



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

Office
Of The
President &
Vice-Chancellor.

The Senate, 8 December 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.

This report includes updates on the institutional response to Covid-19 in the context of wider institutional activities.

1. EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

1.1 Comprehensive Spending Review

- The Chancellor of the Exchequer set out the Autumn Budget and Spending Review on 27 October. This was the first long-term spending review for five years. It had been expected and previewed for some time that the Government would use this Spending Review to finally respond to the Augar Review of Post-18 Education (first published in 2019 with a top line recommendation of a reduction in undergraduate fees to £7,500 a year) and set out its plans for the long-term future of HE in England. However, following speculation about disagreements between the Treasury and DfE over plans to reduce tuition fees, this has again been postponed to "the coming weeks." There has been speculation that that the Government is preparing to publish a White Paper on this issue.

Despite the delay on the HE funding issue, there were still announcements of note in the Spending Review. Although the Chancellor confirmed that it was still the Government's intention to increase spending on R&D to £22bn, this target has been delayed until 2026/27, with a promise of £20bn spending "by the end of the Parliament." He also announced changes to the R&D tax credit, both to include cloud computing and data costs, and to focus on domestic R&D activity.

Other announcements from the Spending Review included a commitment to fully fund the UK's association with the Horizon Europe scheme. In the event that an association agreement could not be reached between the UK and the EU, that money would be used for domestic R&D programmes, including on developing new international partnerships. There was also £800m funding for the new Advanced Research and Invention Agency (AIRA) and confirmation of an additional year's funding for the Turing student exchange scheme.

- **TUoS interest:** While the University welcomes the commitment to £22bn of R&D spending, the delay to the target being achieved is concerning. It is very important that this does not represent a dilution of the Government's commitment to increasing research spending over the longer term. The University will continue to work with Government Departments and businesses

to help drive private investment and maximise the impact of R&D spending, as well as using public R&D funding to fund its own research agenda.

On the future of HE funding, the University will continue to lobby Government for a sustainable funding model that protects funding for universities so that it can continue to provide the highest quality education and student experience. The University will respond fully to any consultations and/or White Papers as they are published.

1.2 Universities Minister remit clarified

- Michelle Donelan MP, the Universities Minister, takes on the Further Education brief and becomes Minister for Further and Higher Education, attending Cabinet. She is the first Minister to hold these combined briefs since 2007-08. She will share responsibility for this portfolio with Alex Burghart MP, the Parliamentary Under Secretary for Apprenticeships and Skills. Donelan will continue to work on education reform and student finance, while Burghart will take responsibility for widening access and international students.
- **TUoS interest:** The combining of these roles stresses the importance the Government is placing on the parity between FE and HE. The University will continue to support the ambition for a strong FE sector that sits alongside and complements a fully funded HE sector.

1.3 Attainment gaps shrink

- AdvanceHE, using data from the Higher Education Statistics Authority (HESA), has published a report on changes to attainment gaps in the 2019/20 academic year. The data shows a headline figure of the white-BAME awarding gap as 9.9%. The data is also disaggregated among different ethnic groups and shows the largest attainment gaps between White and Black qualifiers (18.7%), with smaller gaps for Chinese (2.8%), 'mixed-ethnicity' (3.9%) and Asian Indian (2.8%) qualifiers.

Having tracked the data since 2005, AdvanceHE notes that while overall progress in reducing the attainment gap has been slow, 2019/20 marks the single largest annual decrease in the awarding gap, recorded at 3.4%. This coincided with changes in assessment practice in response to the Covid pandemic that first impacted in the 2019/20 academic year. Arguably, therefore, the decrease is a result of the changed assessment practices that Covid disruption necessitated, including safety net policies, flexible use of results from coursework, and continuous exams. However, it is more difficult to draw a causal connection with the reduction in attainment gaps and it remains to be seen whether this reflects a new trend or is an anomaly due to changes in assessment practices.

- **TUoS interest:** The University's own attainment gap in relation to Good Honours has been shrinking since 2016/17. This trend continued in 2019/20 with a reduction of a further 2%, taking the attainment gap between white and BAME students to 7% (better than the national figure). The introduction of a Safety Net policy in response to the Covid pandemic has not significantly impacted the attainment gap, although there will be different experiences in other institutions. The University will continue to investigate the factors that influence its attainment gap and, using the Race Equality Action Plan, to work to further reduce it.

1.4 International student destination attractions

- A new global study from [educations.com](https://www.educations.com) examines the top study abroad market trends of 2021. The study surveyed over 10,000 students in 181 countries to identify the factors driving destination choice and comparing it to similar studies conducted in 2019 and 2020. While the UK remains the most popular potential

destination choice, it has seen another small decline – with 15.3% of respondents listing it as their first choice, just ahead of the United States and Canada. Of particular note is the relative decline for Australia, which is attributed to its border closures during the pandemic, and the rapid rise of South Korea as a top destination choice.

The study suggests that career outcomes are increasingly outweighing reputational rankings for many international students. Students seem less committed to studying in a particular country than in the past and are instead looking to attend schools and universities that offer value for money, strong student support - particularly in mental health, and a return on their investment. It also shows that safety concerns remain prevalent in many students' minds, noting that many are fearful that they will suffer racial discrimination when studying abroad.

- **TUoS interest:** The increasing trend of students looking beyond reputation and instead focusing on course content, career prospects, and student support for mental health, is a challenge for all institutions in the recruitment of both domestic and international students. The University recognises that it has a particular challenge in the need to diversify its international student intake reduce exposure to the risks associated with over-reliance on one international market. Studies such as this provide useful insight into the factors that are driving international student choices and where the University should be focusing in its recruitment messaging.

1.5 Uncertain future for involvement in Horizon Europe

- The European University Association (EUA) has warned that there is currently little progress towards the UK's association with the Horizon Europe scheme and that existing and long-lasting partnerships are at risk as a result. It has been ten months since association was agreed in principle, but the EUA says there is "no clear, official timeline" for completing the association. It calls for the UK Government and the European Commission to finalise Protocol I linked to the Trade and Cooperation Agreement.

As mentioned in 1.1 above, the Spending Review contained the full funding for association to Horizon Europe, with a pledge to redirect that money to domestic R&D projects if the plan for association fails. However, there is little sense of urgency from either the Government or the EU to ensure that this process is concluded in a timely and positive manner.

- **TUoS interest:** Like all research-intensive universities, the University of Sheffield benefits greatly from UK participation in Horizon Europe, both in the funding opportunities that it generates but also in the enhanced collaboration that it promotes. The University will continue to lobby for full involvement in the Horizon Europe scheme and to ensure that research continues to be properly funded in the UK.

1.6 Office for Students

- The Office for Students (OfS) is [consulting](#) on its proposed strategy for 2022-25. The proposals have three areas of focus: quality and standards; equality of opportunity; and enabling regulation. The consultation proposes that the OfS will continue to focus the majority of its regulatory activity on ensuring that universities and colleges meet the requirements set out for them in the OfS's regulatory framework.

The Office for Students (OfS) has confirmed that Nicola Dandridge will step down as Chief Executive at the end of April 2022. Dandridge was appointed in July 2017 as the OfS' inaugural Chief Executive in advance of the OfS coming into

existence as the independent regulator of higher education in England in 2018. Lord Wharton of Yarm, a former MP who chaired Boris Johnson's Conservative party leadership campaign, took over from Sir Michael Barber as Chair of the OfS in April this year. The Chief Executive standing down potentially hands Lord Wharton further scope to reshape the organisation. An announcement regarding recruitment of a successor will be made in due course.

John Blake has been appointed as the OfS' new Director for Fair Access and Participation and will take up the role in January 2022. Blake has worked as a teacher, set up the Labour Teachers network, worked for the Policy Exchange think tank and most recently Ark Schools, a multi-academy trust.

- **TUoS interest:** The University plans to respond to the consultation on the OfS Strategy.

2. EDUCATION

2.1. DELIVERY OF THE PORTFOLIO

2.1.1 Undergraduate Admissions

- The 2022 UG admissions cycle is now underway with home applications at similar levels to last year and international applications continuing to rise above those received at this stage last year. This is in line with the sector position. Offer-making is being carefully managed in some areas to take account of the grade adjustments seen in 2021 and to guard against any political/Covid changes to the exams procedures next summer that are not yet known.

2.1.2 Postgraduate Taught Admissions

- Home applications are below the figures the University would normally expect to see at this time of the year, although in recent years it has seen applications moving later in the cycle. International applications are also below those received at this stage last year with the ongoing effects of Covid globally, however there has been a gradual upturn in recent weeks leading into the normally busy December/January application period.

2.1.3 Postgraduate Research Admissions

- It is early in the cycle for research applications, although the University has continued to see a reduction in applications from home applicants and a marginal increase in international applications. With some positive noise from the recent spending review coupled with the potential for a more settled environment for study after the disruption of the last 2 years, it is hoped the University will see more confidence in potential PhD applicants.

2.1.4 Registration

- As of the 1st November the University had registered 13,557 new students against a target of 13,991.

When counting all students this totals 29,792 registration in the 2021/22 academic year as of the 1st November. The total population normally shows little variation between this snapshot and the 1st December census point though a small number of further registrations are expected.

<i>New Student Registrations Against Targets</i>			
Category	2021 Intake target (1 December 2021)	Intake registered at 1st November 2021	Variance between registrations and target
Home (UK) undergraduate:	4,332	4,893	561
Overseas undergraduate:	1,343	1,347	4
Home (UK) taught postgraduate:	2,304	1,958	-346
Overseas taught postgraduate:	5,180	4,706	-474
Home (UK) research postgraduate:	452	382	70
Overseas research postgraduate:	380	271	109

2.1.5 Recruitment and Marketing Update - Undergraduate

- The University ran two successful face-to-face pre-application Open Days on 11 September (at 50% capacity, in line with its guidance at the time) and 23 October (at full capacity) and was one of very few HEIs to do this before the Oxbridge deadline. Many competitors are not offering face to face pre-application open days at all this cycle, however demand is very high. The University saw over 5,000 students and over 10,000 visitors - in line with pre-COVID levels. Feedback from the September events was extremely positive with 86% saying they had a “Great” experience (with the October survey still open).
- Due to continued demand an additional “Sheffield Experience Day” (an open day, but without full departmental offers across the board), was arranged on 13 November and the University increased the number of Campus Tours offered in order to maintain a competitive advantage and to ensure as many prospective students and visitors as possible are able to visit the campus face to face.
- The University continues to complement these opportunities with a virtual offer. These virtual events have seen 5,700 users register with the Revolution Viewing platform. The majority of these users had no previous face to face contact with the University and the University has extended its geographical reach.
- The University continues to roll out the 2021/22 UGH/OS recruitment campaign and extended this to produce a new mini-guide to Sheffield and send each of the University’s 420 key target schools a campaign themed teacher pack that includes a personalised postcard, an activities booklet, mug, Yorkshire tea bag and diary with a call to action of booking activities. As a result the University has seen headteachers, careers leads and heads of sixth forms who have not previously been in contact now engaging with the University, which is pivotal to the University’s schools recruitment strategy for 2021/22.

2.1.6 Recruitment and Marketing Update - Postgraduate

- A virtual postgraduate open day took place on 24 November and the PGR open evening on 16 November.
- On 13 and 14 October SRMA representatives attended a virtual Find a PhD event, with support from colleagues in Global Engagement, Admissions and Faculties.

The fair attracted 3,045 attendees across both days. On 10 and 11 November SRMA will attend a virtual Find a Masters fair, which has been organised in collaboration between Find a Masters and Russell Group PG consortium members and will focus on the Russell Group PG offer.

2.1.7 Student Support Services

- The student [Welcome pages](#) were used to channel 2021-22 welcome and transition activities and information. Social events, community building activities and information were delivered via a mix of recorded, online and in person activities.
- The Student Fees and Funding Team has received over 3,000 applications from students facing additional Covid related costs to travel to Sheffield for the new academic year.
- From 1 November, the Student Services Information Desk has resumed a drop-in service; students can now visit SSD in the Students' Union without the need to book an appointment. Between September and October, SSiD received 27,730 enquiries.
- The University Counselling Service and Student Access to Mental Health Support now have additional premises at Claremont Crescent, which will greatly assist with service delivery and will be used for triage, counselling and group work.
- The International Student Support, Advice and Compliance (ISSAC) team has moved all student email enquiries to a webform, accessible via their [contacts page](#). Students can also continue to contact the team via live chat or phone.

2.1.8 Global Engagement

- The University has further strengthened its partnership with The University of Alberta (Canada) by signing an agreement to boost research collaborations between the two institutions. A £168,000 joint seed fund will support 6 collaborative projects over 3 years. Each year of the fund will be themed; the first year will bring together expertise from the University's flagship Energy Institute and the University of Alberta's Energy Signature Area.
- Following advocacy and negotiation with the Turkish Embassy in 2021, led by the Director of Global Engagement, the University has been reinstated to the Turkish Ministry of Education's approved list of destination universities. Removal from this list was caused by having successfully recruited too many Turkish students funded by this sponsor (c 90 PGR students in the 2019/20 session).

2.1.9 Learning and Teaching

- The Annual Reflection commenced in November. Annual Reflection is a data-informed process which helps departments to reflect on their learning and teaching, to identify, address and track areas for improvement and to surface good practice which can be shared across the University.
- The Academic Programme Office in APSE will prepare key information for each department relating to entry profiles, enrolments and withdrawals, attainment and NSS results. A meeting will then be scheduled with each department's learning and teaching leadership team (chaired by the respective Faculty Director of Learning and Teaching) to discuss this further. Key institutional themes, agreed by the Vice President for Education, will also be discussed at each meeting to help ensure strategic alignment.

2.2 EMPLOYABILITY

2.2.1 Careers Service

- Last year focused on development of the University's careers and employability services for students, launching new tools and approaches to enhance student self-awareness, and access to a wider range of digital and online services and resources. With enhanced cross-campus collaboration significant progress was made to optimise the employability and outcomes of all students. Work with academic faculties and departments, across Student Support Services and with other professional services, and close collaboration with the Students' Union, enabled the extension of in-curricula and extracurricular employability activity.
- The four priorities for 2021/22 are:
 - Embedding the Sheffield Graduate Attributes - Working to embed awareness of the updated Graduate Attributes in academic programmes and extracurricular experiences.
 - Integrating use of mySkills - Delivery of the Education Strategy Delivery Plan goal to 'Embed mySkills within academic programmes, using this as the lever to reflect on skills development across years and with an emphasis on how the University is preparing students for life beyond university'. The Careers Service is now working with increasing numbers of academic departments to extend and embed the use of the mySkills personal development portfolio tool.
 - Enhancing Placements & Work-related Learning - Working with colleagues to democratise access to year-long work placements and further opportunities for work-related learning experiences, whilst minimising the administrative burden on staff.
 - Supporting Graduate Transitions - Continuing to develop careers and employability information, advice, services and resources for students at all stages, to enable and optimise their successful transitions as graduates.
- Provision continues to be hybrid. Students can book in-person or online careers guidance appointments and Careers-led workshops or webinars, with evidence suggesting a 50:50 split in student preferences.
- However, employer events and careers fairs remain almost exclusively virtual. The University would welcome employers back onto campus but many recruiters show no inclination to return in person, and most have suffered budget cuts which make it more difficult to justify the expenses involved. The concern is that far fewer students engage with online careers fairs and that there may be a detrimental impact on the diversity of student engagement and graduate recruitment. This is a national, sector-wide concern which the University and other universities are raising with employers.

3. RESEARCH

3.1 RESEARCH EXCELLENCE

3.1.1 Research Awards

- See section 6, Finance, below.

3.1.2 Research Development

- As reported above (see section 1.1), the current doubt cast over UK association with Horizon Europe is causing anxiety among the research community. Failure

to associate would preclude participation in 'Pillar 1, Excellent Science' schemes, including significant academic fellowship schemes and networks which enable mobility for PGR students. Across the Russell Group, these schemes account for 50%+ of applications. The Government's alternative is a national replacement scheme, but Horizon Europe represents a chance to collaborate widely with other excellent scientists across the EU and this aspect would be unlikely to be replaced by any national scheme. The University continues to promote Horizon Europe to its researchers and encourages them to apply.

- The University has launched its Yorkshire Cancer Research funding schemes relating to Yorkshire Cancer Research's share of royalty income from Lynparza. Governance is in place to ensure high quality applications in strategic areas.
- The sector continues to work through JISC to renegotiate its 'deal' with Elsevier which currently costs UK institutions £50 million p.a. (It is the University's largest deal, of c. £800K p.a. for access to journal content, plus additional charges to make individual articles immediately openly accessible). The most recent offer from Elsevier has been soundly rejected across all mission groups (94%). Versions of this negotiation have already taken place in other EU countries and with large institutions in the US. The sector may need to walk away for a period if negotiations stall; the Library continues to engage with faculties and departments and to work with the N8 & Russell Group to ensure the University is able to limit disruption as far as is possible.

3.1.3 Postgraduate research

- The Engineering and Physical Sciences and Economic and Social Research Councils have published reviews of doctoral education. Their commitment remains strong and there are encouraging indications about funding students for longer periods of time. There is also a greater focus on employability skills. UKRI is starting a project, 'new deal for postgraduate research', which is welcome. Whilst UKRI funds 20-30% of PGRs in the sector, to some extent its policies drive behaviour and policy in other HEIs and funders. UCU is currently [campaigning](#) for PGRs to be given comparable benefits to university staff. The University has a strong track record for the wider benefits offered to its own funded students; the University plans to review its total support package as part of the strategy delivery plan for research, to contribute to its aim of being the institution of choice for the best PGR students.

3.1.4 Knowledge Exchange

- Research England has confirmed that the University will again receive the maximum HEIF (Higher Education Innovation Fund) allocation for 2021/22 of £4,785k, which will be central to achieving the University's plans to drive innovation through knowledge exchange and deliver against the stated priorities under the Innovation pillar of the University's 5-year vision.
- A response mode call is now open to allocate up to £400k of HEIF funding to support KE activity across the University, with delivery of University, Faculty or Flagship priorities a key criterion. Allocations will be made in late November by a cross-faculty panel chaired by the VP Innovation.
- The University, which has had a strategic partnership with Siemens plc since 2012, has been invited to become a strategic partner university in the Siemens Research and Innovation Ecosystem Northern Arc. The new strategic university engagement programme will pave the way for continued and greater success in their engagement with external partners.

4. INNOVATION

4.1 INNOVATION IMPACT

4.1.1 Success and Achievement

- On 9 November, the University and ITM Power announced a new pioneering collaboration to advance the hydrogen sector in the UK. The proposed collaboration includes an agreement in principle for a new ITM Power Gigafactory to be built at the University of Sheffield Innovation District. ITM Power and the University have also agreed to work together to jointly plan and fund a National Hydrogen Research Innovation and Skills centre, which will undertake research into the safe and efficient manufacture of hydrogen using low or zero carbon sources of energy.

The University has agreed non-binding Heads of Terms for ITM to acquire a substantial site at the University of Sheffield Innovation District. The acquisition is subject to the grant of full planning permission for the new factory and final approval by the Board of ITM Power and Council.

The University's long-term strategy is to attract high quality industrial partners to the Innovation District, sited alongside state of the art translational research facilities. Attracting ITM Power to build a Gigafactory and to jointly develop a research, innovation and skills centre there is an important step. ITM Power is the world leading manufacturer of catalysers for the production of green hydrogen and a South Yorkshire company of global significance.

- Rolls Royce and the UK Government announced funding for the UK Small Modular Reactor programme on 9 November in an event at the University's Nuclear AMRC. The Nuclear AMRC will work with Rolls-Royce SMR to develop the manufacturing capability for a variety of advanced processes, using the state-of-the-art machining, joining and testing facilities at its research factory in Rotherham. The centre will also support the design of a new UK factory for large SMR components.
- The University organised an event at the Conservative Party Conference in Manchester to discuss what needs to be done in order for the aviation sector to achieve net zero carbon emissions, which was extremely well received.
- The University has developed a host of innovative communications content and events to promote its pioneering research to help mitigate the climate crisis in line with the COP26 conference. The content, including blogs from Grantham Scholars and a digital feature raising the profile of the Institutes for Sustainable Food, Energy and the AMRC, has led to substantial media coverage both locally and nationally.
- Sue Hartley, Vice-President for Research at the University of Sheffield was awarded an Honorary Membership from the British Ecological Society for her exceptional international contributions to the generation, communication and promotion of ecological knowledge and solutions.
- In the build-up to COP26, the University received national media coverage for its decision to switch from single-use plastics to milk churns in its cafes –which could reduce the university's plastic waste by over 87,000 bottles a year.
- Almost 100 years after penicillin was first used as a therapy at the University, researchers have discovered a new insight and understanding into how β -lactam antibiotics, including penicillin, kill bacteria. The findings could be crucial in trying to find a way to treat antibiotic-resistant super bugs.

- University researchers received national media coverage for using a new x-ray method to discover the structure of potentially harmful substances within the remains of the Mary Rose, which will help to conserve it for future generations.

4.2 SHEFFIELD CITY REGION

4.2.1 Public and Regional Engagement

- In November, the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) nationally funded Festival of Social Science took place. The University has participated in the festival since 2013 and this year's event saw 23 events delivered online for a general public audience. Seven events were COP26 related and all content can be viewed via the University's own player website ([Understanding Society: A Festival of Social Science 2021 | The University of Sheffield Player](#)).
- The University has recently hosted a number of events alongside city partners with thousands of members of the public interacting with performers and activities. These include:
 - Off the Shelf festival of words - the 30th edition - which featured 45 live events including sell-out events such as Miriam Margolyes, Lady Hale and Simon Armitage as well as 20 online events and three weekends of activities in the city centre, including Celebrating 70 years of the Peak District.
 - The University was also involved with Sheffield Theatres on the production and delivery of a welcome event for [Little Amal](#); the 3.5m puppet of a 10-year old refugee girl who has travelled from the Syria/Turkey border to Manchester.
- The University was a partner in the successful Levelling Up bid from Sheffield City Council for Castlegate, with Partnerships and Regional Engagement (PRE) contributing funds and time to support the Council in producing the bid in six weeks. This, alongside the previous Future High Street Fund award for Fargate, demonstrates how the PRE team has leveraged an additional £36 million of Government funding for the City with cultural assets at the centre of the regeneration.

4.2.2 Post-Covid recovery

- The report into the post-pandemic impact on South Yorkshire's cultural sector, funded through the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) UK Research and Innovation Covid-19 Rapid Response Fund, has leveraged an additional £1 million of support with £280,000 of this coming to Sheffield. This will be used to benefit the freelancer's fund, previously established through the Sheffield Culture Consortium and both Universities, and to leverage a further £120,000 of sector specific funding (e.g. film, music, publishing and theatre). The University, via Off the Shelf, will help deliver the funding for publishing and writers.

5. ONE UNIVERSITY

5.1 SENIOR STAFF RECRUITMENT AND KEY APPOINTMENTS

- Odgers Berndston have been appointed as executive search agents, working with the University to recruit a new Executive Director of Corporate Services. It is anticipated that recruitment will begin for this role in early November 2021. Recruitment to other roles at UEB is being progressed.

5.2 STAFF WELLBEING

- As previously reported, following delays due to the pandemic, a range of policy changes have been introduced at the start of the new Academic year to provide

a greater level of support to staff with caring responsibilities. The changes include:

- An extension of the right to request flexible working to all staff from the first day of their employment (previously staff were required to work for six months before making a request) in advance of an anticipated legislative change by the UK government.
- A new policy allowing for time off for fertility treatment for staff.
- A new policy providing compassionate leave in cases of child bereavement.
- A new policy providing emergency leave for staff with caring responsibilities.
- Support for staff and their families in relation to menopause including a partnership with Peppy Health (the first University to do so).
- To complement these policy changes the University has extended its partnership with Peppy Health to provide additional support via the Peppy app. Following the successful launch of menopause support earlier this year, staff are also now able to access expert practitioners to provide personal and professional expert advice and mental health support, in the following areas:
 - Peppy Fertility to support anyone considering having a child, trying to conceive, undergoing fertility treatment and dealing with loss.
 - Peppy Baby to support anyone during pregnancy, adoption, fostering and surrogacy as well as early parenthood.

5.3 DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

5.3.1 Disability Inclusion Strategy

- A Disability Inclusion Strategy Action Plan for staff and students was approved by the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee on 21 October 2021. Work to develop a Disability Equality Strategy Action Plan for the University began in January 2020, with the creation of a Task and Finish Group to collate and scope out ideas and actions to progress disability inclusion across the institution. These ideas were presented to staff and students as part of an extensive consultation exercise that ran from January 21 - April 2021 (due to complexities surrounding Covid restrictions and exam timetables the staff and student consultations ran concurrently).
- Based on the results of the consultation, the Strategy and Action Plan aims to bring about transformational change across the University community to ensure that the University's disabled students and staff are fully supported to flourish and meet their full potential and are grouped under the following headings:
 - Create an equitable, inclusive and open culture that facilitates belonging and promotes respect for disabled staff, students and wider community.
 - Maintain and develop accessible flexible teaching, learning and assessment to best support disabled students academic experiences'.
 - Create an accessible campus through improved physical and digital space to all staff, students and visitors.
 - Provide a clear pathway of equitable support for disabled students.
 - Attract and retain disabled staff, supporting their personal development and career progression.
- A Strategy Delivery Group is being convened to take forward the actions contained within the Strategy Action Plan. It will include representation from staff and students through the Disabled Students Committee and the Disability Staff Network, both of which have a representative on the group. The strategy is intended to be a dynamic document and will be reviewed and amended as work in this area progresses.

5.4 PHILANTHROPY

5.4.1 Alumni Volunteering

- The figures below are as of 25 October 2021:

	2021/22*	2021/22 Target	2020/21	2019/20
Volunteers	56	1000	1,115	863
Volunteer hours	235	12,000	12,597	8,985
Philanthropic prospects engaged in volunteering	25 (45%)	15%	146 (13%)	127 (15%)
Donors engaged in volunteering	14 (25%)	20%	223 (20%)	133 (16%)
Student beneficiaries	121**	7000	6,500**	4,500+

*** Recorded student attendance on events and programmes. Activity across the University is captured where known but this is likely to be an underestimate. The number of students who have accessed online content (e.g. recorded webinars) is not included in figures of student beneficiaries either.*

- The 2021 Boardroom series has been successfully delivered and received excellent feedback from participants and alumni. 23 global alumni speakers delivered leadership workshops for 30 2021 graduates. All session recordings can now be viewed at <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/alumni/boardroom-masterclass/speakers-2021>
- The series of Coach Cafe programmes is underway with events for Arts and Humanities, Social Sciences and Law students taking place in November. Each event will host 25-30 alumni 'coaches' and up to 125 current students. Alumni will share their insights in small groups, followed by an informal online networking session. Details here: <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/alumni/coach-cafe/student>
- The e-Mentoring autumn scheme now has 234 students matched to an equal number of alumni mentors for one to one advice.

5.5 ACADEMIC AND STRATEGIC PLANNING

5.5.1 Annual Planning Cycle

- The 2021/22 Planning Cycle was launched at the start of October with discussions held at UEB and at the weekly briefing with Heads of Departments. This year faculties and departments will set Five-Year Plans that clarify priorities and any areas that require improvement over the strategic period. Faculties will work closely with academic departments to agree Strategic Framework Metric targets for each department that support the realisation of the University's KPIs.
- The launch has been followed up with meetings between the DVC and Faculty Vice Presidents to ensure alignment of plans and discussion of priorities, and two training sessions on the academic department Planning Cycle process and updates to the Strategic Framework that were attended by over 100 attendees each.
- Further sessions are planned in November to ensure Heads of Departments are aware of the Student Population principles that have been agreed, to inform student intake target setting, and are progressing the development of five year plans using best practice examples that have been provided from across the university.

5.5.2 Strategic Projects - Technology Enabled Strategic Framework Progress

- Key areas of success are:
 - Phases 0, 1, 2 are essentially complete apart from some large pieces of work that are ongoing.
 - Phase 3 is progressing delivering value very well with some key changes to roadmaps within existing budget projections.
 - Roadmap planning with UEB sponsors for Phase 4 and beyond is due to take place ahead of the January meeting of the UEB IT Sub-Group.
- The Education product area has delivered the following value in the last 3 months ready for the start of term:
 - Supported the interim Deputy VP for Education and worked with Professional Services colleagues to agree actions and guidance as the remote start and international study position was confirmed.
 - Completed re-imaging of all pool student computers and in teaching spaces, cleaned student computers and reset rooms back to full capacity (following the removal of social distancing).
 - Replaced all student computers in IC open access areas.
 - Set up a new remote desktop service.
 - Set up a new process for live streaming of Encore (lecture capture) recordings automatically.
 - Increased the provisioning of cameras to capture chalk and talk activity in teaching spaces.
 - Completed allocation of rooms for semester 1 teaching (which process was re-started following the removal of social distancing) and made many thousands of adjustments to timetables for staff.
 - Reviewed University Connect for China to anticipate headroom for increased usage in early 2021/22.
- The Research Product Team have delivered the following value across their key priority areas:

Research support:

- The University received a total of 45 support requests (via Topdesk), and 30 were resolved. Plus 39 support emails and 11 consultations.
- 132 attendees for short courses across a number of programming and Linux topics.
- 146 people pass the High Performance Computing driving test intended to ensure that users have a basic level of understanding of how to work with HPC platforms.

Research platforms:

- Graphics Processing Unit Cluster - all equipment now on site @ AQL data centre. Installation due to start in November 2021.
- Plan for Multi Factor Authentication on all HPCs is in place

Data Safe Haven:

- Team lead has been recruited.
- Ronin scheduled to be installed on AWS in October
- LabCollector ELN is now a live service

Supporting the Research Lifecycle:

- IT Services have identified 2 projects where, in collaboration with the Library and Research Services, better services across the research lifecycle can be provided.
- More broadly, the University has been supporting staff and students in the return to campus and in particular in the rollout of hybrid working equipment and technology:
 - IT Services have answered 3251 calls in September – resolving the vast majority of these within the time SLA.
 - The University has completed 7707 Service requests this month – supporting teaching, learning, support and research.
- In information security the University has now completed the rollout of MFA to all of its staff and students (securing 59,723 accounts). The University has also rolled out its new 24/7 Security Operations Centre (SOC) to provide continually monitoring of threats with the InfoSec landscape at the University.

6. FINANCE

6.1 RESEARCH

6.1.1 Research Awards

- The total value of new awards for the last 12 months to the end of September 2021 now stands at £206m. This is an increase of £44m (27%) on September 2020.
- There has been a rise in the total number of awards opened. For the last 12 months to the end of September 2021, the number of new awards opened stood at 1123 compared to 783 as at September 2020. The biggest increase in numbers of awards are (184) from the UK Government funding category, whilst the number of RCUK awards has increased by 96. There are an additional 139 Catapult projects included in the September 2021 UK Government awards compared to September 2020.
- The value of new awards for the 12 months to September 2021 has seen increases across all funder categories apart from the EU framework, which has fallen by £3m. The biggest increases were in the value of RCUK and UK Government awards which increased by £17m and £25m respectively.
- There has been 1 new award for over £1m in the month since the last report, this was £3.5m from Sheffield Region LEP awarded to the Faculty of Engineering.
- The value of the Research Net Contribution is £51.8m for the 12 months to September 2021 compared to £39m for the 12 months to September 2020 an increase of £12m (32%).
- As at September 2021, research grants work in progress (research order book) which excludes capital projects, stands at £364m which is an increase of £49m on the work in progress figure of £315m recorded in September 2020. All faculties have a higher W.I.P. as at September 2021 compared with 12 months ago.

7. LEGAL AND REGULATORY MATTERS

7.1 REPORTABLE EVENTS

- The OfS has recently-published new reportable events guidance which applies from 1 January 2022, which updates the guidelines following a consultation and restores the requirements which were temporarily suspended during the pandemic.

- Since the previous report the following has been reported to the Office for Students (OfS) as a 'reportable event':
 - 39 students were omitted from the 2019-20 individualised student HESA return and an error summary has been submitted to the OfS data amendment panel for consideration, following HESA and OfS standard procedures. The OfS has accepted the University's response with no further queries.

