

SENATE

MINUTES AND ACTIONS – APPROVED ON 21 JUNE 2023 8 MARCH 2023- 14:00-17:00 - MICROSOFT TEAMS

NB text in BLACK is for publication; text in BLUE will be redacted for publication.

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- 10. ITEMS BROUGHT FORWARD FROM PART II (SEN/23/12)
- 11. CHAIR'S CLOSING REMARKS

ATTENDEES (listed according to the membership as detailed in Ordinance 20)

- a) Chair: Professor Lisa Roberts, Vice-Chancellor
- b) Professor Janice Kay, Provost
- c) Professor Richard Follett

Professor Neil Gow

Professor Tim Quine

Professor Martin Siegert

d) Professor Rob Freathy

Professor Andrew McRae

e) Professor Dan Charman (ESE)

Professor Sallie Lamb (HLS)

Professor Gareth Stansfield (HASS)

f) Professor Jo Bowtell (HLS)

Professor Anni Vanhatalo (HLS)

Professor Nick Stone (ESE)

- g) James Hutchinson
- h) Professor Jon Brown (HLS)

Professor Claire Hulme (HLS)

Professor James Wakefield (HLS)

Professor Mark Wilson (HLS)

Professor Isabelle Engeli (HASS)

Professor Rebecca Langlands (HASS)

Professor Jane Milling (HASS)
Professor Dave Hodgson (ESE)
Professor Enrico Onali (ESE)
Professor Nicola Thomas (ESE)

i) Dr Safi Darden (HLS)

Dr Samuel Pollard (HLS)

Professor Ruth Garside (HLS)

Dr Ioanna Kapantai (HLS)

Dr Maisha Reza (HLS)

Dr Abby Russell (HLS)

Dr João Florêncio (HASS)

Professor Linda Williams (HASS) Professor David Jones (HASS) Professor Fabrizio Nevola (HASS)

Professor Sue Prince (HASS)

Professor Adam Feldman (ESE)

Professor Ben Zissimos (ESE)

Dr Sharon Strawbridge (ESE)

Professor Barrie Cooper (ESE)

Professor Tim Naylor (ESE)

Professor Christine Parkin Hughes (ESE)

j) Mike Shore-Nye

l) Lily Margaroli

Jack Liversedge

Izzie Dyer

Emma de Saram

m) Georgi Griškevičienė

Emma de Saram

IN ATTENDANCE:

Totty Brobyn Committee Secretariat Administrator (minutes)

Jeremy Diaper Assistant Director, Governance
Jo Hamilton Head of Admissions (for item 4)

Shades Chaudhary Assistant Director, Culture and Inclusion (for item 6)

Mark Sawyer Head of Student Wellbeing (for item 7)

APOLOGIES:

Stuart Brocklehurst

Professor Henry Buller (ESE)

Professor Fiona Cox (HASS)

Professor Richard Everson (ESE)

Professor Daniel Fountain (HASS)

Professor William Gaze (HLS)

Professor Alex Gerbasi (ESE)

Professor Ilke Inceoglu (ESE)

Professor Li Li (HASS)

Professor Joasia Luzak

Professor Anna Mountford-Zimdars (HASS)

Kira Orchard

Imelda Rogers

Professor Clare Saunders (HASS)

Professor Joanne Smith (HLS)

Professor Rich Smith

Professor Ion Sucala (ESE)

Professor Naomi Sykes (HASS)

Lauren Taylor

Professor Chrissie Thirlwell (HLS) Professor

Adam Watt (HASS)

Professor Geoff Vallis (ESE)

ACTIONS AND DECISIONS

MINUTE	ACTION	LEAD
5.8	Jo Hamilton to feedback to Senate in June regarding offer numbers and student withdrawals and retention.	Jo Hamilton
6.2	PVC HASS to progress the work around controversial partnerships and opposing values in consultation with Dave Hodgson and Mark Wilson	Gareth Stansfield
7.10	Staff counsellor provision to be looked into by HR and reported back at a later date.	Imelda Rogers

1. Chair's introduction

1.1 The Chair welcomed Senators to the meeting.

2. Minutes from the meeting of 2 November 2022 (SEN/23/01) and Matters Arising.

- 2.1. The minutes of the meeting held on 2 November 2022 were **approved**.
- 2.2. The Chair noted that the Vice-Chancellor had approved, under Chair's action on behalf of Senate, the amendment of Fitness to Practice Procedures to include an updated list of regulated programmes for CEDAR. The paperwork for this was included in part II (SEN/23/23).

- 2.3. The Registrar and Secretary highlighted that two volunteers were needed to serve as representatives on the Postgraduate Research Board, with meetings scheduled in October, February and June of each academic year. Expressions of interest were invited from Senate members who were asked to contact the Senate team.
- 2.4. This summer the Senate would be looking for a new Council Representative from Senate to take the place of Professor Alex Gerbasi whose term comes to an end on 31 July 2023. The nominations and election process would take place in May and June 2023. For more information about the role, members were invited to contact Alex directly, or continuing Senate Representatives Professor Barrie Cooper or Professor Sue Prince.
- 2.5. The Chair noted the completed actions from the previous meeting and that the progress of actions still ongoing would be updated within the agenda in items 5 and 7.

3. Vice-Chancellor's Report (SEN/23/02)

- 3.1. The Chair referenced the report from the Vice-Chancellor, the Provost and the Deputy Vice Chancellors, and added further updates from the sector, and internally, since the report was circulated:
 - Welcome to Professor Richard Follett as DVC (Global Engagement) and Stuart Brocklehurst, the new DVC for Business Engagement and Innovation.
 - The Sir Paul Nurse Review (a government commissioned review of the research development and innovation landscape within the UK) had been released in early March 2023, and stated that the UK currently lagged behind commercially successful research intensive nations, calling for an overhaul of the RD&I sector. It highlighted the danger of underfunding from successive governments and the lack of investment, with R&D funding making up only 2.5% of GDP. The review incorporated 29 recommendations within the report including:
 - a need for long term policy certainty,
 - stability and additional funding,
 - improved permeability between academia and industry,
 - review of 'hub and spoke' models to ensure they were fit for purpose;
 - increased public funding,
 - a reduction in excessive bureaucracy from government,
 - that more effort was given to boosting international collaboration, highlighting how essential it is that the UK associates with Horizon Europe.
 - further news was still awaited on the long term plans for UK association to Horizon Europe to be finalised. the UK government had announced a new Science and Technology Framework, which was the first major initiative from the newly created Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT). The Framework was focused on cementing the UK's place as a global science and technology superpower by 2030, outlining key actions to support the vision. £370m of government funding would be invested to boost infrastructure and skills, taken from the existing R&D settlements. It will pursue strategic advantage in five critical technology areas:

- Artificial Intelligence (AI)
- Engineering biology
- Future telecommunications
- Semi-Conductors
- Quantum technologies
- The government had set out further details on the Lifelong Loan Entitlement, including its response to the LLE consultation. The new financing model would be introduced in 2025 and would give students access to four years of tuition funding which could be used flexibly for full or part time study. It currently only included levels 4 to 6 and was therefore not open to those seeking a Masters (level 7). The DVC (Education and Student Experience) was leading a group to look at how the University will respond to those changes.
- UCU Industrial Action talks continued following agreement on the Terms of Reference for a review of the UK HE pay spine. Progress was being made towards agreeing terms of reference for negotiations to cover equality pay gaps, contract types, workload, etc. A further meeting with ACAS (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service) was scheduled to take place on 14th March 2023. If no resolution was found, further dates for industrial action were planned for Wednesday 15th to Friday 17th March and Monday 20th to Wednesday 22nd March.
- There was cautious optimism surrounding the upcoming USS pension valuation, which was looking more favourable in light of the current economic crisis, which should allow the restoration of benefits and the reduction of costs.
- Government had announced plans in January 2023 to ensure all students studied some form of Mathematics up to the age of 18. The Provost had been asked to join a Department of Education Advisory Group to bring the University and University Maths School Network into the developments. The Provost gave particular thanks to colleagues who contributed to the briefing, including: Barrie Cooper, Nicky King, Alison Hill, Nicola Sinclair, Rob Freathy and Tim Quine.
- Recruitment for new DVC (Research and Impact) was launched following Professor Neil Gow's decision to step down from this role to concentrate on his research.
- The Vice-Chancellor had recently undertaken a visit to Sharjah with colleagues, a follow
 up to visits in 2022 including the Exeter Marine Group and the Marine Research facility
 in Sharjah. The University had received a philanthropic pledge from His Highness
 Sheikh Dr Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qasimi, the Rule of Sharjah, to support an
 extension of the IAIS (Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies).
- The Vice-Chancellor had visited Saudi Arabia, and the Princess Nourah University (PNU), the largest women's university in the world with 33,000 students and 5000 staff.

Closed Minute – Confidential

- 3.2. Following a question asked about the sustainability of LLE funding, the VC noted that she was involved in a UUK group that was looking at a more sustainable funding model for higher education involving people from within and outside of the sector.
- 3.3. Concerns were raised about the partnerships with universities in Saudi Arabia and China and the need to define principles for overseas partnerships. Professor Richard Follett noted that as an inclusive university, there was a need to think through the parameters, making them sufficiently flexible to be able to engage in projects, but that the community feels engaged. A common framework of principles would be created to allow the University to engage globally, support reform and positive change and allow the University community to feel that the partnerships are representative of its values. This would include making support available to those who do not feel able to participate in particular partnerships.
- 3.4. It was agreed that transparency was key to these partnerships, following a number of concerns raised around the human rights records and treatments of women, minorities and expatriate workers in Saudi Arabia.

4. Education an PGR Board Reports (SEN/23/03) and (SEN/23/04A & B)

- 4.1. Senate noted the reports from both the Dean for Taught Students and the Dean for Postgraduate Research.
- 4.2. The Dean for Postgraduate Research noted the ongoing review of the Doctoral Strategy which was being led by Professor Neil Gow.
- 4.3. The Dean for Taught Students noted the new format of reporting following the move from three Education Board meetings per year to six. The report highlighted the work on assessment and feedback undertaken to support NSS; the work by Vrinda Nayak on success and inclusive education and the Transformative Education Framework; the new Centre for Degree Apprenticeships being led by Rachel Johnson; and, the review into academic representation and student voice by Oli Young.

5. Review of Admissions Data and Strategy (SEN/23/05)

- 5.1. The DVC Global Engagement, Professor Richard Follett and Jo Hamilton, Head of Admissions, provided Senate with the current outlook on admissions data and the strategy for student numbers highlighting the following key points:
 - Home UG UCAS applications deadline had passed and the University was expected to hit target numbers, but a clearer picture would be brought to the Senate meeting in June.
 - PG Home applications had declined due to cost of living and a buoyant employment market.
 - UG International applications had increased, but not on target. The team were working on converting offer holders. A number of steps were in place to support students to come to the LIK
 - International PGT numbers had increased and were 24% higher than at the same position in the previous year.
 - New scholarship programme, the Exeter Global Leaders Award was launched in early 2023.

- 5.2. The Head of Admissions noted that the University was seeing an increase in fraudulent applications. Training had been undertaken and measures were being put in place. There had been encouragement across the sector to share information on these applications.
- 5.3. Offers for UG home applications were due to be sent out at the end of March 2023, an informal deadline to aid conversion, and the team were working with faculties to get the final decisions out.
- 5.4. It had been announced that the Department for Education were increasing the number of applications one person could make from 3 to 4 and they had removed the application fees. There had been no formal acknowledgement of these changes but more information would be disseminated when available.
- 5.5. Concerns were raised by student representatives around students who find they have a language gap following stringent coaching through their language exams, the level of knowledge from the visa exam and the work on their course. The wellbeing concerns around these issues were noted as important. The DVC Global Engagement and the DVC Education and Student Experience were looking at International Student Support for students from every background. The recent Senate Deep Dive on Awarding Gaps had highlighted the challenges in relation to the international/ home awarding gap.
- 5.6. A question was raised over whether there had been any work into if IELTS and Duolingo were fit for purpose to assess student language proficiency. The Head of Admissions noted that student performance and qualifications were reviewed annually at the Admissions Policy Group. The University accepts a plethora of qualifications and IELTS is a Secure English Language Test (SELT), but Duolingo was no longer being used as it was only used during the Covid-19 pandemic.

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5.7. ACTION: Jo Hamilton to feedback to Senate in June regarding offer numbers and student withdrawals and retention.

6. EDI Update (SEN/23/16)

- 6.1. The Provost, Professor Janice Kay and Shades Chaudhary, Assistant Director Culture and Inclusion, took Senate through the report highlighting the following key points:
 - Mean gender pay gap has decreased by 2.3% to 14.6% with a commitment to reduce it to 5% by 2030.
 - Race Equality Action Plan was being worked on by the Strategic Race Equality Group and the work on the 100 Black Women Professors Now Project, with the Women in Higher Education Network.
 - Disability Equality Network had seen developments in the Transformative Education Framework by Vrinda Nayak.
 - Working towards new Athena Swan applications.
 - Approval of the multi-faith centre on the Streatham campus.
 - Partnership with the Students Guild to set up an EDI Advisory Board.
 - Stonewall Award, achieving the highest ranking, achieving 143 out of the top 200 employers, a rise by three places year on year.

- 6.2. A Senate member questioned whether the University could do something positive to create alternative opportunities for staff and students whose protected characteristics make partnership working difficult or dangerous. And how it would be possible to manage the actual or perceived trading of Intellectual Property or performer rights if staff deny that transaction due to concerns around human rights reputation of partners. The PVC HASS agreed to take this forward.
- 6.3. ACTION: PVC HASS to progress the work around controversial partnerships and opposing values in consultation with Dave Hodgson and Mark Wilson

7. Annual Review of Student Wellbeing and Welfare (SEN/23/06)

- 7.1. The Provost and Mark Sawyer, Head of Wellbeing, presented the reports to Senate. The Provost recognized the challenging landscape of mental wellbeing for students and thanked the services for their hard work.
- 7.2. The report was written concurrent to the Mental Health review, chaired by Sir Richard Atkins, taking into account the recommendations and stipulations from the review by the coroner following the inquest into the death of a student. Also looked more broadly at service provision and its relationship with statutory services. A further briefing will be at the June meeting of Senate which would focus on the specific recommendations and outcomes of the review.
- 7.3. The report gave an overview from September 2021 to December 2022 and highlighted:
 - the plans to; build a new wellbeing service on Streatham campus; ready for the new academic year, further investment in staff; a new case management system; and, further staff training, including in suicide prevention.
 - Continue to see high level of demand, a notable increase in self-harm, suicidal ideation and episodes of crisis cases, a pattern repeated across the sector.
 - Deep dives were to take place in the following months, including looking in depth at the stepped care model as part of taking the mental health review forward.
 - Provision to PGR students through a bespoke education welfare advisor, an out of hours service.
 - Tailored support for students of colour, international and LGBTQ+ students and online CBT (Cognitive Behavioural Therapy) in 16 different languages.
 - Working with GJ Melendez-Torres acting as Academic Advisor on Student Mental Health and Wellbeing, Ed Watkins leading an international programme on student mental health called 'Nurture You' and Louise Lawrence working with students on the concept of 'compassionate campuses'.
- 7.4. The Head of Wellbeing emphasised the need to review partnerships with a range of NHS services.
- 7.5. A question was raised around the difficulty accessing mental health services in Exeter, due to the chronic underfunding of the NHS, and what can be done by the University to ensure access for students specifically following a review of the current partnerships with NHS services. The Head of Wellbeing noted that the University had a bespoke partnership with the NHS Community Mental Health Team, which buys a part share in three senior mental health practitioners, a session psychiatrist, and a part-time psychologist on campus, which was an important part of the framework of support for students. This means the University gets additional support for the most complex and

unwell in the student community. The gap within the NHS is in talking therapies and the rates of disclosure for anxiety and depression were higher in higher education than in the wider community. That data therefore created opportunity in terms of early intervention for those with less complex needs.

- 7.6. The Provost added that Devon and Cornwall Trust are looking to do a major review of mental health and wellbeing of 16-25 year old over the next year which would enable some kind of support for the University.
- 7.7. The Dean for Postgraduate Research noted that PGRs have full access to wellbeing service and to SpectrumLife so were in a unique position.
- 7.8. A Senate member queried whether access to SpectrumLife was being monitored by the University following a number of cases where phone call were unanswered or not followed up. The Head of Wellbeing stated that feedback has been that students had not taken up offers for SpectrumLife from the wellbeing team but added that there were communication issues in respect of the current arrangements. He noted that it was a remote service and the team were increasingly trying to provide more face to face services post-pandemic.
- 7.9. A Senate member noted recent conversations between the Geography department and the Wellbeing Team around building an inclusive curriculum around mental health and increasing the competency in staff. They added that there needed to be more training for mental health first aid for all staff and that students were provided access to counsellors with lived experience, but there was no such provision for staff.
- 7.10. ACTION: Staff counsellor provision to be looked into by HR and reported back at a later date.

8. TEF Submission Update (SEN/23/07):

- Council Standing Committee Minutes 20 January 2023 (SEN/23/08)
- 8.1. The DVC Education took Senate through the update, noting that the provider submission was submitted on January 24th 2023.
- 8.2. The provider submission made a case for excellence highlighting the strength of work undertaken, for example, Success for All and the working groups associated with that.

8.3. It emphasised:

- co-creation with students and staff,
- excellence in education and research and the synergy between them,
- the culture of continuous improvement and data informed decision making,
- the sector-leading work to support students through the pandemic,
- co-curricular activities,
- above benchmark continuation and completion rates for mature students,
- above benchmark completion and employment for black students,
- the work to reduce awarding gaps led by Rob Freathy in the Degree Outcomes Steering Group, and closing the disability awarding gap,
- commitments to work around assessment reimagined, degree apprenticeships and the work by Vrinda Nayak.

8.4. Particular thanks were given to the student presidents for their submissions to the TEF.

9. Student Sabbatical Officers Reports to Senate (SEN/23/09 & 10)

- 9.1. The President of the Students' Guild drew attention to the following points in her report:
 - The student submission to TEF emphasised the student experience and noted areas for improvement. A list of the key areas for improvement can be found within this report with an emphasis on the need to ensure continued focus on improving those areas.
 - The Guild was going through a rebrand, keeping the name, but the visual identity, ways of working and student engagement were going through a transformation. This work was supported by the estates strategy with a refurbishment of Devonshire House.
 - The cost of living work would see the publishing of a report with Russell Group student unions, which surveyed almost 10000 students within the Russell Group.
 - Jack Liversedge had been working on Assessment Reimagined and the Tutoring Review. This work was integral to improving student experience, ability to succeed, awarding gap and more.
- 9.2. The Exeter President of the Falmouth and Exeter Students' Union drew attention to the following points in her report:
 - SU Money week, where SU officers highlight areas of work in the cost of living crisis.
 - The report details the People's Assembly around ethical partnerships and the full report could be found in the appendices of the substantive report.
 - The elections had closed and the next president would be Connie Chilcott, who was running between her 2nd and 3rd year. The other student officers elected were Falmouth students so therefore would not be eligible to sit on Senate.

10. University Research Networks and University Research Centres Update (SEN/23/11)

- 10.1. The DVC Research updated Senate on the University Research Networks and the University Research Centres highlighting the following key points:
 - There were 13 networks with between 100 350 people aligned to each, all interdisciplinary, with an ability to transform their fields and their ways of working.
 - There were 106 Research Centres in the University and four were highlighted for their strategic importance; the Centre for Resilience in Environment Water and Waste (CREWW), the Joint Centre for Excellence and Environmental Intelligence, the Medical Mycology Centre (MRC), and the Wellcome Centre for Cultures and Environments for Health.
- 10.2. A query was raised around financial sustainability for the larger centres, how the University could ensure the deepening and renewal of partnerships. The DVC for Research and Impact responded that the ability to identify and work with new partners would open up opportunities to seek new forms of funding. He added that some centres and networks might not continue in perpetuity as it would be an evolutionary process, enabling the research base to adapt and take advantage of new opportunities.

10.3. Stuart Brocklehurst, DVC Business Engagement and Innovation would use this as a focal point for the industrial partnership and business engagement strategy.

11. Items brought forward from part II (SEN/23/12)

- 11.1. Draft Academic Calendar 2022-23 (SEN/23/13) was APPROVED.
- 11.2. Extension of Dean of Postgraduate Research Contract (SEN/23/14) was APPROVED.
- 11.3. Terms of Reference for Education Board Sub-Committee (SEN/23/21) was APPROVED.
- 11.4. External Examiners (SEN/23/25) was APPROVED.
- 11.5. Ordinance 23 and 24 (SEN/23/26) was APPROVED.

The registrar drew Senate's attention to the amendments to Ordinance 23 and 34, noting that unfortunately owing to a scheduling oversight there were some minor amendments to **Ordinance 34** which were inadvertently omitted from the Senate agenda in November 2022 prior to Council Approval in December 2022.

The amendments incorporated some minor changes in nomenclature to the procedures set out in **Ordinance 34** in relation to **Disciplinary, Grievance and Dismissal Procedures**.

As the changes did not amend the practical application of the current procedures but were only minor amendments intended to provide clarity to colleagues, their trade union representatives and managers on the procedures, the Vice-Chancellor had therefore signed-off on behalf of Senate via Chair's Action.

Following today's meeting of Senate, the Senate team would circulate a document highlighting the minor amendments that had been made to Ordinance 34 for information along with a link following the meeting to the revised and updated University webpages (which are live on the website following Council approval in December).

Apologies were given for this oversight, but Senate would continue to be invited to review and comment on proposed revisions to Ordinances moving forwards.

12. Chair's Closing Remarks

12.1. The Chair thanked Senators for joining the meeting and the high level of engagement.

Dates of meetings for 2022/23

17th May 2023 – Joint Council and Senate meeting 21st June 2023

Part II Papers

Draft Academic Calendar 2023-24 (SEN/23/13)

Extension of Dean of Postgraduate Research Contract (SEN/23/14)

Annual Review of Student Wellbeing and Welfare - Appendices (SEN/23/15)

Council Minutes: November and December 2022 meetings (SEN/23/17 & 18)

Education Board Minutes: November 2022 and February 2023 meetings (SEN/23/19 & 20)

Education Board Sub-committee: Terms of Reference (SEN/23/21)

Postgraduate Research Board Minutes: February 2023 meeting (SEN/23/22)

Amendments to Fitness to Practice approved by Chair's Action (SEN/23/23)

Senate Appeals Report (STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL) (SEN/23/24)

Amendments to Statutes, Ordinances and Regulations (that are not in part II)

- External Examiners (SEN/23/25)
- Ordinances 23 and 24 (SEN/23/26)

Awards of Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates and Conferment of Degrees in Absentia: The award lists, approved by the Vice-Chancellor on behalf of Senate, since the last meeting may be inspected by contacting Student Records.