University continues to provide a broad range of internal and external communications to keep staff, students (current and prospective) and the local community updated on the University's response to changing government guidance.

5.1.4 Safe Bookable Spaces

For staff whose wellbeing is suffering as a result of working from home, we have created a safe, bookable space on campus that staff can use following discussion with their Manager. Staff can book a desk to work from on a day/s that suits them.

5.1.5 New Key Appointments

Mr Daniel Harrison has been appointed as Director of Health & Safety with effect from 14 December 2020. Mr Harrison was previously Head of Health & Safety at London Metropolitan University.

Mr Andy Riggs has been appointed as Interim Head of Finance Services in Finance & Commercial with effect from 4 January 2021. Mr Riggs was previously Chief Financial Officer at Solent University.

Mr Ian Wright has been appointed as Director of Human Resources with effect from 1 January 2021. Mr Wright was previously Deputy Director of Human Resources.

5.1.6 Professional Services Effectiveness Programme Board

As part of the 'One University' pillar, the University is taking steps to ensure that professional services activity is delivered in a consistent and effective way that supports all students and academics.

In order to support this, the 'Professional Services Effectiveness Programme Board', chaired by Professor Gill Valentine, has been set up to provide oversight for any significant professional services projects.

5.2 STAFF WELLBEING

The latest national lockdown, which includes the closing of schools, is proving to be particularly challenging for many staff. As a result, and recognising that under the furlough rules as they pertain to publicly funded roles it is not necessarily possible to simply furlough staff who are struggling, e.g. with childcare, the University has taken a flexible stance for managers to support staff to balance their various responsibilities and help preserve wellbeing. The [message to staff from the President & Vice-Chancellor](#) on 15 January emphasised a focus on core priorities (to be determined by departments with support from UEB members) and a message to "do what you can, when you can and for now, that's enough".

Specific guidance for managers has been developed to support this approach, which sits alongside our previous package of wellbeing support and resources. We are also seeking input from staff to establish what they need to help them through the lockdown period.

5.3 DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

5.3.1 Support for Widening Participation students

- Employability support for WP students is also being enhanced with a clearer focus on the needs of specific students. Several new staff roles are being funded

within Careers/APSE and CAR by a new alumni donation, which will enable a scaling-up of existing WP student support as well as some exciting new employability and work experience initiatives.

5.4 SUSTAINABILITY

- The University announced its pledge to reach net-zero carbon emissions on campus by 2030 and across all activities by 2038.

5.5 PHILANTHOPHY

5.5.1 Milestones and Significant Developments

- The University is completing the planning phase of the first institution-wide fundraising and engagement Campaign, with the aim to be in an active private/quiet phase of fundraising from August 2021.

5.5.2 Alumni Volunteering

	2020/21*	2020/21 Target	2019/20	2018/19
Alumni volunteers	361	900	863	999
Volunteer hours	3,369	10,000	8,985	10,752
Philanthropic prospects engaged in volunteering	71 (20%)	15%	127 15%	144 (14%)
Student beneficiaries	1,448**	5,000	4,500+	5,307

* As of 14/01/21 (from 01/08/20)

** Recorded student attendance on events and programmes. This does not include the full picture across the University, or students benefiting from accessing online content (e.g. recorded webinars), so the actual number of students beneficiaries will be higher.

- In November the annual [Northern City Connections](#) event was held online. 30 Arts and Humanities students from WP backgrounds undertook a day of interactive webinars delivered by HSBC, SDL and Museums Sheffield, followed by virtual networking with alumni from a variety of sectors in Sheffield and the North.
- This Autumn saw the launch of [Sheffield Insights](#), a new virtual alumni speaker programme where alumni share their career stories and tips for success with students (50% WP). Sessions are recorded to ensure they reach wider audiences. Topics for the Spring semester programme include intersectionality and diversity in large organisations, being 'on the road' with multinationals and how to forge your own path. Each session includes an interactive Q&A.
- A record number of matches were made on the Careers Service's [ementoring programme](#) which ran from October-December, matching 278 students to an alumni mentor for one to one advice and support.

5.5.3 New Year's Honours

The following alumni were honoured in the Queen's New Year Honours List, 2021:

CBE (Commander of the Order of the British Empire)

- [Professor Shearer C. West, CBE](#) (Former Staff). Vice-Chancellor, University of Nottingham. For services to Higher Education.

OBE (Officer of the Order of the British Empire)

- Professor Valerie Gibson, OBE (BSc Physics, 1983). Professor of High Energy Physics, University of Cambridge. For services to Science, Women in Science and to Public Engagement.
- Professor Lorraine L. Maltby, OBE (Current Staff and former member of Senate and Council). Professor of Environmental Biology, University of Sheffield. For services to Environmental Biology, Animal and Plant Sciences.
- Mr Christopher M. Tyas, OBE (Current Staff). Chair, Food Resilience Industry Forum. For services to the Food Supply Chain during the Covid-19 Response.

MBE (Member of the Order of the British Empire)

- Professor Adewale O. Adebajo, MBE (Current Staff). Consultant Rheumatologist, Barnsley Hospital NHS Foundation Trust. For services to Inclusive Patient and to Public Involvement in Research.
- Mr Alan Armson, MBE (BEng Civil Engineering, 1972). For services to the community in Northamptonshire.
- Dr Harnovdeep S. Bharaj, MBE (MEd Pharmacology and Therapeutics, 1983; MEd Clinical Medicine, 1985). Consultant, Diabetes and General Medicine, Bolton NHS Foundation Trust. For services to People with Diabetes in the South Asian Community.
- Mr Alan K. Lane, MBE (BA English Literature, 2000). Artistic Director, Slung Low. For services to the community in South Leeds during Covid-19.
- Mrs Margaret G. Roberts, MBE (Former Staff). External Examiner and President, Institute of Education and Geographical Association. For services to Education.
- Professor Hora Soltani-Karbaschi, MBE (MMEedSci Human Nutrition, 1994; PhD Obstetrics and Gynaecology, 1997). Professor of Maternal and Infant Health, Sheffield Hallam University. For services to Higher Education and to Maternal and Infant Health.
- Mrs Stella W. Thebridge, MBE (BA German/Music, 1978). Principal Librarian, Schools and Reading, Warwickshire. For services to Public Libraries during Covid-19.
- Miss Claire Waldrom, MBE (MEd Inc Education, 2001). Deputy Headteacher, Rosehill School, Nottingham. For services to Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

6. FINANCE

6.1 Research

- New awards for the last 12 months to the end of December 2020 now stand at £177.8m (£150.8m excluding AMRC). This is an increase of £11.5m (6.92%) on the £166.3m in December 2019 (£139.4m excluding AMRC).
- There has been a rise in the total number of awards opened. For the last 12 months to the end of December 2020, the number of new awards opened stood at 937 compared to 825 as at December 2019. There have been across all funder categories apart from UK Industry, which has remained unaltered. The biggest rise of 43 is in RCUK awards.
- The value of new awards for the 12 months to December 2020 has seen increases across all funder categories apart from the Overseas (all Overseas excluding EU Framework) category which has fallen by £9.2m. The biggest increases were in the value of RCUK, Charities, and EU Framework awards of

£6.3m, £5.5m, & £5.0m respectively. Total RCUK and UK Government awards over the last 12 months represents £115.4m of the £177.8m total awarded (64.9%), compared to 63.9% of the total award value as at December 2019.

- There were 12 new awards for over £1m in the 3 months since the last report. Six of which were awarded to the Faculty of Engineering, with four to the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health and two to the Faculty of Social Science. The largest of which was £3.5m from BBSRC to the Faculty of Social Science.
- As at December 2020, research grants work in progress (research order book) which excludes capital projects, stands at £339.1m (£322.7m excluding AMRC) which is an increase of £39.0m on the work in progress figure of £300.1m (£277.4m excluding AMRC) recorded in December 2019. This is the highest recorded work in progress to date. The increase is because of a number of factors, including an increase in the number and value of new awards in the last 6 months compared with the previous year and approximately £16m less expenditure over the 9 months from April 2020 to December 2020 compared with the corresponding 9 months in 2019. Reduced expenditure caused by some research projects having to be / continue to be suspended due to COVID19 and a reduction of staff research salaries due to furloughing.

7. LEGAL AND REGULATORY MATTERS

7.1 REPORTABLE EVENTS

- In its role as principal regulator of HEIs, the OfS requires that serious incidents have been appropriately notified under registration condition F3 (i). The OfS defines a reportable event as 'any event or circumstance that, in the judgement of the OfS, materially affects or could materially affect the provider's legal form or business model, and/or its willingness or ability to comply with its conditions of registration',
- In the period since the previous report to Senate the University has not needed to notify the OfS of any reportable events.