



Minutes Meeting of the Senate

Date: 20 March 2024

Present: The President & Vice-Chancellor in the Chair

Professor P Bath, Professor S Bhaumik, Dr B Birdi, Professor R Blakeley, Professor A Blom, Professor L Brooks, Professor C Buck, Professor C Burns, Dr J Burr, L Byrne, Professor M Carre, A Clements, Dr C Codina, Dr T Cooper, Professor L Cross, Professor M Dickman, Professor S Fitzmaurice, Professor A Fleming, Professor J Flint, Professor G Gee, Professor M Gilbert, Dr L Gray, Dr S Hale, Dr V Halliday, Professor R Hand, Professor S Hartley, Professor P Hatton, T Hodgson, Professor J Hodson, Professor G Jewell, M Jones, N Jones, Professor J Kirby, Professor R Kirkham, Professor W Kitchen, Professor D Lambert, Professor R Lawthom, M Lourido Moreno, Dr S Marsh, Professor M Marshall, C Martin, Professor M Mayfield, Professor C Miller, Professor T Moore, Professor N Morley, Professor D Mowbray, N Musa, Dr C Nic Dháibhéid, Dr S D North, Professor C Ó Brádaigh, Professor J Oakley, Professor G Panoutsos, Dr L Preston, Professor L Robson, T Rocha, Professor S Rushton, H Sadiq, Dr R Simpson, Professor M Strong, N Stubbs, R Sykes, Professor K Taylor-Jones, Professor M T Vincent, Dr N Walkinshaw, Professor C Watkins, C Williams, Professor L Wilson, Professor H Woolley.

Secretary: J Strachan

In attendance: S Callan, A Carlile, K Clements, A Colley, A Davison, Dr E Smith, K Sullivan.

Apologies: The Senate received apologies from 12 members.

Welcome

The President & Vice-Chancellor (P&VC) welcomed members to the meeting. There were 2 new members of Senate. Al Carlile was in attendance for item 4, Final Structural Proposals and for item 7, QS Ranking Progress.

Members of Senate were reminded of the purpose of Senate. The statutes were clear that Senate, subject to the Statutes and the control and approval of Council, oversaw the teaching and research of the University and admission and regulation of students. The remit of Senate was teaching, research, admissions and regulations.

1. Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

- 1.1 It was recognised that there would be a number of actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest arising from item 4, below, and, while individual members were invited to declare any such conflict if they wished, the Chair acknowledged the matter as potentially affecting

all staff and student members of Senate. It was agreed that all members could participate in the discussions and decision making process.

1.2 No further conflicts were declared.

1.3 Pre-Submitted Questions

1.3.1 It was highlighted that nine questions had been submitted in advance of the meeting, which would be covered under the relevant items.

1.3.2 One of the questions related to the legal advice shared with Senate at the last meeting, which had since been shared with members by email. This question would be responded to at the end of the meeting under Other Business.

1.3.3 Four of the questions related to sharing with Senate the advice from Senate to Council on the Final Structural Proposals, as discussed at the last Senate meeting. In addition to these, several emails were received in response to the recent email to Senators relating to the same matter. Some had been responded to directly, where that was appropriate; the remaining queries would be responded to at the end of this meeting under Other Business.

2. **President & Vice-Chancellor's Report to Senate**

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

2.1 External Environment – Immigration – Measures announced to reduce net migration have the potential to harm UK Science Superpower ambitions - In December, the government announced measures to reduce legal migration to the UK, in a bid to reduce net migration as per the 2019 Conservative manifesto. Included in the announcement was a review by the independent Migration Advisory Committee of the Graduate visa route with the intent to “prevent abuse”, raising the salary thresholds for Skilled Worker and spousal visas and conducting a review to reduce the number of occupations on the shortage occupation list.

The measures and accompanying statements surrounding immigration had the potential to damage the perception of the UK as a welcoming destination for international staff and students and come at the same time as UCAS data, from last year, suggested that a third of UK universities saw a decline in overseas non-EU applicants in 2023. A healthy international student recruitment environment was vital for the diversity of UK campuses and cities, for the quality of education and research, and it would help to secure the financial sustainability of the higher education sector. Changes to the skilled worker and spousal salary thresholds could deter the movement of skilled workers and therefore pose a potential challenge to the University's ambitions. The Graduate visa route was designed to enable universities to compete globally, increase and diversify recruitment and help boost export earnings. It was deliberately designed with no salary, skill, or sponsorship requirements and this was an important factor in students' decisions about where to study. It was possible that further restrictions would be announced in the run up to the next General Election given the Conservative's 2019 manifesto commitment to reduce net migration. The Labour Party was not expected to oppose the overall premise of the measures announced in December. The University had written to those affected to explain

the current position and would continue to highlight to all political parties the economic, social and cultural contribution that international students and staff make to the sector.

- 2.2 During discussion the following was noted:
- 2.3 In response to questions about the extent to which these measures might deter students from coming to the UK to study and whether the University had considered other ways of reaching these students, it was highlighted that, while the University would continue to be a campus based university, it was exploring opportunities to use online and digital tools to reach overseas student populations. Senate would be updated on any relevant opportunities and developments. India had recently become a viable market to overseas providers and some other universities were already exploring transnational education arrangements with Indian institutions; the University would keep a watching brief on these developments.
- 2.4 In response to a question about whether the university was considering lowering entry requirements as one of the actions to mitigate a reduction in applications, Senate was assured that, while the university would continue to apply contextual admissions, there was no blanket instruction or expectation to lower entry requirements; a more detailed update on mitigating actions was provided as part of the QS Ranking Update at item 7.
- 2.5 It was important to ensure that international students had the appropriate support and the university was committed to this.
- 2.6 There was feedback that some international students were not aware of support available to them; one of the reasons for this was believed to be the higher than usual number of students to enrol later in the year, who had perhaps missed initial communications. It was important to ensure that international students were made aware of the support services available to them throughout their programmes, and this would be taken into consideration. It was noted that a comprehensive communications plan was in place, with additional local communications in departments with high levels of international students.
- 2.7 EU Research Collaboration – UK participating in Horizon Europe has received formal sign off and University colleagues are encouraged to continue applying to the programme – The UK's participation in Horizon Europe, the world's largest research collaboration programme, was formalised in December 2023, signing-off the deal that was agreed in September 2023. The government had subsequently launched a campaign to encourage UK businesses, academics and researchers to apply for funding under the programme. That route was now open and UK researchers could now apply for grants and bids to take part in Horizon projects as the UK was a fully associated member for the remaining life of the programme to 2027. The government had acknowledged that the period of non-association did lasting damage to UK research with statistics showing a decline in applications during this time of uncertainty. Colleagues were strongly encouraged to apply to the programme; some funding had been made available to support colleagues with this.

3. Matters Requiring Approval

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

4. Proposal for New School Names

Al Carlile was in attendance for this item.

4.1 Senate received and noted a report which proposed the names for the schools to be formed by September 2024. The report included 11 appendices, which provided additional information on the naming proposal for each school.

4.1.1 It was highlighted that, as part of the new schools structure proposals approved by Council on 24 January 2024, existing departments and schools would either come together to form new schools, necessitating a new school name, or change from a department to a school over the next two academic years.

Faculties and departments had worked together over the last few months to review options and propose names for the new schools that would be established by September 2024 (Wave 1 of new schools). The activities that had been completed were outlined in the related paper and the appendices.

Each Faculty and impacted department had followed a similar process to review names, engage with staff and students, and propose the final name. It was noted that the proposals in the paper had been agreed by Faculty Executive Boards and UEB in advance of submission to Senate and, following Senate's consideration, each proposal would be considered for ratification by Council on 25 March. The 'Phase 2' school names would be proposed to Senate on 26 June and to Council on 8 July.

4.1.2 During discussion, the following was highlighted:

4.1.3 The Students' Union (SU) raised concern that there had been an inconsistent approach to student engagement in reviewing the options and considering the proposed school names. It was important to ensure that within the new Schools Structure there was a consistent student voice, including in terms of decision making, and the SU sought assurance that the University was committed to, and planned for there to be, a baseline for student representation in the new schools structure to ensure equity of student voice.

The University recognised that there had been different approaches. This reflected the range of structures of student representation currently in place across the organisation. One of the important aims of the Schools Structure was to address those differences. The SU was assured that the University was committed to addressing this and discussions with the SU had already started.

4.1.4 It was noted that one of the points highlighted to Council on 24 January, when it considered the Schools Proposal, was the importance of ensuring that individual disciplines retained their identity. While it was recognised that a school name was only one factor in identity, there was strong feeling amongst some of the disciplines not included in the proposed

school names that their identity would be lost, and further concern, for example with Chemistry, that they would disappear over time.

Senate was assured, in the strongest terms, that there had been no suggestion at any stage during the schools naming process or restructure to de-prioritise or prioritise any one discipline over another and no suggestions that the future of the university shouldn't include Chemistry.

UEB had considered the options very carefully, were mindful of the concerns raised and recognised that there was work to do to ensure disciplines maintained their sense of identity. It was noted that in terms of the School of Mathematical and Physical Sciences (which would include the Department of Chemistry), this name was widely used and recognised across the sector and by students. Senate was again assured that in naming this School there had been no intention to downgrade the individual disciplines involved.

4.1.5 It was noted that the feedback shared during the meeting would be shared with Council for its meeting on 25 March.

4.1.6 Having considered the proposals, it was agreed to present them to Council for final ratification, along with the feedback from Senate.

4.2 Governance Review

4.2.1 Further to a detailed update in December 2023, Senate received and noted a presentation and update on the Governance Effectiveness Review, conducted by the Halpin Partnership (Halpin). It was highlighted that the review sought to; understand the changes that would be required to support the move to a Schools based model; ensure that governance arrangements met external legal and regulatory requirements and mitigate associated risks; ensure that governance arrangements continued to meet the needs of the business and ambitions as stated in the University Vision.

4.2.2 A detailed update was provided, which included: the approach to the review; lines of enquiry; definitions of governance; drivers for the review; governance structures; key themes; commendations; priority recommendations and recommendations. The presentation would be shared with members after the meeting. **[Action by: JS]**

4.2.3 During discussion the following was highlighted:

4.2.4 Key lines of enquiry of the review included looking at what committee structures should be put in place, and at what levels, and Halpin had made recommendations relating to this. The SU asked for assurance that, when considering future changes to committee memberships, students would continue to be appropriately represented. It was noted that a clear component of the review, and of OfS requirements, was to ensure that the student voice was embedded in this work. Work to review memberships and terms of reference had not yet begun, but it was envisaged that there would continue to be student representation on key committees.

4.2.5 One of the Halpin recommendations was for greater training and development in OfS compliance, and in wider legislation and compliance impacting universities. During

discussion about whether this would apply to graduate teaching staff, it was clarified that while this didn't directly apply to that staff group, there was a need for greater awareness of OfS compliance across the organisation and there would be support available for all staff.

- 4.2.6 Halpin recommended a gradual shifting of the membership of Senate such that it retained existing skills and experience, with priority being given over time to Faculty and School Committee members. Halpin also noted that the Powers of Senate lacked clarity and that this should be addressed as part of the changes in governance. In response to concerns raised that this might result in Senate's powers and Faculty/School representation being downgraded, it was highlighted that these were areas yet to be explored in detail but Senate was assured that current plans were to continue with proportional representation of the faculties and schools on Senate.
- 4.2.7 In response to a question about the process for transitioning the change in Senate membership, resulting from the move from Departments to Schools, it was noted that in the first year there would be minimal change to the configuration in Senate membership; more detail on how this would be progressed would be shared in due course.
- 4.2.8 One of the key themes to come out of the focus groups was support for change; some members highlighted that this did not square with feedback on the ground, which in their experience had reflected opposition to, and concern about, the change process. It was noted that some concerns had been fed into the review. In response to a query about how the focus groups had been selected, it was noted because of the nature of the review, the focus groups were primarily made up of people on committees and/or in leadership roles; in this context, names had been provided by the University Secretary's Office and the Vice President for Education's office.
- 4.2.9 Another key theme was aligning accountability with resources and authority to deliver. In response to a query about whether there would be work on the funding model to address variations in the resources departments currently had available to spend on student activity, and whether this would be reported to Senate, it was noted that this had been picked up by Halpin. It was important to ensure that resources were aligned with activity and it was planned to look at this. The funding model would be kept under review, and while this was in the remit of UEB, Senate would be kept updated.

5. Senate Standing Orders

- 5.1 In June 2023, Senate considered revisions to its Standing Orders including changing the order of business to start meetings with declaration of conflict of interests and have the minutes of the previous meeting at the end of the agenda, in the same way that Council had started to operate. Following detailed discussion on the risks and benefits of taking the minutes of the previous meeting at the end of the agenda, Senate approved the changes to its Standing Orders as proposed in the paper, subject to trialling at its next two meetings taking the minutes of the previous meeting at the end of the agenda. Now that the two-meeting trial has come to an end, it was time to ask Senate to indicate a preferred approach.
- 5.2 To inform this decision, ahead of the meeting a vote had been conducted using OpaVote, a secure online voting platform. The vote asked members of Senate to answer 'Yes', 'No' or

'No preference' to whether the minutes of the previous Senate meeting should continue to be taken at the end of the Senate agenda (as per paragraph 2.2 of the Senate Standing Orders). 76 out of 84 people voted, the outcome of that vote was as follows: Yes - 41 votes; No - 15 votes; No preference - 20 votes.

- 5.3 In response to a pre-submitted question about the procedure to cover situations where the business of a current meeting of Senate was dependent on a decision taken at the previous meeting, which may not yet have been ratified, it was noted that the University Secretary's Office would either bring the minutes forward on the agenda for approval, as previously discussed with Senate, or the minute extract from the previous meeting would be noted in the Chair's Brief, to be highlighted to Senate, thereby ensuring it was taken into consideration at the appropriate point in the meeting.
- 5.4 In response to a pre-submitted question about the procedure to cover situations where matters arising on the minutes of the previous meeting may have a bearing on the deliberations of the current meeting of Senate, it was noted that the matter arising would be noted in the Chair's Brief under the relevant agenda item, to ensure it was raised at the appropriate point.
- 5.5 In response to pre-submitted questions about how sufficient time would be guaranteed to discuss the minutes and matters arising when they were at the end of the agenda, it was noted that the Chair's Brief for each meeting included indicative timings, to ensure that each agenda item was given the appropriate time allocation, as accurately as could be predicted and within the constraints of the overall meeting time. As per the usual process, the minutes would be allocated 5 minutes, and time would be allocated to review and provide updates on the matters arising as appropriate, depending on how many matters arising there were; this was standard practice.
- 5.6 A pre-submitted question asked which other universities had made this change for their Senate or equivalent body, what evaluation had been undertaken in other universities and how this had informed the current proposal. During discussion a subsequent point was made that when a similar question had been raised previously, it had been understood that other universities had adopted this practice; the member highlighted that their discussions with colleagues at other universities did not support this. It was clarified that the University had not said it was aware of other universities adopting this practice, but of other organisations that had.
- 5.7 It was highlighted that Senate had a detailed discussion about the risks and benefits of the proposal in June 2023, when it approved the change subject to trialling it for two meetings. It was clarified that any decision about the order of Senate business was in the gift of Senate, because this formed part of the Standing Orders, which required Senate approval. This was respected and recognised by asking the question of Senate on several occasions; in June 2023 and after the trial period and more recently via an online vote. The results of that vote clearly indicated a preference for the minutes being taken at the end of the agenda. During discussion, it was noted that some members felt that the vote sought to close down discussion and pre-empt Senate's deliberations. It was clarified that this was not the intention; the vote aimed to seek views from members in an inclusive and transparent way.

5.8 Noting that 4 members objected to the proposal, Senate reaffirmed its support for the previously approved amendment to the Senate Standing Orders to have the minutes of the previous meeting at the end of the agenda (as per paragraph 2.2 of the Senate Standing Orders).

5.9 It was also agreed to ensure that all references in the minutes, and other governance documents, to she/her/he/him were amended to 'they'. **[Action by: University Secretary's Office]**

6. Mental Health Strategy

John Flint presented the item

6.1 Senate received and noted the Report, which outlined progress to date on the institutional Mental Health Strategy. It was highlighted that the Strategy Action Plan was published in January 2024 with a launch event in February 2024, which had been extremely successful. Colleagues were now in the process of reviewing the feedback received; a formal review would be undertaken to incorporate the feedback into the action plan.

6.2.1 Senate welcomed the update. During discussion members raised the following points:

- a) It was important to consult with active users of the University's Mental Health Services and, given the nature of mental health, it was also important to engage with staff and students not using these services; this feedback was welcomed.
- b) Reflecting on the impact of events external to the university on mental health, for example the Covid pandemic and recent overseas conflict, it was important that the Strategy and Action Plan remained agile. It was noted that the Strategy and Action Plan were being treated as live documents, which would be reviewed at regular intervals throughout the year.

7. QS Ranking Update

Al Carlile was in attendance for this item

7.1 Senate received and noted an update and presentation on plans to improve the University's performance in the QS World University Rankings and the impact of dropping out of the QS World University Rankings Top 100 in 2023. It was highlighted that, while UEB had been clear that league tables did not define or drive what the University wanted to achieve, its performance in league tables did have the potential to impact what it wanted to achieve.

7.2 The update included an overview of QS as an organisation, their methodology (including for the subject rankings), the impact of dropping out of the Top 100 and why that mattered, what the University could do to influence the ranking and what actions the University was taking, including action being taken to mitigate the potential impact on student recruitment.

7.3 During discussion the following was highlighted:

- 7.3.1 QS specialised in Higher Education around the world and the QS World University Rankings were a major influencer on students in terms of choosing a university, especially in China where the QS World University Ranking of a student's university was used as part of a social credit system. The potential impacts of falling out of the Top 100 included a shrinking of the student population, or a change in the level of quality of applicants the University could recruit, the financial impact if recruitment shrunk and a potential impact on the University's global academic reputation.
- 7.3.3 The primary ways the University could influence its ranking was through research excellence, academic and employer reputation work (maximising nominations/references) and through citations. Details of key actions, which focused on these areas, were shared with Senate.
- 7.3.4 Details were also shared of what the University was doing to mitigate the potential impact on student recruitment. In response to several questions about changes to the criteria for recruiting students from overseas, particularly China, it was clarified that while the University expected to make more offers by the end of the cycle than it usually would, it did not plan to reduce the level of quality of applicants it recruited. Rather, for certain courses it was broadening the current recruitment criteria to include more Chinese universities from which to recruit, as it already did for other courses.
- 7.3.5 There was a detailed discussion about the importance of diversifying the overseas student population and how this might be achieved. The University was actively exploring opportunities in new markets and would continue to be pragmatic in managing the risk of an overreliance on certain markets. Senate would be updated on any significant developments as they arose.
- 7.3.6 The presentation would be shared after the meeting. **[Action by: JS]**

REPORTS FROM STATUTORY BODIES

8. **Report on the Proceedings of the Council**
(Meetings held on 27 November 2023, 14 December 2023, 24 January 2024 and 22 February 2024)

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 6 February 2024)

Senate received and noted the Report of the Senate Academic Assurance Committee (SAAC) noting that there were no specific matters requiring approval.

9.1.1 The following was highlighted:

- a) SAAC had selected the TEF 2023 submission as an area to examine during 2023/24. This followed an initial discussion of the processes informing the institutional submission at its meeting in June 2023. The focus of SAAC's return to the topic was lessons learned following the University's confirmed Silver rating as well as SAAC's level of assurance about the work being advanced ahead of the next TEF submission (scheduled to be in 2027). SAAC was assured that the University performed in line with institutional expectations in TEF, securing an outcome stronger than several other comparable research intensive universities and that was aligned with several peer institutions. Some sector peers secured an overall Gold rating, whilst the University narrowly missed securing a Gold rating for Student Experience, which underscored both the room for and prospect of an improved outcome in the next TEF. The University has articulated a compelling education vision, and SAAC considered securing TEF Gold an appropriate and realistic ambition to pursue.
- b) SAAC also examined Graduate Outcomes and Employability, due to their significance to students' overall experiences and outcomes at the University. While significant progress had been made to embed employability in the curriculum, SAAC was not yet assured that there was a consistent understanding across all academic teams of the importance of employability and SAAC would be revisiting this in the future. During discussion, the SU emphasised the need for a strong central drive to embed employability in the curriculum, including through practical skills development. It was noted that employability was already a fundamental part of the Education Pillar of the University Vision, with an agreed and defined scheme of work to address that. However, this was more embedded in some academic teams than in others and work was underway to redress this imbalance.

10. Report of the Senate Education Committee

(Meeting held on 8 February 2024)

- 10.1 Senate received the report, noting that it included several recommendations relating to the Degree Outcomes Statement, the Senate Education Committee Terms of Reference, the institutional framework for taught programmes, the institutional approach on undergraduate mixed-level study and the new, significantly amended, and closed programmes, title changes and new exit routes approved by Faculties between 9 November 2023 and 1 March 2024.
- 10.2 In response to a pre-submitted question about why the proposed new University Framework for Taught Programme Structures did not reference the structure or regulation of an undergraduate student's initial (foundation) year of study on these integrated degree programmes, it was noted that the University recognised that (Integrated) Foundation years made an important contribution to its students, preparing them for degree level study. It was clarified that the proposed new University Framework for Taught Programme Structures aimed to set out the parameters for the levels of programmes that either contributed to the degree classification or could lead to an exit award and sought to provide more consistency for students. Following discussion, and with support of the Head of Department for the Department of Lifelong Learning (DLL), it was agreed to reference

Integrated Foundation Years in the Framework with a footnote to state both that an integrated foundation year added a preparatory year to an undergraduate programme and that the University did not seek to stipulate further structural parameters at this time.

- 10.3 A pre-submitted question relating to section 3.7 of the University Framework for Taught Programme Structures, which stipulated that where an Integrated Masters programme included a year studying abroad or on placement, that year would constitute Year 4 of the programme, highlighted that at present students on integrated masters programmes could choose to take a placement year either between years two and three, or between years three and four of their degree programme. Employers seemed satisfied with this practice and it allowed students the flexibility to tailor their degree structure to their personal circumstances. It was noted that the University Framework for Taught Programme Structures had been written to reflect the structure of the institutional placement and study abroad offer, previously approved by Senate, which came into effect at the start of 2023-24 academic session. The standard model agreed for the institutional offer stated that the optional placement/study abroad year would extend the length of the programme by one year and take place in the penultimate year of study. This aimed to provide a clear, consistent, and marketable offer.

There were some benefits to defining the year for the placement; for example, students' sense of belonging to a cohort (given they would go out and come back at the same time as their peers), and recognising the positive impact a placement year had so students could apply their real world experience in their final year project/dissertation which contributed significantly to their overall classification. For departments it could reduce the complexity of changing the curriculum offer and ensure the placement year cohort was considered in any curriculum refresh. However, it was noted that where flexibility was needed, a route existed, through the use of special regulations, to consider individual student circumstances.

- 10.4 During discussion about the recommendation to approve the University Framework for Taught Programme Structures, concern was raised about the recommended credit values for dissertations. While it was recognised that the recommendation only applied to new programmes, it was highlighted that for some departments, implementing this would mean a significant change from current practices and it was felt this needed further consideration. A follow-up question was raised about the level of consultation on the proposals at department level. It was noted that all Faculty Directors had been involved in the discussions. The guidance had been developed to provide clarity on institutional expectations for programme structures, align them to the sector standards in the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications and ensure clarity for departments, fairness and consistency for students, who had themselves raised the issue of inconsistency, as well as compliance with sector standards for University of Sheffield awards. It was clarified that this was something the University must do and any significant variances at department level should be explored.
- 10.5 In response to a pre-submitted question about whether the proposal for Senate to delegate powers to the Senate Education Committee (SEC) with regard to the approval of programmes and policies relating to the student and academic experience, would have an impact on programme approval for FHEQ 8 and whether there would be a limit to what could be approved by SEC, it was clarified that the Senate Education Committee was

responsible for taught programmes of study from FHEQ Level 3 to 7 and so PhD provision (FHEQ 8) would not be within its remit. The detailed proposals for the delegation of powers would be developed in the next few months and presented at the next Senate meeting in June for consideration. Further work was planned to determine appropriate levels of delegation.

- 10.6 During discussion about the recommendation to approve the institutional approach on undergraduate mixed-level study, which aimed to ensure that where students were taught in mixed level groups there was differentiated support for them to develop knowledge and skills to the appropriate level, including preparation for the assessment, it was highlighted that in some departments there was no awareness of this and it would present local challenges. Some examples were given of where there might be local difficulties. It was noted that where issues were already known, departments had been offered support and where there were other local challenges, these needed to be highlighted so that any support needed could be provided.
- 10.7 Following discussion Senate:
- a) Approved the Degree Outcomes Statement.
 - b) Approved the revised Senate Education Committee Terms of Reference
 - c) Approved the institutional Framework for taught programmes, and noted the reservations expressed during the meeting (see minute 10.4).
 - d) Approved the institutional approach on undergraduate mixed-level study, noting that some departments would require support with this (see minute 10.6).
 - e) Approved the new, significantly amended, and closed programmes, title changes and new exit routes approved between 9 November 2023 and 1 March 2024.

11. Report of the Senate Research and Innovation Committee
(Meeting held on 8 February 2024)

- 11.1 Senate received and noted the Report of the Senate Research and Innovation Committee noting that there were no specific matters requiring approval. It was highlighted that the university was improving support for colleagues applying for major EU funding calls, especially in the context of the UK's confirmed association with Horizon Europe. It was also highlighted that the REF had been delayed to 2029; colleagues were encouraged to join the REF Panels and anyone interested in mentoring those sessions, or wanted more information, were invited to get in touch.

12. Report of the Senate University Research Ethics Committee
(Meeting held on 7 February 2024)

- 12.1 Senate received and noted the report of the University Research Ethics Committee, noting that there were no specific matters requiring approval. The Committee reported that the number of investigations remained small given the amount of research conducted in the University by staff and students. The Committee was satisfied that the report provided assurance that the ethics review procedure was operating effectively. It had also been noted that a range of work was ongoing, aimed at providing additional support to researchers, supervisors and UG/PGT students, in meeting the ethics requirements.

OTHER MATTERS

13. Report on Action Taken

Senate received and noted the report. It was highlighted that since the last meeting, the President & Vice-Chancellor, acting on behalf of the Senate and on the recommendation of the relevant Committees of Senate, had approved the following:

- a) A new apprenticeship programme (on the recommendation of the Senate Education Committee)
- b) Three appointments to the Senate Discipline Panel (on the recommendation of the Senate Nominations Committee).

14. Major Research Grants and Contracts

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

14.2 It was agreed to amend references to 'Information Studies' to 'Information School'.

15. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

(Meeting held on 13 December 2023)

15.1 The Minutes of the meeting held on 13 December 2023 were approved.

16. Matters Arising on the Minutes

16.1 Updates were provided on matters arising from the Minutes of the previous meeting, not covered elsewhere on the agenda:

16.2 Minute 1.2.5 - Amendments to the October 2023 meeting minutes - The suggested changes to the October minutes, having been agreed by Senate in December 2023, were made and are reflected in the published minutes on the University web pages. [October 2023 Senate Minutes](#)

16.3 Minute 4.1.3 g - SU feedback on the experiences of the students in the Biosciences School - During discussion about Biosciences, it was highlighted that the feedback shared at the meeting indicated that, while the University recognised that there may be issues that needed to be considered, no significant issues had been raised through student engagement and that the NSS results showed a good return from Biosciences. The SU highlighted that this did not align with feedback the SU had received from students. Therefore, it was agreed that the SU would share its reflections and student feedback with the Vice President for Education, for further consideration. This had been followed up in a request to the SU for more information; the Vice President for Education's Office was awaiting a response.

16.4 Minute 4.2.3 - Governance Review Presentation - The presentation was shared with Senate after the December meeting (on 14 December).

17. Any Other Business

- 17.1 Due to time constraints on the agenda, it was agreed with the author to withdraw a pre-submitted question relating to legal advice to Senate; this question would be deferred to the next Senate meeting. **[Action by: JS]**
- 17.2 Post meeting note: Several questions had been raised with the University Secretary ahead of the meeting (via email) in relation to sharing advice from Senate with Council on the Final Structural Proposals. Due to time constraints on the agenda these were not responded to during the meeting. It was felt that a recent email from the University Secretary ahead of the meeting had addressed these queries but if any members felt that any part of the query was unresolved they should contact the University Secretary.