

SENATE

Wednesday 05 June 2024: 2:15pm

Council Chamber | Senate

Attended

Jimena Alamo

Fran Amery

Christopher Bonfield

Steve Brammer

Zoe Burke

Julian Chaudhuri

Duncan Craig

Adrian Evans

Fiona Gillison

Sarah Hainsworth - **Chair**

Marion Harney

Sophia Hatzisavvidou

Alan Hayes

Andrew Heath

Titus Hiller

Jo Hyde

Tim Ibell

Nigel Johnston

Peter Lambert

Ryan Lucas

Guy McCusker

David Moon

Lucy Noble - *Online*

Fei Qin

Ben Ralph

Paul Shepherd

Amber Snary

Hannah South

Danae Stanton Fraser

Cassie Wilson

Lorraine Whitmarsh
Deborah Wilson
Jun Zang

In Attendance

Katie Anderton
Ian Blenkarn
Helena Barrell
Andrew Browning – **Secretary to Meeting**
Lauren Howells
Ruth Robins
Rachel Sheer

Apologies

Jura Neverauskaite
Ian White
Angie Brown
James Davenport

15452.0 Welcome and Quorum

Purpose - For Information

Minute

The Interim Head of Governance in his capacity as secretary to Senate explained that the Vice-Chancellor his apologies and was therefore unable to Chair the meeting.

Under the terms of reference of Senate the Deputy Vice-Chancellor would normally Chair in the absence of the Vice-Chancellor. As this position was currently vacant the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research & Innovation) had been asked to Chair the meeting. There were no objections to this from Senate and she therefore assumed the Chair.

15453.0 Declarations of Interest

Purpose - For Information

Minute

There were no declarations of interests.

15454.0 Minutes of the Previous Meeting - S23/24 - 77

Purpose - For Approval

Minute

The minutes of the previous meeting of Senate held on 17 April were approved.

15455.0 Actions and Matters Arising - S23/24 - 78

Purpose - For Noting

Minute***S23/24 - 65 - Approval of Appointment of University Marshall***

The Interim Head of Governance told Senate that he had received clarification from the graduations team as to what the role of the University Marshall was and how it had been appointed. He said that while the Marshall role has had final approval from Senate the nomination has tended to come from the organisers of the graduations with the endorsement of the Vice-Chancellor. He said that the role would be for three years. The Interim Head of Governance recommended that Tim Woodman be formally appointed but that there be a request from Senate that the role be advertised internally at the University ahead of the expiry of the term.

Decision

Senate **approved** Tim Woodman to be appointed as University Marshall for a period of three years.

15456.0 Institutional Update - S23/24 - 79

Purpose - For Noting

Minute

The contribution of all staff throughout the past academic year was acknowledged.

The successful OFSTED outcome was noted.

Senate were informed that Annie Maw had been appointed for a three-year term as Pro-Chancellor and would take up the role on 1 June 2024, working alongside the existing Pro-Chancellor, Ruth Foreman. Annie has a long association with the University and has been a strong advocate for our research.

The contribution of the Students' Union was acknowledged, with outgoing officers being thanked for their substantial contribution to University life, and re-elected officers congratulated.

It was noted that Nicky Kemp, Chief Compliance Officer, had retired, and she was thanked for her significant contributions to the University.

The University had been officially recognised as a UK Sport-accredited Elite Training Centre.

21 students would shortly be starting internships as part of the new Bath Insights internship programme, with internships in various University departments lasting for 6-8 weeks.

The University would be showcasing the campus and offer to prospective students and applicants at two upcoming Open Days, with significant numbers of visitors expected.

The University would be hosting international agents from key countries on campus, with the aim of ensuring the University is at the forefront of the minds of agents when advising prospective international students. It was planned for this to become a regular event.

A correction was issued under point 48 of the Institutional Update, to reflect that the Innovation in Learning and Teaching Award was presented to Professor Jason Hart and Dr Katharina Lenner (Department of Social & Policy Sciences).

A question was asked about the student petition that had been submitted to senior management about Gaza, and its lack of inclusion in the Institutional Update. It was confirmed that it had been received and that discussions were ongoing and, as such, it was not yet considered appropriate to offer an update to Senate. It was emphasised that the Vice-Chancellor and other senior members of staff were holding regular meetings with students and that work was ongoing in the background. It was asked if Senate would be advised once a response had been formulated? Senate were told that this would be dependent on the incoming Vice-Chancellor.

A question was asked about the small drop in UG conversions due to lateness in making offers made in point 44, and if the cause of this was known. It was confirmed that all students received offers, and that the delay was partly due to an increase in applications creating a greater volume of offers required, further, some offers went out later to maximise international offers. Since the time of writing of the paper, the conversion rate had held up compared to the previous year.

15457.0 Discussion Item - School of Management Faculty Spotlight- S23/24 - 80

Minute

The Dean of the School of Management presented an update on the work of the School. It was noted that the School was performing well across Undergraduate and Postgraduate courses, both financially and within the league tables. There were however some concerns around the performance of some of the Postgraduate courses and the delivery of online courses which required further attention. Discussion covered the following points:

- The performance of the University's MBA course had been lower than expected. The initial strategy within the School had been to be selective of high quality students with the aim that this would then reflect in the ranking of the course. However rankings for the MBA course were based on the responses to alumni surveys which had a relatively low response rate. Therefore the School may be required to reconsider their strategy of recruitment, while ensuring any change they were to make did not influence the reputation of the School.
- It was queried what the School were doing to improve their research performance. The School wanted to increase their numbers of PhD students however this would require substantial investment from the School but was currently not possible. The current priority for the School was for grants which came in to bring focus and impact through research rather than just income. This had resulted in the School investing in support programmes to allow academics to make time within their Workplace Allocation Model for grant applications. There were also a number of ongoing cultural projects taking place to improve the School's research culture which could also impact on the School's

international standing.

Senate **noted** the update.

15458.0 Curriculum Transformation Project Update - Annual Course Level Survey and Curriculum Transformation Project - S23/24 - 81

Purpose - For Approval

Minute

Senate received an update on the Curriculum Transformation (CT) Project. They were asked to approve the introduction of a course level survey to all departments which would enable the CT project to gain valuable student voice data to evaluate the impact of the project.

Senate queried how the course level survey could affect completion rates for the current Online Unit Evaluation (OUE) process, which formed part of probation and progression for academic staff. It was noted that OUE data was limited, and the intention was to move away from using this as a sole evaluation method. There would be a holistic review of OUE data and the teaching probation process.

Steps were being taken to ensure the introduction of a new survey would not impact NSS responses and cause survey fatigue; a review of all student surveys was part of the Student Voice Strategic Implementation Plan, led by the APVC for Student Voice, Professor Nathalia Gjersoe.

It was noted that once the survey was launched, it would be managed through the Centre for Learning and Teaching with results distributed to committees and students via the normal routes.

Decision

Senate **approved** the roll-out of a course level survey to all departments to enable the Curriculum Transformation Project to gain student voice data to evaluate the impact of the project.

Decision

Senate **approved** the proposal for an annual report on CT progress to be circulated to Executive Board, UEB and Senate.

15459.0 Freedom of Speech Code of Practice - S23/24 - 83

Minute

The interim Head of Governance presented the draft Code of Practice for Freedom of Speech. He informed Senate that there was a statutory requirement on the University to have such a code of practice in place by 1 August 2024. It was also necessary to amend Regulation 18 of the student regulations relating to freedom of expression

The version that was being considered by Senate had previously been considered by UEB which had made two comments, one which centred around the need to deepen the institutional understanding of what Academic Freedom and the other which related to the need to ensure that the code was aligned to with the University's complaints procedure.

The Interim Head of Governance said that some useful comments and suggested amendments had been made by members of Senate which he would look to incorporate into the final version to be considered by Council.

The SU Education Officer stated that the SU had yet to be consulted on the Code of Practice which had previously been promised. The Interim Head of Governance said that he would look to arrange a meeting with the SU over the next week.

Concerns were raised by Senators regarding the wording of paragraphs 3 and 4 of the Code of Practice and that these may appear to be state that Freedom of Speech should take primacy over other University policies and procedures such as the Dignity and Respect Policy.

It was suggested that the University consider the creation of a joint document with the Students' Union in the future.

The Interim Head of Governance said that he would consider the comments made at the meeting and make further revisions to the Code of Practice. These would be shared with Senate before receiving final approval at Council.

Decision

Senate **approved** the amendments to regulation 18 on Freedom of Expression subject to approval by Council of the Code of Practice for Freedom of Speech.

15460.0 2010 Equality Act University Obligations - S23/24 - 84

Minute

The PVC (Student Experience) presented the paper. Senate were being asked to note the outcome of the Abrahart v University of Bristol case and the obligations of higher education institutions under the Equality Act 2010.

Senate asked whether enough was being done by the University in relation to physical disability. The PVC (Student Experience) said that more needed to be done and the implementation of the DAP would assist with this.

Senate **noted**

the paper.

15461.0 Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee - S23/24 - 85A - C

Minute

There were no questions or comments.

Decision

The appointment of the Associate PVC Research (Doctoral) to RKEC was approved.

Decision

Senate Agreed to recommend the Annual Statement on Research Integrity to Council for approval.

15462.0 Committee Effectiveness Review - S23/24 - 86

Purpose - For Discussion

Minute

The Interim Head of Governance Secretariat presented the paper. Discussion covered the following points:

- It was noted that some work had already started in relation to the review of the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee.
- There had been several areas which were consistently arising as areas for improvement including member induction and it was queried as to whether there were any systemic issues. It was confirmed that there had been issues relating to member induction in recent years, due mainly to the changes within the Governance Team but this would be remedied for the 2024/25 academic year. It was noted that the most effective committees were those with clear Terms of Reference from which an agenda could be developed with the Committee members knowing the the aims of the meeting.

Senate noted the report and supported the further review of the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee (RKEC), Academic Programmes Committee (APC), University Ethics Committee and Senior Academic Appointments Committee (SAAC).

15463.0 Degree Outcomes 2022/23 - S23/24 - 87A - C

Purpose - For Approval

Minute

Senate considered the reports on Undergraduate and Postgraduate Degree Outcomes, and noted the report on the academic impact to students during the national Marking and Assessment Boycott.

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education & Global) explained that these reports provide a deep dive into the data, as compared to a previous paper submitted to Senate in January that selected the highlights. It was noted that not all the relevant data on the wider sector is available yet. Discussion covered the following points:

- Senate noted that it was good to see Recommendation 1 of the UGT Degree Outcomes report that relates to developing an action plan to address the outcome gaps for

underrepresented students. In response to a question on what the action plan might include, it was explained that more needs to be done to understand the problems first before potential solutions are identified. It is likely that these activities will overlap with the University's ongoing work around the 2010 Equality Act, as discussed earlier under Item 15460.

- With regards to Recommendation 3 in the UGT Degree Outcomes report, it was suggested that it might be difficult for departments to unpick the impact of group work on outcomes. It was explained that different faculties approach group work differently and some aspects of how group work is set up and managed may favour particular students. The aim of this recommendation is not to prevent faculties from making innovations to group work, but to support the implementation of a framework for how group work is set up that helps to provide assurance that it generates fair marks. Some faculties are already starting to do this, which will make it easier to extend to other faculties.
- Senate queried how the University benchmarks itself against other institutions and whether it would be possible to know if the University has higher standards. It was noted that the University has a robust quality assurance system in place for the allocation of different grades. The sector benchmarking data shows the proportion of firsts and 2.1s awarded at different institutions. This data was not available in time for the meeting, but the University is expected to sit in the middle of the sector.
- Members highlighted that QA35 'Assessment Procedures for Taught Programmes of Study' asks for close attention to be paid to grades that fall outside of a typical range, and it was asked if it is possible to know how common it is for a unit's outcomes to fall outside of a typical range. It was noted that this data is held by faculty examination boards and is submitted to EQSC as an annual report on scaling. Consideration would be given to the Quality Assurance Code of Practice as this work proceeds.
- Members asked if it would be possible to view more detailed data on marks distribution. It was explained that currently data is just collected on the proportion of grades awarded, but consideration could be given to collecting marks distribution data as well. It would be good, for example, to look at how many students from less advantaged backgrounds were on the borderlines of being awarded different grades. The University is not in a position to collect such data in the near future, but it is starting on a journey of unpicking data at a higher level than has been done previously.
- It was noted that there is a gap between the awards received by UK and international PGT students, and it was asked if this could present a risk for the University's business model which relies on recruiting postgraduate international students. It was explained that international PGT students do not always have as much space or time to develop their English language skills at the same pace as international UGT students, but they do usually leave with better English language skills than before. International PGT students often study for different reasons to UK students, such as to improve their job prospects. It was noted that the University does not currently have anything similar to an Access and Participation Plan for PGT students, but there are plans for future work in this area.
- It was commented that students can face challenging grade barriers when applying to study further elsewhere. It was explained that different universities have different ways of awarding grades, so it is important that the University has rigorous quality assurance processes in place so that it can be assured of the high standard of the grades awarded.

Decision

Senate approved the recommendations relating to undergraduate degree outcomes.

Decision

Senate approved the recommendations relating to postgraduate degree outcomes.

15464.0 Student Regulations 2024/25 - S23/24 - 88A - C

Minute

Senate received three papers detailing proposed updates to Student Regulations 7, 15 and 16 to be implemented for the 24/25 Academic Year.

Paper 88A was a summary of the review and consultation activity undertaken in relation to Regulation 16 Higher Degrees during 2023/24 and the proposed changes to the presentation and content of this regulation. The paper also included an update on the Doctoral Strategy Implementation Plan.

A query was raised on point 6 of paper 88A concerning recommendation 1, and where this left PGT (Postgraduate Taught) regulations once they had been removed from Regulation 16. The intention was to renovate Regulation 15 to incorporate PGT, which in turn would allow Regulation 16 to have a clearer focus on PGR (Postgraduate Research) regulations.

Senate noted the potential impact of point 22 of paper 88A, with the removal of the option for PGR students to re-register due to 'the passage of time'. It was noted that set timeframes improved completion rates and the regulations dictated behaviour of the PGR population as whole. Individuals requesting extensions would still be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Decision

Senate **approved** the following recommendations relating to Regulation 16:

Recommendation 1: To rename Regulation 16 from 'Regulation 16 Higher Degrees' to 'Regulation 16 Doctoral and Research Degrees'.

Recommendation 2: Approval of the new and substantially revised text of Regulation 16 to be implemented with effect from 1 September 2024.

Decision

Senate **approved** additions to Regulation 7, as set out in appendix 1. This brought the regulation in with OIA (Office of the Independent Adjudicator) best practice.

Decision

Senate agreed to delegate decision making on Regulation 15 to EQSC (Education, Quality and Standards Committee).

15465.0 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee -

S23/24 - 90

Minute by Katie Anderton

The Vice-President (Community & Inclusion) attended to present the paper. Discussion covered the following points:

- Over the course of the consultation with the committee the size of the membership had increased slightly however there was an overall decrease in membership, moving in the same direction as the size reduction of Council.
- The relationship between EDIC, the proposed Community and Inclusion Operational Steering Group (CIOSG) and the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Network (EDIN) was queried. It was confirmed that the amendments to the Terms of Reference and creation of the CIOSG would not impact on the composition or function of the EDIN. It was felt that membership of the EDIN co-chairs on both groups was important, both to impact operational policy changes and to provide assurance, not only to Senate and Council, but to the EDIN and the wider University Community. This would result in some changes to the current job description and recruitment of the co-chairs to reflect the increased time commitment.

Senate noted the report from the EDIC meeting on 23 May 2024.

Decision

Senate agreed to recommend to Council the proposed new Terms of Reference and the formation of the Community and Inclusion Steering Group (CIOSG).

15466.0 Academic Staff Committee Membership 2024/25 - 101

Purpose - For Approval

Minute

The Vice-President (Community & Inclusion) attended to present the paper which requested the extension to the term of office of Professor Semali Perera for one additional year. Discussion covered the following points:

- A discrepancy in term lengths had arisen in part due to the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as Academic Staff Committee moving between teams during this time.
- It was noted that due to the decisions made by the Committee it was beneficial to maintain a good level of continuity and transfer of knowledge rather than a large turnover in a given year.
- It was noted that the members whose terms were coming to an end had agreed to provide support to the Vice-President (Community & Inclusion) in their work in the next academic year, reviewing the processes of the Committee.

Decision

Senate **approved** the extension of Dr Perera's term of office for one additional year, ending on 31 2025.

15467.0 Export Control Policy Update - S23/24 - 102

Purpose - For Approval

Minute

It was noted that export control was a challenging area, with government scrutiny ever-increasing.

The University's Export Control Policy was first published in 2022, and had been reviewed recently due to the complex nature of the regulations and the need to continuously monitor to ensure University policies were mapping against government policy.

It was explained that the changes amounted to minor updates, which were outlined in the paper.

Decision

Senate **approved** the proposed updates to the University Export Control Policy.

15468.0 Request to set aside Regulation 16.5(e) - Second extension to registration of PhD student - S23/24 - 103

Purpose - For Approval

Decision

Senate **approved** the setting aside of Regulation 16.5 (e) in the specific case raised, so that a second extension of registration of 8 months' duration may be granted.

15469.0 Courses and Partnerships Approval Committee - S23/24 - 91

Purpose - For Approval

Minute

The report from the meeting of CPAC held on 1 May 2024 was noted by Senate.

Decision

Senate **approved** the following:-

- a. (i) The Stage 2 new course proposal for an MPharm Pharmacy with Preparatory Year (at

University of Plymouth) for 2025/26 start; and,

- (ii) noted the direction of travel for the draft assessment regulations for the MPharm's Preparatory Year, and agreed that approval of the final version be delegated to Education, Quality and Standards Committee

b. the Stage 2 new course proposals for:

- (i) an MSc Artificial Intelligence and MSc Artificial Intelligence with placement, including exit awards of PG Dip. Artificial Intelligence and PG Cert. Artificial Intelligence, for 2025/26 start; and
- (ii) an MSc Advanced Machine Learning and MSc Advanced Machine Learning with placement, including exit awards of PG Dip. Advanced Machine Learning and PG Cert. Advanced Machine Learning, for 2025/26 start

c. The Stage 2 new course proposals for:

- (i) an MSc International Development with Education, full-time and part-time, including exit awards of PG Dip. International Development with Education and PG Cert. International Development, for 2025/26 start; and
- (ii) an MSc International Development Management, full-time and part-time, including exit awards of PG Dip. International Development Management and PG Cert. International Development, for 2025/26 start

15470.0 Academic Programmes Committee - S23/24 - 92

Minute

Senate noted the report updating it on the work of APC including its meetings in February and May.

Decision

Senate **approved** Amrita University, India as a new collaborative partner.

15471.0 Academic Ethics and Integrity Committee - S23/24 - 93

Minute

The report of the meeting of the Academic Ethics and Integrity Committee which was held on 24 April 2024 was noted by Senate.

15472.0 Education Quality and Standards Committee - S23/24 - 94

Minute

Senate noted:-

- i) The unconfirmed minutes from the Education Quality and Standards Committee meeting held on 15 May 2024.
- ii) The report from the meeting of Education Quality and Standards Committee held on 15 May 2024.
- iii) The Education Annual Review and Enhancement Overview 2023/25. Senate also endorsed the recommendations for action

15473.0 Report from Council - S23/24 - 95

Minute

Senate noted the report of the meeting of Council held on 2 May 2024.

15474.0 Academic Appeals Data - S23/24 - 96

Minute

Senate noted annual monitoring data in relation to academic appeals in 2022/23 and the operation of Regulation 17.

15475.0 Academic Dress - S23/24 - 97

Minute

Senate noted the changes to Academic Dress made by the Director of Academic Registry,

15476.0 Awards & Prizes - S23/24 - 98A - C

Minute

Senate noted the awards and prizes made in academic year 2023/2024.

15477.0 Boards of Studies - S23/24 - 99A - D

Purpose - For Noting

Minute

Senate noted the annual reports of the Boards of Studies. It was queried if there were any improvements which could be made to the format going forward or if there were any areas of the Boards' work which Senate would like to see highlighted. Senate confirmed they were happy with the current format and content of the annual reports.

15478.0 Senate Benchmarking Actions Update - S23/24 -

100

Purpose - For Noting

Minute

Senate noted the progress made to complete the actions arising out of the Senate Benchmarking Review.

15479.0 Programme of Meetings for 2024/25

Minute

Senate noted the programme of meetings for 2024/2025.

15480.0 Any Other Business

Purpose - For Noting

Minute

The Interim Head of Governance reminded Senate members to complete their Prevent Training.

Minute

The Interim Head of Governance said that nominations for elections to Senate were currently open and asked if Senate members could encourage colleagues to stand.

Minute by Andrew Browning

It was the last meeting of Senate for the following members:-

Professor Danae Stanton Fraser
Professor Guy McCusker
Professor Paul Shepherd
Professor Lorraine Whitmarsh
Dr Fran Amery
Titus Hiller

They were thanks for their service during their terms of office.

Minute

The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Ian White, was unfortunately unable to Chair what would have been his last meeting of Senate. Senators expressed their thanks to him for his service to the University and for his leadership through difficult times including most notably the Covid-19 pandemic. Senate expressed its view that the University had been led by him to a better place. It also thanked him for the quality of his chairing of meetings over the last six years.