

# Special Meeting of Senate

Thursday, 1st June 2023 1:00 pm

Online, via Teams | Senate

## Attendees

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### Members

Professor Ian White, Chair  
Dr Fran Amery  
Professor Julian Chaudhuri  
Professor Duncan Craig  
Professor Adrian Evans  
Britt Flanderijn  
Dr Sabina Gheduzzi  
Dr MariCarmen Gil Ortega  
Professor Sarah Hainsworth  
Professor Andrew Heath  
Julia Kildyushova  
Dr Frances Laughton  
Dr Dai Moon  
Dr Ben Ralph  
Kate Robinson  
Alexander Robinson  
Dr Paul Shepherd  
Professor Brian Squire  
Professor Edmund Thompson  
Dr Steve Wharton  
Professor Cassie Wilson  
Professor Deborah Wilson  
Professor Jun Zang

### In attendance

Ian Blenkharn  
Rachel Sheer

### Apologies

Christopher Bonfield (observer)  
Professor Marion Harney (regular attendee)  
Professor Tim Ibell  
Professor Guy McCusker  
Professor Jane White

### Did Not Attend

Professor Peter Allen  
Professor Phil Allmendinger  
Professor Steve Brammer  
Dr Teslim Bukoye  
Professor Matthew Davidson  
Professor Fiona Gillison  
Professor Alan Hayes  
Professor Momna Hejmadi  
Professor Robert Kelsh  
Jura Neverauskaite  
Dr Fei Qin  
Professor Danae Stanton Fraser  
Professor Lorraine Whitmarsh

### Secretariat

Emily Commander, Secretary  
Karen Gleave  
Greg Noakes  
Caroline Pringle

## 15308.0 Welcome and Quorum

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**Minute** by Emily Commander

The Chair welcomed members of Senate to the Special Meeting (Standing Order 4.2) and confirmed that a quorum was present.

## 15309.0 Declarations of Interest

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**Minute** by Emily Commander

The Chair noted that guidance on declarations of interest had been circulated in advance of the meeting and called for any declarations to be made at that point.

*Guidance:*

*Senate Standing Order 8.5 states that “a Senate member with any direct or indirect personal or financial interest, whether actual or perceived, in any matter under discussion by Senate must declare that interest to the Chair at the earliest opportunity, either before or during the meeting. Such interests may include decisions which have an impact on the terms and conditions of employment of a member of Senate. All declarations of interest must be recorded in the minutes by the Secretary.”*

*Standing Order 8.6 states that “by default, Senate members with an interest in a particular item of business should withdraw whilst that item is under consideration. Exceptionally, at the discretion of the chair, they may remain to participate in the discussion, but not to vote. A member who has temporarily withdrawn from a meeting continues to count towards the quorum.”*

*The item of business under consideration at the meeting today (item 15310) arises as a result of, and in response to, the difficult personal decision taken by some members of Senate to withdraw their contribution to marking and assessment. This decision puts the action of those members of Senate into conflict with their responsibility as a member of Senate to assure the standards and quality of the academic work of the University, including by mitigating any risks to standards and quality (Ordinance 8.1).*

*Consequently, any member of Senate who has withdrawn their contribution to marking and assessment has a conflict of interest, or at least a perceived conflict of interest, which compromises their ability to take part in any decisions to mitigate the associated risk to standards and quality. Along with any Senate member who finds themselves conflicted for a different reason, they will be asked record that they have a conflict of interest at the start of proceedings, and that declaration will be recorded in the minutes. There is no requirement to specify the nature of the conflict.*

*As it is important that all members of Senate both hear and understand as wide a range of views of possible on this issue, the Chair will exercise his discretion to ensure that all those declaring an interest are able to contribute fully to the discussion. However, they must not participate in making the decision, and an abstention will be recorded by their name in any vote which is called.*

Some concerns were raised in relation to the guidance that had been issued and members of Senate asked questions for reasons of clarification, as follows:

- Membership of a union did not qualify as a declarable interest;
- Support for those taking industrial action did not qualify as a declarable interest; and
- It was the responsibility of each individual member of Senate to determine, on the basis of their personal integrity, whether or not they needed to declare an interest and abstain from any decision made. Declarations would not be policed.

The following members of Senate then declared an interest:

- Dr Fran Amery
- Britt Flanderijn
- Dr Sabina Gheduzzi
- Dr Dai Moon
- Dr Ben Ralph

These members would be able to participate fully in the discussion but would be recorded as having abstained in any decision taken.

Julia Kildyushova and Alexander Robinson noted that they did not have an interest to declare but would abstain in any decision taken on the basis that they had not been able to consult the Students' Union for its view on the proposals.

# 15310.0 Undergraduate Finalists and Ceremonies - S22/23 - 83

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## Minute by Emily Commander

At the outset, the Chair noted the discussions arising from the previous circulation of the paper and the resulting meetings. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) introduced paper S22/23 - 83 on proposals to assure academic standards and quality in light of current industrial action. In doing so, he noted that:

- although not included in the paper, the direction of travel would also be applicable to finalist PGT students (i.e. online courses); and
- documentation considered by the Education, Quality and Standards Committee (EQSC) would be circulated to members of Senate for its meeting on 7 June 2023 but had been shared with members of Senate in advance via Decision Time.

The following points arose in the discussion which followed:

- Some members noted that many of the concerns and questions they had raised throughout the consultation period had been addressed in the proposals before Senate.
- Guidance in relation to quoracy at exam boards would follow in due course.
- The guidance on prizes was intended to be sufficiently permissive to enable the award of prizes where enough information was available for a fair and reasonable decision to be made.
- The policy of allowing each Board of Studies to take its own decision on equivalent approaches that could replace double marking represented a divergence from QA16 and presented a risk of inconsistency within the institution. The University was mitigating this risk by taking an "equivalent but different" approach, which required the Boards of Study to identify alternatives that offered an appropriate degree of externality and calibration. Where no safe equivalent could be identified, an interim award would have to be made. The Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS) confirmed that at the Board of Studies for HSS, after a good discussion, a decision had been taken that there was no safe equivalent.
- In response to concerns that the proposals might make it possible for interim ordinary awards to be made permanent, it was confirmed that interim awards would be replaced in all cases, either by a classified degree or, where a student had not met the required standard, by the relevant exit award. It was anticipated that a review would determine whether the ability to award ordinary degrees was something that would be useful to retain in the longer term.
- The Students' Union read out a prepared statement, which has been made available to all members of Senate [under separate cover](#).
- It was noted that there may be an increased need for mental health support - the University would monitor this and respond accordingly.

- Ordinary awards attracted FHEQ Level 6 recognition but it was acknowledged would not usually be sufficient to enable finalists to progress on to masters study. The University was working to ensure that it could provide sufficient evidence of individual student attainment, for example through detailed transcripts, to enable students to progress to the next stage of their study or career.

Noting the abstentions under item 15309, Senate approved recommendations in relation to:

- The approach and principles for assuring the quality and standards of marking summative assessment, applicable for the 2022/23 academic year where there is MAB impact. (Report, para. 7a; Appendix 1 and Appendix 3).
- The approach to the administration of marks and interim academic outcomes where there is no or incomplete information, applicable for the 2022/23 academic year where there is MAB impact. (Report, para. 7a; Appendix 1 and Appendix 3).
- The extraordinary options for interim award and classification, applicable for the 2022/23 academic year where there is MAB impact (Appendix 1)
- The conduct of summer 2023 ceremonies. (Appendix 2)

## **15311.0 Any Other Business**

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**Minute** by Emily Commander

There was no other business to be taken at the meeting.

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