



Minutes Meeting of the Senate

Date: 12 October 2022

Present: The President & Vice-Chancellor in the Chair

Professor S Beck, Professor S Bhaumik, Dr B Birdi, Professor R Blakeley, Professor A Blom, Professor G Brown, Professor C Buck, Dr J Burr, Professor M Carre, Revd Dr J Clines, Professor J Cordiner, Professor C Deery, Professor J Derrick, Professor R Finn, Professor S Fitzmaurice, Professor J Flint, Dr J Forstenzer, Professor G Gee, Professor M Gilbert, Professor V Gillet, Dr S Hale, Dr V Halliday, Professor S Hartley, Professor J Hodson, Professor N Hughes, Professor P Hatton, M Jones, N Jones, Dr W Kitchen, Professor R Lawthom, Dr C Majewski, Dr S Marsh, Professor Matthew Marshall, Professor Michelle Marshall, Professor M Mayfield, Professor S McIntosh, Professor C Miller, Professor E Milne, Professor D Mowbray, Professor C Nic Dháibhéid, Dr S D North, Professor J Oakley, Professor D Robinson, Professor L Robson, A Romaine, Professor S Rushton, Dr R Simpson, Professor M Strong, R Sykes, Professor C H Tan, Professor A Tiwari, Professor G Valentine, Dr D Vessey, Professor M T Vincent, Dr N Walkinshaw, Professor C Watkins, Professor L Wilson.

Secretary: J Strachan (Interim)

In attendance: M Borland, K Clements, A Colley, B Cook, A Davison, A Grigson, I James, Dr E Smith.

Apologies: The Senate received apologies from 21 members.

Welcome

The President & Vice-Chancellor (P&VC) welcomed members to the meeting, including the new interim University Secretary, Jeannette Strachan.

1. President & Vice-Chancellor's Report

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

- (a) **Truss Government:** It was thought to be unlikely that HE policy will be a high priority for this government. Liz Truss could face early challenges to her leadership and difficulty in implementing her policy programme. The Department for Education's focus was anticipated to be on poor quality degree courses, graduate outcomes, and vocational training. There was thought to be a risk to research funding and the

Government's target to increase total Research & Development investment to 2.4% of GDP by 2027.

- (b) **Undergraduate Admissions:** The University anticipated it would finish the 2022 recruitment cycle above target for both home and international undergraduate students. The University had seen increased diversity with higher numbers of home students from underrepresented backgrounds through its contextual admissions policy and an increase in international students from a range of countries. UG recruitment has benefitted from a range of measures this year, including a city campaign in collaboration with Sheffield Hallam University and Sheffield City Council. Colleagues across the institution were thanked for their work in developing the UG offer and moving the University towards its student population aims.

In response to a question regarding reports from students that some lectures had been overcrowded and whether full capacity was assumed for lectures, it was clarified that University shared the Student Union's aspiration that the experience of a first lecture at Sheffield should be as accessible and welcoming as possible. Lecture theatres were booked on the basis of full student attendance. There could be issues at the start of the academic year and members were encouraged to report any instances to the Vice President for Education. With regard to the impact of increased recruitment on the student accommodation there were no known issues with 100% of UG students accommodated in Sheffield.

2. Declaration of Conflict of Interests

No conflicts of interest were declared.

3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 22 June 2022

The Minutes of the meeting held on 22 June 2022, having been circulated, were approved as an accurate record.

4. Matters Arising on the Minutes

There were four other matters arising on the Minutes that were not covered elsewhere on the Agenda:

- (a) **Item 3, Minutes of the Meeting held on 16 March 2022:** The additional sentence as agreed by Senate had been added to the Minutes, which have now been published on the Senate webpage.
- (b) **Item 7, Senate Questionnaire:** The Senate Questionnaire Small Group was being established. It will be chaired by the Vice President for Education and will meet to work on the questionnaire design and administration, issue the questionnaire to members of Senate, and then present the results to Senate.
- (c) **Item 9, Report of the Senate University Research Ethics Committee:** In relation to the action that the estimated workload allocations for the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Committee be referred to the Workload Allocation Group for consistency, the action is in hand and further correspondence will be sent to the Chair of the Committee from the University Secretary's Office.

- (d) **Item 19, AOB – Alternative meeting room options:** Three written questions had been received regarding the venue for Senate meetings. Alternative venues considered were the Diamond and the Mappin Workrooms, however neither of these rooms were available at the times required by Senate and did not meet all of the venue criteria for a Senate meeting. The lift access route to Lecture Theatre F02 in Firth Court would be made clearer to members of Senate when the papers for future meetings were sent out. Any suggestions for more appropriate venues should be made to the University Secretary.

5. Matters Requiring Approval

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

6. Review of Student Protection Plan, 2022

Senate considered an updated version of the University's Student Protection Plan and approved its submission to the Office for Students for their approval and subsequent publication.

During discussion it was clarified that the inclusion of the section on industrial action had been included following discussions the University had with the OfS.

7. Senate Annual Academic Assurance Report

Senate considered the Annual Academic Assurance Report 2021/22 and agreed that it be submitted for consideration and approval at Council's meeting on 21 November 2022. It was noted that a Joint Sub-Group of Council and Senate will be convened in the intervening period (on 31 October 2022) to discuss the report. Attention was drawn to the background to the report; the top level message; the shape of the work undertaken by the Senate Academic Assurance Committee, and the response to previous feedback from Council.

REPORTS FROM STATUTORY BODIES

8. Report on the Proceedings of the Council (Meeting held on 11 July 2022)

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

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES OF THE SENATE

9. Report of the Senate Academic Assurance Committee (Meeting held on 20 September 2022)

Senate received the report and approved the Committee's updated Terms of Reference and Membership for 2022-23. Senate noted the six themes the Committee planned to examine or revisit, for assurance across the 2022-23 academic year.

During discussion it was clarified that in relation to the PGR Submission Rates theme of the Business Plan for 2022-23 and specifically University support for PGR students, the Committee would take a rounded view of support and consider student wellbeing. With regard to the Unfair Means theme and the specific reference to international students, it was agreed that reference to specific student groups in this theme would be removed.

10. Report of the Senate Learning and Teaching Committee

(Business conducted by correspondence)

Senate received the Report and approved the following:

- (a) That the Senate Learning and Teaching Committee (SLTC) be renamed as the Senate Education Committee (SEC).
- (b) In relation to Assessment Regulations: Degree Algorithms, that Senate agrees in principle:
 - (i) Calculation 2 is removed from the General Regulations for First Degrees and degree awards therefore based on a single algorithm.
 - (ii) Existing borderline rules are replaced within the General Regulations for First Degrees.
 - (iii) Exemptions relating to award calculation within programme regulations are removed, other than where these meet pre-agreed criteria for exemption.
- (c) The new, significantly amended, and discontinued programmes, and title changes and new exit routes recommended by Faculties between 11 May 2022 and 9 September 2022.

During discussion, the historic background to the current approach was provided. It was believed to be a consequence of a change over 25 years ago from different parts of the University using a median or a mean approach to classifications to the current system. It was clarified that the proposed 'big bang' approach to implementation in 2023-24 would avoid potential confusion from running two systems simultaneously that a phased implementation would require. It was not expected that any student would be disadvantaged by the proposals and the aim would be to make it as easy as possible for any student that felt disadvantaged by the approach to appeal. Regarding student consultation, the University must consult with every student and it would be important that the consultation was understandable to enable students to engage fully with it. Disaggregated data on the potential impact on student groups would be provided to departments. In relation to borderline rules the timescales that would apply would be made clearer.

11. Report from the Chair of the Senate Research and Innovation Committee

Senate received and noted the report including, the University will match the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) uplift for the PGR stipends that it funds; a roadmap for future REF preparations; an update on a Knowledge Exchange support service design project; and a new unified Intellectual Property policy would be proposed to Senate in December 2022.

It was clarified during discussion in relation to calibration that the ultimate aim was to make the REF stocktake more accurate.

12. Report of the Senate University Research Ethics Committee
(Meeting held on 14 September 2022)

Senate received the report and approved the following:

- (a) The revised Ethics Policy Governing Research Involving Human Participants, Personal Data and Human Tissue.

During discussion it was suggested and agreed that not naming specific mandatory training in the policy would save having to update the policy if there were changes to the mandatory training in the future. It was clarified that it would be difficult to combine the two step process of a scientific review and ethics review as it is difficult to conduct an ethics review without a scientific review having taken place.

13. Report of the Senate Nominations Committee
(Business conducted by Chair's action)

Senate received and approved the report, including approval of the following appointments to the Senate Learning and Teaching Committee:

- (a) That Professor Elizabeth Milne (Psychology) be appointed for the period 2022-25.
- (b) That Professor Steven McIntosh (Economics) be appointed for the period 2022-25.

OTHER MATTERS

14. Provisional Senate Business Schedule 2022-23

Senate received and noted the report.

15. Returning Officer's Report

Senate received and noted the report.

16. Annual Report of the Military Education Committee

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

There was no other business.