



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

University
Secretary's
Office.

Minutes Meeting of the Senate

Date: 22 June 2022

Present: The President & Vice-Chancellor in the Chair
L Abnett, Professor W Baird, Dr R Bellaby, Professor S Bhaumik, Professor R Blakeley, Professor G Brown, Professor C Buck, Dr J Burr, A Cantrell, A Clements, E Croxford, Professor H Dobson, Professor R Finn, Professor S Fitzmaurice, Professor A Fleming, Professor J Flint, Professor D Forrest, Dr J Forstenzer, Professor G Gee, Dr S Hale, Dr V Halliday, S Hanson, Professor S Hartley, Professor J Hodson, Professor R Horn, Professor N Hughes, M Jones, Professor J Kirby, Dr W Kitchen, Dr C Majewski, Dr M Malek, Professor M Marshall, Professor T Moore, Dr S D North, Professor A Pacey, Dr S Pukallus, Dr B Purvis, R Simpson, Professor R Timmers, R Tomlinson, Dr D Vessey, Professor M Vincent, Dr T Walther, Professor L Wilson.

Secretary: Dr T Strike

In attendance: M Borland, K Clements, A Davison, L Hand, A Romaine, Dr E Smith, M Stannard, L Wild.

Apologies: The Senate received apologies from 31 members.

Welcome

The President & Vice-Chancellor (P&VC) welcomed members to the meeting.

1. President & Vice-Chancellor's Report

The President & Vice-Chancellor (P&VC) presented the report and provided updates:

(a) Legislative programme:

- (i.) The Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill contained 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 had a specialism in engineering and nuclear research.

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 the company the University's energy contract was with had not been sanctioned by the UK government and legally it would be difficult to exit the existing contract. The parent company of the UK-based Gazprom Energy was now owned by the German state.

2. Declaration of Conflict of Interests

No conflicts of interest were declared.

3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 16 March 2022

The Minutes of the meeting held on 16 March 2022, having been circulated, were approved as an accurate record, subject to the inclusion of an additional sentence in the Minute for item 9, Standing Orders Annual Review, to show it was agreed that only members of the Senate present at a meeting should be entitled to participate in any vote.

4. Matters Arising on the Minutes

There were no other matters arising on the Minutes that were not covered elsewhere on the Agenda.

5. Matters Requiring Approval

Senate received and noted a summary of the matters for which Senate's formal approval was sought.

6. REF Results

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.

During discussion it was clarified that individual departmental feedback would be shared with the Head of Department. The appropriate level of caution in relation to internal calibration was also discussed. It was believed that the element of the REF assessment which looked at the quality of the environment to support research and impact would be a part of future assessments. The implications of the REF for research funding were not yet known.

7. Senate Questionnaire

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. The small group of Senate members would comprise: a Chair, who would be a member of UEB on Senate and appointed by the Chair of Senate; one of the three members of Senate who had sponsored the Senate Questionnaire paper; a third member of Senate. Members of Senate were invited to contact the University Secretary to express an interest in serving on the Group.

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 their 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.

REPORTS FROM STATUTORY BODIES

8. Report on the Proceedings of the Council

(Meeting held on 21 February, 25 April and 7 June 2022)

Senate received and noted the Report on the Proceedings of the Council.

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES OF THE SENATE

9. 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.

During discussion it was clarified that the role of the faculty representatives on the Committee included liaising with departments. It was agreed that the estimated workload allocations for the Chair and Deputy Chair be referred to the Workload Allocation Group for consistency, and the University Secretary would update the Chair of Research Ethics Committee.

10. 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.

11. Report of the Senate Learning and Teaching Committee

(Meeting held on 19 May 2022)

Senate received the Report and approved the following:

- (a) New, significantly amended, and discontinued programmes, and title changes and new exit routes approved by Faculties between 13 February 2022 and 10 May 2022
- (b) Changes to Regulation XXII Regulations relating to the Discipline of Students.
- (c) Revisions to the Policy for Late Submission of Assessed Work.

In response to a submitted question on proposals in relation to degree programmes in the School of Languages and Cultures, it was outlined that the proposals originated in the School, with appropriate student input, and were then scrutinised at Faculty LTC before being recommended to SLTC. In response to a submitted question regarding why phase 1 and phase 2 of the Languages at Sheffield Project had not been brought for discussion at Senate. It was confirmed that changes in the Languages Project did not require oversight by Senate or Council as the changes related to the internal organisation of the departments.

In response to a question submitted in advance regarding the proposed revisions to the Policy for Late Submission of Assessed Work and specifically on consultation on its application to online examinations completed within a specific timeframe, it was highlighted that the revised policy had been discussed at length at Quality and Scrutiny Sub-Committee and adjustments made following feedback from department representatives. In response to a further submitted question it was confirmed that there were currently no plans to offer pro-rata extensions on late submission periods for students with learning support plans.

12. 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.

13. Report of the Senate Research and Innovation Committee

(Including meeting held on 25 May 2022)

Senate received the Report and approved:

(a) Amendments to Regulation XXIII, Regulations relating to Intellectual Property.

Attention was drawn to the Report of the Open Access Advisory Group, an update from the University PGR Committee, and an update from the University Early Career Researcher Committee.

REPORTS FROM JOINT COMMITTEES OF THE SENATE AND COUNCIL

14. Report of the Honorary Degrees Committee

(Meeting held on 21 March 2022)

Senate received and noted the report.

OTHER MATTERS

15. Returning Officer's Report

Senate received and noted the report. In response to a question submitted in advance it was stated that the University Secretary monitored the turnout figures, and the number of nominations, and whether places on Senate were contested. The trends were positive compared to the period prior to the Senate reforms. In future, turnout figures could be published as part of the Returning Officer's report to Senate.

16. Programme Approvals

Senate received and noted the report.

17. Report on Action Taken

Senate received and noted the report.

18. Major Research Grants and Contracts

A Report listing major research grants and contracts awarded since the last meeting of the Senate was received and noted.

19. Any Other Business

The accessibility of the meeting room was raised and it was noted that there was lift access. Alternative meeting room options would be explored for the 2022-23 year.

The Chair thanked those members of Senate for whom this was their last Senate meeting, including Heads of Department, members who had come to the end of their term and student representatives. Thanks were given to Professor Dave Petley, Vice-President for Innovation, who will be leaving the University on 31 August 2022. Dr Tony Strike, who will be retiring from his role as University Secretary at the end of September, was thanked.