

CONFIRMED MINUTES
Approved at the meeting of Senate of 6 June 2022



Unconfirmed Open Minutes

Senate

Wednesday 6 April 2022, starting at 2.15m

Location 1 West 2.102
TEAMS for remote attendance

Present:

Professor Ian White, Chair
Dr Fran Amery
Professor Julie Barnett
Dr Rob Branston
Professor Nick Brook
Professor Julian Chaudhuri
Professor James Davenport
Dr Sabina Gheduzzi
Professor Sarah Hainsworth
Dr Marion Harney
Dr Alan Hayes
Professor Momna Hejmadi
Professor Tim Ibell
Dr Nigel Johnston
Dr Fran Laughton
Professor Guy McCusker
Dr Dai Moon
Dr Paul Shepherd
Sid Singh
Professor Danae Stanton Fraser
Luca Volentir
Dr Steve Wharton
Annie Willingham
Professor Cassie Wilson
Jacob Withington

In attendance:

Dr Christopher Bonfield
Charlie Slack

Remote attendance:

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Emily Commander (secretariat)
Professor David Galbreath
Professor Robert Kelsh
Professor Bruce Rayton
Rachel Sheer (in attendance)
Dr John Troyer
Dr Jun Zang

Apologies:

Dr Peter Allen
Professor Phil Allmendinger
Professor Steve Brammer
Professor Matthew Davidson
Dr Rita Chawla-Duggan
Professor Marcelle McManus
Kate Robinson
Professor Brian Squire
Professor Lorraine Whitmarsh

Secretariat:

Caroline Pringle, Acting Secretary
Fiona Blackmore
Jane Eyles

Introductory items

15107 - Welcome and Quorum

The Chair welcomed new members and attendees and a formal note of attendance was kept to ensure the meeting remained quorate throughout the meeting.

15108 - Declarations of Interest

Dr Marion Harney declared an interest in relation to item 15119 (A) and would leave the room for that item.

Members declared any potential conflicts of interest.

15109 - Minutes of the Previous Meeting - Paper S21/22 - 63

The minutes of the previous meeting of Senate held on 2 February 2022 were approved.

15110 - Actions and Matters Arising – Paper S21/22 - 64

The action log was noted: the only actions which remained open were those not yet due.

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Part I: Items in this part of the agenda are for decision and/or discussion

15111 – Institutional update – Paper S21/22 - 65

The Vice-Chancellor introduced the institutional update, drawing particular attention to the success of the Varsity event that day; continuing high rates of Covid infection; the outpouring of support within the community for those affected by events in Ukraine; and the need for continued cyber-security vigilance.

In response to a request from a member of Senate, he elaborated further on the issue of staff morale in relation to the issues underlying ongoing industrial action, he noted:

- A [Joint Statement](#) from the University of Bath and the local UCU branch on the USS pension had been published on the website.
- A quarterly staff survey had been conducted in March – analysis of the results was in its preliminary stage, but early indications were that further work was needed in four main areas: hybrid working; reward; workload and facilities.
- HR was moving into the second phase of its work on hybrid working – staff were encouraged to submit their views.
- A workload study had been launched and it was hoped that it would develop some clear routes forward. The University had understood the clear messaging that staff felt under pressure and that hybrid working had yielded both benefits and downsides for all involved.
- It was clear that staff wanted access to some staff-only facilities on campus and work was underway to identify suitable space as the University continued to emerge from Covid.

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) spoke to congratulate those colleagues who had recently brought in significant grant awards and commented on the wide range of interesting research being carried out.

Members of Senate asked questions and were answered as follows:

- Some doctoral students who had made a good case for funded extensions as a result of the pandemic had not been successful due to a lack of available funds. Now that it was clear that further money from the Research Councils was unlikely, this was expected to be addressed through the planning round.
- It was agreed that further discussion at Senate of staff productivity and morale, particularly in light of some of the issues underlying the industrial action, would be helpful.

Action: An update to come to June meeting of Senate addressing issues of staff productivity and morale as being carried out through the activities above, within Senate's remit (Director of HR).

Senate noted the Institutional update.

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15112 – Formal examinations: priorities and strategy – Paper S21/22 – 66

The Vice-Chancellor noted that this item was on the agenda partly due to the efforts of Professor Bird, who had retired at the end of March, giving a wonderful ‘Outaugural’ lecture as he did so.

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) introduced paper S21/22 – 66, noting that there were a number of moving parts associated with curriculum and assessment, particularly Curriculum Transformation; relatively poor scores on feedback and assessment in the National Student Survey (NSS); and transition to a new normal after Covid. The paper outlined principles and direction of travel. Further proposals would come to the meeting of Senate on 8 June, once operational details and resourcing had been considered. The outline had received scrutiny at both Education Board and the Education, Quality and Standards Committee, and had been the subject of an “Ask Me Anything” session with Academic Assembly, at which useful, primarily operational, points had been made.

Members of Senate asked questions and were answered as follows:

- The definition of an open book exam provided in Appendix 1, point 2 was incorrect: open book exams were not exams which did not require invigilation. The Director of Academic Registry confirmed that the definition would be amended to say that open book exams may or may not require invigilation.
- The issue of like-for-like exams during supplementary assessment needed further consideration. Currently students who had sat an in-person exam on campus would need to return to campus to take an in-person re-sit, if this was required. There were student experience and climate impact reasons why this may not always be desirable. The measure would remain in place for the remainder of the current academic year but further work would take place to explore whether the policy could be amended for future years.
- There was a need to ensure robust assessment for two distinct categories of students taking exams during the supplementary assessment period: those who were re-sitting their assessments; and those who were taking the assessment for the first time.
- It was agreed that it would be helpful for Faculty Assistant Registrars to be represented on the Academic Integrity Working Group.
- A RAG-rated approach to the risks and trade-offs associated with invigilated and uninvigilated exams and assessments might help to ensure that the University got the balance right across the diversity of its provision. This would help ensure that assessments were sufficiently robust across all courses.
- It would be important to ensure that the benefits for inclusivity of some of the more recent innovative assessment practices were not lost as the University transitioned out of the pandemic.
- Further consideration would be given to engagement with external examiners.
- It was not anticipated that additional budget would be required for invigilation of in-person exams, but this would require active monitoring, particularly in the context of the new planning process, which would seek to identify a set of priorities for spending.
- Senate members requested information on the costs of Inspira.

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Action: Review like-for-like provisions in relation to exam re-takes and update Senate accordingly (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education)).

Action: Provide information on the costs of Inspira (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education))

Senate agreed the direction of travel for a high-level assessment and feedback vision statement and strategic priorities that will inform the development of strategic principles aligned to Curriculum Transformation.

Senate agreed the principles, indicative operational detail, and timelines to underpin the University approach to formal examinations in academic year 2022/23.

Senate noted the membership, Terms of Reference and initial priorities of the Academic Integrity Working Group.

15113 – Academic KPIs – Paper S21/22 - 67

The Director of Policy, Planning and Compliance presented paper S21/22 – 67. The KPI data was broadly unchanged since the last update: only continuation data had changed. She suggested that Senate may wish to align its KPI monitoring more closely with that carried out by Council, with Senate receiving performance data first, and providing a commentary to Council, as part of the assurance process expected by the Office for Students (OfS).

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) noted that the continuation data showed that the University was well above the OfS benchmarks.

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) said that, at the end of quarter 2, the University was seeing continued success in terms of grant awards, which, at £24.5 million, were £7 million up on the same period last year. The benchmarking data provided the imperative to take action. The external landscape continued to be challenging.

Members of Senate asked questions and were answered as follows:

- Council was sensitive to the fact that staff had been asked to prioritise teaching activity during the pandemic and the consequent possible impact on their ability to deliver against the ambitious targets for increasing research income. However, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) noted that the University was not expected to be very far behind its target at the end of the current year, partly because of delays to IAAPS.
- The University had a number of strategies to support research staff to bring in additional income. These included the Beacons; a review of Research and Innovation Services; additional support around peer review; and appointments. Encouraging staff to go for large grants should also help as, currently, considerable effort was put into bidding for a large number of small grants.

Senate noted the University's performance against academic KPIs, including relevant benchmarking data.

Senate agreed to use the same set of KPIs as Council from the start of the 2022/23 academic year.

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15114 – Curriculum Transformation – Paper S21/22 – 68 (A and B)

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) introduced paper S21/22 – 68A. He noted that, since submission of the paper, natural sciences had completed its phase 2 paperwork. Earlier that week, the University Executive Board (UEB) had considered a paper on transitions for students who would be going on a placement under the old programme and returning to a transformed programme: the aim was to deliver this transition as smoothly as possible whilst maintaining quality.

Dr Marion Harney noted that guidance had been developed to help engage students in the process for approving curriculum transformation.

Members of Senate asked questions and were answered as follows:

- It was noted that UEB had been incorrectly listed as a governance body in the decision-making pathway section of the paper.
- An options appraisal had been conducted for online unit evaluations. It was agreed to modify online unit evaluations to the extent required to get them operational in time for the introduction of transformed programmes. Nonetheless, it was clear that a wider piece of work would be needed, and this would form the subject of a separate project.

Dr Fran Laughton presented paper S21/22 – 68B. The paper proposed rules for PGT individual mitigating circumstances (IMC) and PGT exit awards, which, if approved, would be brought back to Senate for formal approval in June. Dual-stage courses would be included in due course. Some tweaks would be required to New Framework for Assessment (NFA) rules to ensure that they would work for everyone, including students on transformed courses. The aim was to simplify the regulations as much as possible. Consideration was being given to the best way to integrate the new 50% pass mark for undergraduate Masters degrees.

Members of Senate asked questions and were answered as follows:

- The solution of allocating a slightly higher number of credits was welcomed.
- For undergraduates, the intention was to phase out the use of the separate NFA document, and to integrate all applicable NFA rules into a single set of undergraduate assessment regulations. For postgraduates, it was possible there would be a mixed economy during a transition period, and the importance of minuting which set of regulations was applicable in each case was noted.
- It was noted that the Students' Union was keen to explore the possibility of allowing students to be reassessed without first needing to fail.

Action: Final PGTAR v22-23.1 Assessment Regulations document to come to meeting of Senate on 8 June along with generic exit awards specifications and UGAR direction of travel (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education)).

Senate noted the update on Curriculum Transformation.

Senate approved proposals for PGT Individual Mitigating Circumstances; and proposals for rules for PGT exit awards; and noted the direction of travel and timings for further PGT and UG adaptation.

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15115 – Research Misconduct – S21/ 22 – 69

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) introduced paper S21/22 – 69, thanking colleagues for the collegiate approach, particularly from UCU.

It was noted that it would be helpful to reference the additional support offered through the Students' Union in the paper that went to Council.

Action: Procedure to be updated for consideration by Council (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research)).

On the recommendation of the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee (RKEC), Senate agreed to recommend to Council amendments to the Procedure for Inquiring into Allegations of Misconduct in Research and Scholarship.

15116 – PGT outcomes and standards in AY 20/21– S21/22 – 71 (A and B)

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) presented paper S21/22 – 71A, which analysed PGT outcomes for academic year 2020/21, which had been impacted by the pandemic. The analysis showed that neither completion rates nor degree outcomes had been significantly different from those in previous years, suggesting that the University's no-detriment measures had been appropriate and proportionate.

Members of Senate asked questions and were answered as follows:

- It was noted that there was a gap in outcomes for both ethnic minority students and for international students. The University continued to work to close these gaps, noting the difficulty of assessing data from such a small sample and in categories which were inherently diverse (international students). Further consideration would be given to these issues.
- It was noted that the university of first degree may be relevant to PGT outcomes.

Action: Report to be updated for consideration by Council (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education))

Senate agreed to recommend to Council the report on PGT outcomes and completion rates in 2020/21.

Senate noted the report on quality assurance for PGT courses in 2020/21, on the recommendation of the Education, Quality and Standard Committee (EQSC).

Senate took a short break and resumed after 10 minutes.

15117 – Council, Senate, Students' Union Committee (CSSU) – S21/22 – 72

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) presented paper S21/22 – 72. The proposal to disband CSSU had originally arisen as part of the Senate Effectiveness Review and in light of the creation of the Student Experience Board (SEB). Detailed work had been carried out to understand all the potential risks, with mitigations clearly identified in each case.

Members of Senate asked questions and were answered as follows:

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- It was noted that it could be challenging to distinguish between the student representative and student governor roles of SU officers. Work was underway between the SU and the governance team to resolve these issues.
- It was noted that there were now considerably more (and better) opportunities for the student voice to be heard than at the time when the CSSU had been established.
- Concerns were expressed by some members of Senate that the disbanding of CSSU would further sideline the role of Senate within the University and reduce democratic oversight. In response, it was suggested that, by enabling the student voice to be heard directly at Senate, the proposal to disband CSSU strengthened, not weakened, Senate's role.
- The vast majority of issues being considered at CSSU were operational and not appropriate for either Council or Senate. Recent examples included buses and drug harm reduction. These could be acted upon with greater agility if they were raised at SEB.
- The Students' Union observed that there was nothing that they raised at CSSU relevant to Senate that they would not feel comfortable raising directly at Senate.
- It was noted that the number of meetings SU officers attended had greatly increased in recent years, and that their effort on the same issues was duplicated in a number of different fora.
- Some members of Senate expressed a preference for CSSU to be retained for a period so that a further assessment could be made – it was also suggested that CSSU could be retained but not meet.

A firm undertaking was provided to Senate that matters appropriate to Senate would continue to be raised directly there, rather than diverted via SEB.

Question put: That Senate agree to recommend to Council the disbanding of CSSU.

In favour: 16

Against: 11

Abstentions: 1 formal abstention

The question was accordingly agreed to.

Action: Report to be updated for Council (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience)).

Senate agreed to recommend to Council the disbanding of CSSU.

15118 – Appeals policy – S21/22 – 73

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) introduced paper S21/22 – 73.

Members of Senate asked questions and were answered as follows:

- Academic appeals and boards of enquiry were not currently included in the proposals. Registry would be looking at whether these could be further streamlined but that would occur in a later phase.

Action: Report to be updated for Council (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience)).

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Senate agreed to recommend to Council a new policy and procedure for handling non-academic student appeals.

15119 – Senate matters – S21/22 – 74 (A and B)

Dr Marion Harney declared an interest and left the meeting.

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) introduced paper S21/22 – 74A. Dr Harney's membership of Senate would be coming to an end at the end of the current academic year. As well as being an elected member, Dr Harney added great value as a result of her role in curriculum transformation. The proposals were designed to ensure that she could continue to attend to give Senate the benefit of her expertise in this area.

Members of Senate asked questions and were answered as follows:

- It was proposed that Dr Harney attend Senate rather than sit as a co-opted member because this would not affect her eligibility for membership in the future.
- Further consideration was needed of Senate membership provisions – a paper was requested for the June meeting.

Action: Letter of appointment to Dr Harney (Head of Governance)

Action: Senate Standing Orders to be updated and published on the website (Head of Governance)

Action: Further revisions to Senate Standing Orders to be brought to Senate for consideration at its June meeting (Head of Governance)

Senate approved the regular attendance of the Academic Lead for the Curriculum Transformation Project Team at Senate effective from the start of the 2022/23 academic year for the duration of the Curriculum Transformation project.

Senate approved the amendments to Standing Orders necessary to affect this change.

Dr Harney returned to the meeting and was congratulated.

The Acting Secretary to Senate introduced paper S21/22 – 74B. The proposal was to establish a more consistent and transparent system for decision-making in relation to expulsion. The Vice-Chancellor noted that the changes were designed to reduce his discretion in such matters.

Action: Senate Scheme of Delegation and Student Regulations to be updated and published on the website (Head of Governance)

Senate approved the delegation of the power to expel a student to the Vice-Chancellor.

Senate approved the delegation of authority to the Head of Governance to make the amendments to Regulations and to the Senate Scheme of Delegation necessary to enact this change.

On a related matter, the Vice-Chancellor informed Senate that consideration was being given to the introduction of software, similar to the Convene software currently used by Council, to

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improve the management of information at Council and Senate and their committees, increasing transparency and effectiveness, including for decision-making between meetings. Senate indicated its support for proceeding with this work. An update would be provided to the Senate at its next meeting, but members of Senate were invited to approach the Head of Governance with any comments or questions in the meantime.

Action: Update to be provided to Senate at its next meeting on the provision of new software (Head of Governance)

Part 2: Items in this part of the agenda are for noting without discussion

15120 – Research Ethics system (update)– S21/22 – 75

Senate noted the progress made to date on the research ethics system project and associated issues and constraints.

15121 – Interim update on industrial action in 2021/22– S21/22 – 76

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) introduced paper S21/22 – 76.

Members of Senate asked questions and received the following responses:

- A member of Senate questioned the accuracy of the data on units affected by the industrial action. The process used to gather the data was the same as that used during previous rounds of industrial action and the University was confident in its accuracy.
- The rating of impact was made on the basis of information provided by Heads of Department on units impacted and mitigations in place.
- Discussions were underway in relation to contingency plans for the safe operation of unit and programme boards in Semester 2. The priority was to ensure that student experience in terms of awards and progression was not adversely impacted and that quality and standards were maintained.
- Senate would be consulted about any changes to procedures and members of Senate could approach the Director of Registry for further information.
- Clarification was provided that, whilst, as part of the ongoing industrial action, individuals may have opted not to take up their roles as external examiners, this was not encouraged or mandated by the unions

Senate noted current assessments of the impact of industrial action on teaching delivery in 2021/22.

15122 - Calendar of Meetings– S21/22 – 77

The Acting Secretary to Senate introduced paper S21/22 – 77, noting that, as graduation dates for summer 2023 had not yet been confirmed, these would come to Senate in June, along with confirmed dates for the meetings scheduled for the end of the academic year.

Action: Calendar of meetings to be submitted to Council for approval, with provisional calendar for 2023/24 for noting (Head of Governance).

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Action: Dates for graduation in summer 2023 to be submitted to the June meeting of Senate for approval (Director of Education and Student Services)).

Senate agreed to recommend to Council the Calendar of Meetings of Statutory Bodies for the 2022/23 academic year, noting the dates at the end of the academic year which were subject to the agreement of dates for award ceremonies in 2023.

Senate noted the provisional Calendar of Meetings of Statutory Bodies for the 2023/24 academic year.

15123 – Students’ Union Officers– S21/22 – 79

Senate put on record its continued thanks to the serving Students’ Union officers and its congratulations to incoming officers.

Formalities to be completed in relation to the sabbatical year for the Community Officer (Acting Chief Executive of the Students’ Union).

Senate noted the Students’ Union officers elected for 2022/23.

Senate approved a sabbatical year for the incoming Community Officer.

Part 3: Items in this part of the agenda are for noting without discussion

No notice had been given by the deadline of a wish to discuss the items in this section.

15124 – Senate Vacation Powers and Urgent Business Procedure – S21/22 – 80

Senate noted one item agreed under the Senate Vacation Powers and Urgent Business Procedure (SUB21/22 – 11).

15125 – Effectiveness – S21/22 – 81 (A and B)

Senate noted an update on the processes for assessing committee effectiveness.

Senate noted an update from Council on Council effectiveness.

15126 – Professorial pay– S21/22 – 82

Senate noted an update on professorial pay.

15127 – Minutes of Boards of Studies – S21/22 – 83 (A – E)

Senate received the following minutes of Boards of Studies:

- A. Faculty of Science meeting of 2 March 2022
- B. School of Management meeting of 2 March 2022
- C. Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences meeting of 2 March 2022
- D. Faculty of Engineering and Design meetings of 12 January and 2 March 2022
- E. Board of Studies (Doctoral) meetings of 17 January and 14 February 2022

15128 – Committee minutes – S21/22 – 84 (A – I)

Senate received the minutes of the following meetings of Senate committees and Joint Senate/Council Committees:

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- A. Curriculum Transformation Committee- *has not met*.
- B. University Doctoral Studies Committee meeting of 27 January 2022.
- C. Education, Quality and Standards Committee meetings of 21 January and 15 March 2022.
- D. Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee meeting of 18 January 2022
- E. Education Board meetings of 27 January and 7 March 2022.
- F. Academic Programmes Committee meeting of 1 March 2022
- G. Courses and Partnership Approvals Committee meeting of 9 March 2022
- H. Academic Ethics and Integrity Committee meeting of 1 February 2022
- I. Council, Senate, Students' Union meeting of 17 February 2022

15129 – Minutes of Council

Senate noted the following minutes of Council:

- Meeting of [18 November 2021](#)
- Meeting of [29 November 2021](#)
- Meeting of [24 February 2022](#).

15130 – Programme of Meetings for 2021/22 – S21/22 – 86

Senate noted the programme of meetings of Senate for 2021/22 and the draft business for the meeting on 8 June 2022.

- Wednesday 8 June 2022 at 2.15pm

15131 – Any Other Business

It was agreed that consideration of Senate Standing Orders might helpfully include clarification on the rules surrounding conflict of interest.

Action: A paper on conflicts of interest to be provided to Senate for consideration at its meeting on 8 June (Head of Governance)

Members of Senate welcomed the break in the middle of the meeting and requested that consideration be given to the provision of refreshments.

Action: Consideration to be given to the inclusion of routine breaks, refreshments and a suitable room (Head of Governance)

The meeting finished at 5.03pm.