



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

University
Secretary's
Office.

The Council, 22 November 2021

Report of the Senate

Date: 13 October 2021
Chair: The President & Vice-Chancellor (P&VC)
Secretary: Dr T Strike

FOR INFORMATION

2. President & Vice-Chancellor's report

- 2.1 The President & Vice-Chancellor (P&VC) presented the report, including:
- (a) Government Reshuffle: Gavin Williamson MP was removed as Secretary of State for Education and replaced by Nadhim Zahawi MP. Michelle Donelan's new ministerial role was Minister for Further and Higher Education and she would attend Cabinet. George Freeman MP was the new Minister for Science, Research and Innovation at BEIS.
 - (b) Admissions: UG home recruitment was expected to exceed target. There was anticipated to be a shortfall regarding PGT recruitment and reduced numbers were expected for PGR recruitment. The admissions numbers were not yet finalised and registration was continuing.
 - (c) Northern Gritstone: A new investment company had been established jointly with the universities of Manchester and Leeds to attract venture capital to the north of England. The Board included Lord Jim O'Neill, an alumnus of the University, as Non-Executive Chairman.
- 2.2 In response to a submitted question regarding academic staff turnover it was outlined that for the period March 2020 to September 2021, effectively the period of the pandemic, the turnover rate for all academics was 10.9%. The figure for September 2018 to February 2020 was not materially different at 10.2%.
- 2.3 Discussion, it was clarified that the University's own contract tracing team had continued to contact trace for all confirmed cases of Covid-19 on campus. A Level results determined by teacher assessment had led to a significant increase in the number of top grades awarded, however it was not known if any University departments had been disproportionately affected by this.

3. Matters Arising on the Minutes

A member of Senate provided a proposed opinion in advance of the meeting to be discussed and declared as an opinion of the Senate. Following discussion, the proposed opinion was deferred to a future meeting of Senate by the member of Senate who had proposed it and a request for an extraordinary meeting of Senate to discuss the opinion

was requested. A response to the request for an extraordinary meeting of Senate would be provided by the Secretary to Senate.

4. Annual Academic Assurance Report

- 4.1 Senate considered and discussed the Annual Academic Assurance Report. Senate approved that the Annual Academic Assurance Report 2020/21 be submitted for consideration and approval at Council's meeting on 22 November 2021, noting that a Joint Sub-Group of Council and Senate will be convened in the intervening period to discuss the report. Discussion included the challenges regarding the disaggregation of data in relation to BAME students.
- 4.2 The Annual Academic Assurance Report 2020/21 is provided to Council under agenda item 8.4.

5. REF2021: Reflections and Next Steps

- 5.1 Senate received and noted the Report, which summarised and reflected on preparations for the Research Excellence Framework 2021 submission and identified next steps in reviewing the University's performance.
- 5.2 Discussion focused on a submitted question regarding funding to support research travel and conference activities.

6. Research Security: Current Issues in Research Collaboration

- 6.1 Senate received and noted the Report, which outlined the current external situation with respect to current and forthcoming guidance and legislation, and presented the University's approach and policy.

7. Report of the Council

- 7.1 Senate received a report on the meeting of Council held on held on 12 July 2021.

8. Reports of committees

8.1 Committees of Senate

- 8.1.1 Senate approved the reports of the following committees:

- (a) Report of the Research Ethics Committee
(Meeting held on 15 September 2021)
 - (i) Senate approve a proposal requiring staff and students undertaking research involving human participants or personal data to complete three online Information Security training courses before commencing an application for ethics approval.

Discussion covered the rationale for not making the proposal mandatory for all students. It was also clarified that the Committee believed that the additional work required was outweighed by the risks related to a lack of understanding amongst staff and students.

- (b) Report of the Senate Academic Assurance Committee
(Meeting held on 21 September 2021)

Senate received and approved the Report, including the Committee's Business Plan for 2021/22.

Discussion covered the award gaps theme on the Business Plan and suggestions were made for the Committee to explore award gaps for students from lower participation neighbourhoods and for LGBT students.

(c) Report of the Senate Learning and Teaching Committee

(Meeting held on 16 September 2021)

- (i) Senate approved an update to the Committee's terms of reference to remove reference to the "Learning and Teaching Strategy" and to replace this with reference to the Education Pillar of the University Vision.
- (ii) Senate approved the ceasing of extra-curricular activity verification for inclusion in the University's official transcript/diploma supplement (HEAR) for undergraduate students and a move to the extended use of the MySkills portfolio tool.
- (iii) Senate approved changes to the General University Regulations (XIV) and General Regulations for First Degrees (XV) to introduce the overarching term 'International Exchange Programmes' in place of 'Erasmus' and 'Study Abroad', and to replace occurrences of 'register' with 'enrol'.
- (iv) Senate approved new, significantly amended, and discontinued programmes, and title changes and new exit routes approved by Faculties between 28 April 2021 and 6 September 2021.

Following a submitted question requesting an update from the UEB Implementation Group it was clarified that the work of the UEB Implementation Group was ongoing and consultations with staff had only recently taken place. It was planned that information would be shared by the UEB Implementation Group as soon as it was possible to do so.

Discussion covered how departments, faculties and the Senate Learning and Teaching Committee were involved in the process that resulted in programme proposals being presented to Senate. It was clarified that the reason for the suspension of UG archaeology programmes was that it would not be fair to applicants to continue to recruit to the programmes.

(d) Report from the Chair of the Senate Research and Innovation Committee

(Including meeting held on 12 May 2021)

Senate received and approved the Report, including: an update from the Open Research Advisory Group on open access; an update on commercial activities; and research awards for 2020-21.

During discussion, it was agreed scoping work would be undertaken to explore what data the University possessed regarding the effect of caring responsibilities during the pandemic on writing grant proposals.

(e) Report of the Senate Nominations Committee

(Business conducted by correspondence)

Senate approved the appointment of Senate Representatives to the Research Ethics Committee.