



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

University
Secretary's
Office.

The Council, 11 July 2022

Report of the Senate

Date: 22 June 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) Legislative programme:

- (i.) The Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill contains provisions that will require universities to report on foreign income. Following lobbying from the Russell Group and others, universities will only be required to report on income from certain countries and individual institutional information will not be made public, with a sector-wide summary made public.
- (ii.) A Northern Ireland Protocol Bill has been published which would see the Northern Ireland Protocol unilaterally replaced. The political impact of this on UK-EU relations is anticipated to make UK association to Horizon Europe, increasingly less likely. It was understood that government were working on a Plan B with a consultation to be published before the parliamentary summer recess.

(b) Research Excellence Framework: The REF results were welcomed and demonstrated that the University's research was world-class. It was noted that there had not been criticisms of the process in the way that there had been in previous REF rounds.

(c) Ukraine: The University of Sheffield has pledged over £1 million to support students, scholars and other staff who are seeking sanctuary in the UK or affected by war in their home countries, including Ukraine. The University of Sheffield now has a twin university in Ukraine – Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute (KPI). KPI is one of Ukraine's leading universities and has a specialism in engineering and nuclear research.

1.2 During discussion on Horizon Europe it was noted that where the University would be able to issue guidance to researchers then it would do so, but the headline message at this stage was to continue to apply for funding until informed otherwise. Further to the discussion on the University's energy contract at the March Senate meeting, it was highlighted that company the University's energy contract was with had not been sanctioned by the UK government and legally it would be difficult to break the existing contract. The parent company of the UK-based Gazprom Energy was now owned by the German state.

2. Research Excellence Framework (REF2021) Results

- 2.1 Senate received and noted an update on REF 2021. The paper and presentation provided a snapshot of an initial analysis of the results and some next steps. The institutional outcome was broadly as expected. At the unit level some units had performed very well, with some making significant improvements. There had however, been an unanticipated number of 2* outputs.
- 2.2 Discussion covered sharing feedback with Heads of Departments, the approach to internal calibration, the element of the REF assessment which looked at the quality of the environment to support research and impact, and QR funding.

3. Senate Questionnaire

- 3.1 Senate considered and approved a proposal for a post-pandemic Senate Questionnaire, for members to reflect and give their views, to inform Council regarding possible areas for consideration in the next governance effectiveness review. Senate also approved the appointment of a small group of Senate members to work with the University Secretary's Office on the questionnaire design and administration and for the results to be presented to the October or December meeting of the Senate for Senate to consider, depending on finalisation of the timing.
- 3.2 During discussion it was noted that the use of focus groups might be more appropriate as part of the actual governance effectiveness review, rather than for informing Council of Senate's view. Reframing the questions to ask individuals to evaluate whether they personally understood the role or felt effective would potentially be more beneficial than asking members about their views of Senate as a whole. The small group would consider the work of the Senate Committees as well as the meetings of Senate itself.

4. Report of the Council

- 4.1 Senate received a report on the meeting of Council held on 21 February, 25 April and 7 June 2022.

5. Reports of committees

5.1 Committees of Senate

- 5.1.1 Senate approved the reports of the following committees:

- (a) Report of the Research Ethics Committee
(Meeting held on 4 May 2022)

Senate received and noted the Report, including: an update on the on-going review of the Research Ethics Policy; workload allocations for UREC members, reports of recent monitoring visits to two departments, and potential breaches of the Ethics Policy.

- (b) Report of the Senate Academic Assurance Committee
(Meeting held on 8 June 2022)

Senate received and noted the report, including the Committee's assurance deliberations and its level of assurance in relation to REF 2021 Outcomes and in relation to Assessments.

(c) Report of the Senate Learning and Teaching Committee

(Meeting held on 19 May 2022)

- (i) Senate approved new, significantly amended, and discontinued programmes, and title changes and new exit routes approved by Faculties between 13 February 2022 and 10 May 2022
- (ii) Senate approved changes to Regulation XXII Regulations relating to the Discipline of Students.
- (iii) Senate approved revisions to the Policy for Late Submission of Assessed Work.

Discussion focused on proposals in relation to degree programmes in the School of Languages and Cultures, which had originated in the School, with appropriate student input, and were then scrutinised at Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee before being recommended to Senate Learning and Teaching Committee. It was confirmed that changes in the Languages Project did not require oversight by Senate or Council. Clarifications were provided regarding the revisions to the Policy for Late Submission of Assessed Work.

(d) Report of the Senate Nominations Committee

(Meeting held on 9 June 2022)

Senate received and approved the report, including approval of the appointment and reappointment of Senate representatives on University committees.

(e) Report of the Senate Research and Innovation Committee

(Meeting held on 25 May 2022)

- (i) Senate approved amendments to Regulation XXIII, Regulations relating to Intellectual Property.