

FORMAL REPORT OF THE VICE-CHANCELLOR TO SENATE - 22 APRIL 2020

1. League Tables - QS World Rankings 2020

The University has been named as one of the world's top universities across 23 subject areas, according to the latest edition of one of the world's most-consulted university rankings, released on 4 March. The *QS World University Rankings by Subject 2020* - by higher education analysts QS - highlights how the world's best universities perform on topics such as academic reputation, employer reputation and impact. The University performed best in sports-related subjects (11th), where both its academic reputation and employer reputation were highlighted. In addition to sports, it also ranked in the top-50 for social policy and administration (46th) and in the top-100 in four other areas: architecture and the built environment, business and management, education, and statistics and operational research (each ranked between 50-100 globally). This year's rankings marked a jump in position for education and statistical and operational research. See: <https://www.bath.ac.uk/announcements/university-of-bath-in-top-100-list-of-world-universities-across-six-subjects/>

The University's overall performance in the rankings however has dropped from 158th place in 2019 to 172 in 2020. Although the majority of UK and US universities have fallen in rank this year, primarily due to a weaker score for international student ratios, Bath has performed less well in terms of academic reputation (based on a survey of over 94,000 individuals in higher education) and faculty/student ratio.

2. Coronavirus/Covid-19

The impact of Covid-19 has caused one of the most challenging times in the University's history. In a rapidly evolving situation, we are guided by official public health advice from the Government, NHS and Public Health England. Developments are being monitored on a daily basis and updates provided to staff and students via the web pages and email, and I have been particularly grateful in operational matters to the Silver Emergency Management Team, chaired by Nicky Kemp, who have been meeting daily for the past two months.

The decision to end face-to-face teaching led to a remarkable response by members of the academic staff and others, in transitioning so quickly to online teaching, preparations for assessment and other forms of online student support. I pay much tribute to what was achieved so quickly and am so grateful. In addition, the care of staff in transitioning the campus and in providing such care to our student community on campus has been deeply appreciated. I am very grateful to UCU whose support for this decision was important. Finally, it has been a very great pleasure to note how many members of the University have engaged in other ways, from providing support to local hospitals through to providing advice at national level.

There will be other papers presented to Senate about the response to COVID-19, and given the speed at which this matter evolves, I will provide latest information at the meeting.

3. Climate Action Framework

The Climate Action Framework Working Group, established by the University Executive Board and chaired by Professor Pete Walker, has 24 members from across the University, including both Union and Students' Union representation. Supported by three sub-groups (on Research, on Learning and Teaching, and on Policy, Practice and Estate emissions reductions) the Group has been developing an outline for the Framework. Professor

Walker updated an informal meeting of Council on 19 February and the University Executive Board on 7 April. Discussions at the Executive Board included the definition of and possible timescales for net-zero carbon, on the impact of the Covid-19 crisis on the University's carbon emissions and the working of the Group, on the primary purpose of the activity and what might be realistically achieved to define the Framework within the current year.

4. Industrial Action

The national disputes on pensions, pay and other terms and conditions continue, although the UCU decision not to rebalot members for further action in light of the coronavirus outbreak is welcome. The number of staff taking strike action over the 14-day period in February and March averaged 120, about 30% fewer than the pre-Christmas action. Relations with the local Trades Unions have remained very positive, with much agreement regarding progress on local issues, and joint working to influence national resolution. However, there does not currently appear to be much sign of national resolution to the disputes. The current industrial action mandate continues until 30 April.

5. International Engagements

Since the last meeting:

- 5.1 Professor Jeremy Bradshaw travelled to Laos in February where he met with representatives from the University of Laos and Panyathip International School and attended a networking event at the Ambassador's residence and an education exhibition. This has led to potential new applications from those in Laos to courses at the University.
- 5.2 Lily Rumsey (Director of International Relations) and Tracey Stenson Jukes (International Mobility Manager) met with representatives from the Guild of European Research, the European Universities Association, the Coimbra Group and UNA Europa (1Europe) to explore ways in which the University could develop its strategic relationships in Europe.
- 5.3 The University has signed a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) with the Agency for Science, Technology, and Research (A*STAR), Singapore's lead public sector R&D agency, to establish a collaboration in sustainable food technologies.
- 5.4 The Associate Deans for International have now been appointed. Professor Stephen Ward will serve as the Associate Dean for International for the Faculty of Science, Professor Louise Brown for the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, and Dr Peter Nuttall for the School of Management.
- 5.5 The IRO has funded two research proposals in collaboration with the Sao Paulo Research Foundation (FAPESP). Dr Bernardo Castro Dominguez (Chemical Engineering) and Professor Matthew Davidson (Chemistry) will be working with the University of Araraquara-Uniara on the development of bacterial cellulose/MOF composite for sustainable packaging. Professor Barbara Kasprzyk-Hordern (Chemistry) will be working with the State University of Campinas Sao Paulo on the development of a public health early warning system via urban water profiling in Brazil.

5.6 The University welcomed Professor Soraya Seedat on her first visit (3 to 11 March 2020) as Global Chair. Professor Seedat, a Distinguished Professor of Psychiatry and Executive Head of the Department of Psychiatry at Stellenbosch University, was hosted by Professor Sarah Halligan in the Department of Psychology. During her visit to Bath, Professor Seedat delivered a public lecture and met colleagues from across our University community to explore new opportunities for collaboration.

6 University Developments

6.1 Institute for Sustainable and Circular Technologies

The University is currently developing a case for the establishment of an Institute, building on the successful [Centre for Sustainable and Circular Technologies](#). Professors Marcelle McManus and Matthew Davidson, as Development Directors, are working on a full proposal to include the development of a budget, finance model and industrial engagement plan. The current Centre is interdisciplinary in nature, drawing on staff from the Faculty of Engineering & Design and the Faculty of Science, and consideration is being given to the potential for including the behavioural and social sciences in the new Institute.

6.2 Off Campus Space Scoping Group

A Scoping Group is being set up to identify a range of options for locating activity beyond the Claverton Down campus, recognising that the finite capacity of the campus is a limiting factor for the University's future development.

6.3 Advancement Board

An Advancement Board, reporting to the Executive Board, is being established. The Board will oversee strategy and policy relating to philanthropy and alumni relations, ensuring that these align with the University's strategic objectives.

7 External Engagement

7.1 Guild Living

A new partnership is being considered between the [University of Bath and Guild Living](#). The intention is to engage in interdisciplinary academic research focused on healthy, independent living for older people and on intergenerational living. The work will support Guild Living (in partnership with Legal & General) as it develops new retirement communities in urban settings, one of which is planned for the current Homebase site on Pine's Way. This will feature a care community with ancillary wellbeing facilities, office space, children's nursery, enhanced pedestrian and cycle links and a new public realm. The project will bring a range of social, economic and environmental benefits.

7.2 iSTART

iSTART (Innovation, Science, Technology, Arts, Research and Training) is a proposed project led by Bath & North East Somerset Council, in partnership with the University, Bath Spa University and Bath College. The project aims to establish a facility in the new Bath Quays business district offering research, innovation and enterprise support for businesses and skills development for residents. This could provide the University with a new opportunity for local engagement and potentially act as a new location for the Innovation Centre. The University is considering which elements of the project could align most closely with its own strategic objectives. An application to the West of England Combined Authority (WECA) is currently being prepared, so that formal scoping studies can be carried out.

8 Other University News

I particularly wish to draw the attention of Senate to the following appointments and developments since our previous meeting:

8.1 [Keith Zimmerman](#) joined the University on 6 April as Chief Operating Officer. He will have a central role in the development and implementation of the University's Strategic Plan and is responsible for key corporate functions across Estates, Human Resources, Digital, Sports, Arts, Legal and Commercial Services.

8.2 [Professor Steve Brammer](#) has been appointed as Dean of the School of Management and will take up his post at the start of June.

8.3 [Professor Marcelle McManus](#) (Department of Mechanical Engineering) has won the Academic category of the 2020 FDM everywoman in Technology Award.

8.4 [Dr Euan Spence](#) (Department of Mathematics) has received the John Todd Award from the Oberwolfach Foundation and the Mathematisches Forschungsinstitut for research in numerical methods and analysis for wave scattering problems.

8.5 A study into the growth of biofilms carried out by recent PhD graduate Dr Oliver Peck with Prof John Chew and Dr Mike Bird from the Department of Chemical Engineering has been awarded the [2020 Junior Moulton Medal](#) by the Institution of Chemical Engineers.

8.6 [Dr Darragh McGee](#) (Department for Health) has been selected as one of this year's 'New Generation Thinkers', a high-profile scheme with the AHRC and BBC Radio 3.

8.7 Four Bath student entrepreneurs were successful in their pitches at a recent [Dragons' Den](#) event, securing funding for start-up businesses ranging from robotics to recycling. The event took place on Wednesday 26 February, run by Enterprise Bath in partnership with SETsquared.

8.8 Professor Jane Millar, Professor of Social Policy at the University of Bath Institute for Policy Research (IPR), and Fran Bennett, Senior Research and Teaching Fellow at the Department of Social Policy and Intervention, University of Oxford, have been appointed as [specialist advisers](#) to the House of Lords Economic Affairs Committee's inquiry on Universal Credit.

8.9 The Department of Pharmacy and Pharmacology has reported excellent student performance in the Oriel process, the national NHS recruitment process managed by Health Education England (HEE). All third year MPharm students undertake external assessment each year and are ranked across the country before being offered their post graduate pre-registration places based on their ranking and preferences. This year, all University of Bath final year students looking to secure a post in the NHS system have been successful and have gained positions across a range of sectors, with some securing some of the best jobs in the country. Bath students ranked 1st for their performance in the Situational Judgement Tests (SJTs) and 2nd for the Multiple Mini-Interviews (MMIs) across all schools of pharmacy. This is an outstanding result and I would like to congratulate them on their achievements.

8.10 The value of the University's research portfolio was £152.5 million as at 11 March 2020.

Recent significant grant awards include:

Description	Funder	Principal Investigator	Department	Amount £
Green rooted agriculture associations (GRASS): community-led pairing of urban agriculture and phytoremediation in Sierra Leone	The British Academy	Dr Lee Bryant	Architecture and Civil Engineering	£252,543
ESRC Indigenous Youth and Skills Development through Higher Education	ESRC	Dr Michael Donnelly	Education	£347,757
Increasing Complexity: The First Rule of Evolution?	John Templeton Foundation	Prof Matthew Wills	Biology and Biochemistry	£260,133
Designing soft engines and active solids	EPSRC	Dr Anton Souslov	Physics	£355,230
ELECTRA	Innovate UK	Prof Chris Brace	Mechanical Engineering	£694,507
Enhanced Low Cost Automation Technology (ELCAT)	Innovate UK	Prof Patrick Keogh	Mechanical Engineering	£528,081
SPECTRUM	MRC	Prof Anna Gilmore	Health	£463,987
GWAS	The Leverhulme Trust	Dr Andrew Preston	Biology and Biochemistry	£335,072
AMT Amendment 6	Applied Molecular Transport	Dr Geoffrey Masuyer	Pharmacy and Pharmacology	£349,808
Astrophysics at the University of Bath 2020-2023	Science & Technology Facilities Council (STFC)	Dr Stijn Wuyts	Physics	£282,677
NHYTE - New Hybrid Thermoplastic Composite Aerostructures Manufactured by Out of Autoclave Continuous Automated Technologies	EU - Horizon 2020	Prof Michele Meo	Mechanical Engineering	£368,625
Re-shaping the Test Pyramid	EPSRC	Prof Richard Butler	Mechanical Engineering	£934,053
Re-shaping the Test Pyramid	EPSRC	Prof Robert Scheichl	Mathematical Sciences	£466,856
Optimised Components, Test and simulation toolkits for Powertrains which integrate Ultra high speed motor Solutions	Innovate UK	Prof Sam Akehurst	Mechanical Engineering	£675,346
Pushing Back the Doubly-Exponential Wall of Cylindrical Algebraic Decomposition	EPSRC	Prof James Davenport	Computer Science	£505,756
Phase 2 UK Hub for Quantum Computing and Simulation	EPSRC	Dr Josh Nunn	Physics	£250,108
Quantum Limits for Sub-elliptic Operators	Leverhulme Trust	Dr Veronique Fisher	Mathematical Sciences	£318,871

Professor Ian White DL FEng
Vice-Chancellor and President
April 2020