



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

University
Secretary's
Office.

The Council, 25 April 2022

Report of the Senate

Date: 16 March 2022
Chair: The President & Vice-Chancellor (P&VC)
Secretary: Dr T Strike

FOR INFORMATION

1. President & Vice-Chancellor's report

1.1 The President & Vice-Chancellor (P&VC) presented the report, including:

- (a) Levelling Up White Paper: Government had published a Levelling Up White Paper. At the centre of an approach to tackle regional and local inequalities were 12 national Missions to be achieved by 2030. Mission 2 was focused on R&D funding and aimed for domestic public investment in R&D outside the Greater South East to be increased by at least 40% by 2030, and by at least one third over the Spending Review period. Given changes to overall R&D public funding the impact may be relatively modest.
- (b) Government response to Augar Review: The policy headlines included:
 - (i.) The maximum tuition fees for undergraduate degrees will be frozen, up to and including academic year 2024/25, at £9,250
 - (ii.) For new student loan borrowers from September 2023 onwards the repayment threshold will be £25,000 and the number of years over which repayments are made before any outstanding debt is written off will be 40 years, rather than the current 30 years.
 - (iii.) Government will not be pursuing a policy of post-qualification admissions.

Government also announced it was consulting on:

- (i.) Student Number Controls, with different approaches that could be taken including a basic sector-wide cap on all providers and subjects through to more granular outcome-based judgements about what provision should be capped and at what level.
- (ii.) Minimum eligibility requirements. Government was consulting on the principle and the specific level at which any requirement could be set. The levels suggested were anticipated to have only a marginal impact on the University's student numbers.
- (iii.) Foundation year fees. Government proposed reducing the fees charged for foundation years to align with current Access to HE diploma fees.

The University was examining the proposals and would work with mission groups in responding to the consultation.

- (c) Social Mobility Targets: The Government and Office for Students (OfS) have set new widening access and social mobility targets for universities in England and universities will have to rewrite their Access and Participation Plans. The plans should include ambitious targets for increasing the proportion of student studying degree apprenticeships, higher technical qualifications, or part-time courses. Universities will also be required to reduce drop-out rates and to help local schools and colleges improve education outcomes for disadvantaged students. Written guidance will be published and the University's Access and Participation Plan will be amended accordingly.

- 1.2 Discussion covered the potential consequences of changes to the USS pension scheme to the university's approach to attracting and retaining international academic talent. The University was mindful of the potential consequences and Senate would be informed about any necessary steps that the University might take if this became a significant issue.

2. Russian Sanctions and the Impact of the Conflict in Ukraine

- 2.1 Senate received and noted an update on the current position and actions in relation to Russian sanctions, and the war in Ukraine. The focus of the update was on support for students and staff, UK sanctions compliance, and the longer-term strategic consequences. Senate was updated on the position of students who had been in Russia at the time of the February 2022 invasion of Ukraine. An update is provided to Council in full on its April meeting agenda at item 7.
- 2.2 Discussion focussed on the University's future energy supply, sustainability and support for students and academics fleeing Ukraine or Russia.

3. Research Excellence Framework (REF2021) Update: Communicating our Results

- 3.1 Senate received and noted an update report on plans for communicating REF2021 results. Senate received and noted a presentation updating on REF lessons learnt.

4. National Student Survey 2021 overview

- 4.1 Senate received and noted a report and a presentation on the NSS results, strengths and weaknesses, and the proposed plan of action. During discussion, it was outlined that pandemic had shown how much learning took place beyond the classroom and the significant amount of work had been undertaken during the pandemic with the aim of maintaining student outcomes and satisfaction.

5. Standing Orders Annual Review

- 5.1 Senate considered and amended its Standing Orders to ensure voting would be electronically enabled and anonymous. During discussion, it was asked how Senate might have an input into the shape of the next governance review. Discussions would take place with the University Secretary to find an appropriate place for this item on the Senate Business Plan, in line with the timetable for future reviews.

6. Report of the Council

6.1 Senate received a report on the meeting of Council held on 22 November 2021.

7. Reports of committees

7.1 Committees of Senate

7.1.1 Senate approved the reports of the following committees:

(a) Report of the Research Ethics Committee

(Meeting held on 9 February 2022)

Senate received and noted the Report, including: an update on the on-going review of the Research Ethics Policy; findings of the Research User Journey Project; the annual report of ethics breaches of ethics approval requirements, and other ethics concerns, for the period 01.09.20-31.08.21.

(b) Report of the Senate Academic Assurance Committee

(Meeting held on 8 February 2022)

Senate received and noted the report, including the Committee's discussion of award gaps.

(c) Report of the Senate Learning and Teaching Committee

(Meeting held on 10 February 2022)

- (i) Senate approved changes to Regulation XVI, General Regulations for Higher Degrees, Postgraduate Diplomas and Postgraduate Certificates.
- (ii) Senate approved a revised Policy on Partnership Provision (Taught Programmes).
- (iii) Senate approved a new policy statement regarding oversight of apprenticeship subcontracting arrangements.
- (iv) Senate approved new, significantly amended, and discontinued programmes, and title changes and new exit routes approved by Faculties between 1 November 2021 and 11 February 2022.

Following SLTC Chair's Action, Senate approved:

- (a) The significant amendment to the BA International Relations and Politics programmes.
- (b) A new apprenticeship programme to be offered by the AMRC: "Nuclear Scientist and Nuclear Engineer (integrated degree) apprenticeship incorporating qualification: FDEng and BEng Top up in Nuclear Manufacturing".

(d) Report of the Senate Research and Innovation Committee

(Meeting held on 3 February 2022)

- (i) Senate approved an updated Research and Innovation Committee Terms of Reference.
- (ii) Senate approved an updated Good Research and Innovation Practices (GRIP) policy.
- (iii) Senate approved amendments to Regulation XVI, General Regulations for Higher Degrees by Research.

8. Other Matters

- 8.1 Following a question submitted in advance regarding the report of the UEB Archaeology Implementation Group, Senate was assured it would be consulted if Council were required to make any further decisions in relation to the implementation.