

# SENATE

Wednesday, 8th November 2023 2:15 pm

Council Chamber | Senate

## Attendees

---

### Attended

Professor Ian White (Chair)

Jimena Alamo

Professor Steve Brammer

Dr Zoe Burke

Professor Julian Chaudhuri

Professor Duncan Craig

Professor James Davenport

Professor Adrian Evans

Professor Fiona Gillison

Professor Sarah Hainsworth

Professor Alan Hayes

Professor Andrew Heath

Dr Nigel Johnston

Professor Peter Lambert

Dr David Moon

Jura Neverauskaite

Dr Ben Ralph

Kate Robinson

Professor Paul Shepherd

Amber Snary

Professor Danae Stanton Fraser

Professor Edmund Thompson

Dr Jennifer Thomson

Professor Jane White

Professor Lorraine Whitmarsh

Professor Cassie Wilson

Professor Deborah Wilson

Professor Jun Zang

**In Attendance**

Ian Blenkharn Director of Education and Student Services

Andrew Browning, Head of Governance Secretariat (Secretary to meeting)

Christopher Bonfield, Director of the Centre for Learning and Teaching

Professor Marian Harney, Associate Dean (Education), Faculty of Engineering and Design

Ryan Lucas, Students' Union Education Manager

Rachel Sheer, Director of Academic Registry

**Secretariat**

Katie Anderton

Laura Andrews

Helen Barrell

Ruth Robins

**Apologies**

Jo Hyde

Rosie Jensen

Guy McCusker

Brian Squire

Teslim Bukoye

**Agenda and Notice of Meeting****15356.0 Welcome and Quorum**

Purpose - For Information

---

**Minute** by Andrew Browning

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. The Chair extended a particular welcome to the Interim Director of Governance Secretariat, Andrew Browning, who in his role would be secretary to Senate.

The meeting noted apologies from Jo Hyde, Rosie Jensen, Guy McCusker, Brian Squire, and Teslim Bukoye.

**15357.0 Declarations of Interest**

Purpose - For Noting

---

**Minute** by Andrew Browning

There were no declarations of interest.

## **15358.0 Minutes of the Previous Meeting - S22/23 - 12**

Purpose - For Approval

---

**Minute** by Andrew Browning

The minutes of the meeting of Senate which took place on 13 September 2023 were approved.

## **15359.0 Actions and Matters Arising**

Purpose - For Noting

---

**Minute** by Andrew Browning

There were no matters arising from previous meetings and there were no actions outstanding.

## **15360.0 Institutional update - S23/24 - 13**

Purpose - For Noting

---

**Minute** by Andrew Browning

The Vice Chancellor paid tribute to all colleagues who had facilitated a smooth start to the semester, including those in Accommodation who worked especially hard to ensure all students had somewhere to reside over the coming academic year.

The Vice Chancellor expressed gratefulness to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) and the Vice-President (Community & Inclusion) for their efforts to support those affected by the situation in Gaza and Israel.

It was confirmed that there has been a meningitis outbreak on campus. The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) was pleased with the efficiency of the University's response. The two students affected are recovering well, and their close contacts have been vaccinated as a precaution.

The Access and Participation Plan for 2024-2028 has been approved by the Office for Students, and is now live on the University website.

It was noted that there has been an increase in the number of visiting delegations. This is potentially linked to the University's TEF Triple Gold Award, led by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education & Global).

Research performance also continues to be positive. The Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) has also announced that it has been able to increase the Centres for Doctoral Training (CDT) funding pot to £135 million, and will therefore award 55 CDTs rather than the 40 CDTs originally announced.

## 15361.0 OfS Presentation - S23/24 - 14

Purpose - For Discussion

---

**Minute** by Andrew Browning

Professor Alan Hayes gave a presentation on the Office for Students Regulatory Compliance. Discussion covered the following points:

It was questioned why Advance HE are also involved instead of the OfS alone? It was confirmed that they attend inspections as part of the panel in their own right.

The issue of personal tutoring had previously been raised at the Senior Tutors Forum, and it was noted that being a personal tutor is not in every staff member's job description and the OfS may question this.

It was highlighted that the administrative burden of this process, in terms of assessment and support, the development of frameworks, and the inspections themselves is quite high. There is also significant burden on the departments being reviewed, as the scope and scale of the material being requested is substantial.

It was acknowledged that the review could be more confirmational than anticipated. It was noted that the OfS try to tread carefully during inspections, as they are aware that there is a possibility for defensiveness.

It was noted that the OfS is often seen to be arbitrary and lacking in transparency when it comes to their processes, and that the emphasis on students should not be understated.

It is difficult to map registered providers within the sector against each other because the range of institutions is so broad.

The work being done by the Education, Quality and Standards Committee was also raised in relation to this, and it was emphasised that our own institutional regulatory framework has been tailored to comply with OfS conditions and therefore it ought to be the case that by carrying out "business as usual" the conditions should be met by default. It was noted that there is always the drive for enhancement beyond basic compliance, and that there may be areas that would benefit from deep dive investigations, such as personal tutoring and Moodle provision.

## 15362.0 Mark and Assessment Boycott Update

---

**Minute** by Andrew Browning

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education & Global) and the Director of Academic Registry provided Senate with an update on the 2022/23 academic outcomes following the Marking and Assessment Boycott. They noted that nearly all of the outcomes for the academic year had been resolved and extended their thanks to both Academic colleagues and Professional Services staff who were involved in achieving this. All Undergraduate finalists had received their final outcomes on 20 October 2023, with no further interim awards requiring resolution. Work had now moved to certificate release and the issuing of final transcripts. The outcomes for continuing students would be released on 16 November 2023 with outcomes looking positive in

the majority of cases.

It was noted that for a small number of Postgraduate students there were some complexities, however Registry had worked to ensure there were a number of options available to progress these cases.

For continuing Undergraduate students there were several different paths moving forward but all would be manageable within the Faculties and School. The information provided to Senate was still in its preliminary stages as some results were still awaited however the projection was that 94% of students would pass successfully with no problems. The majority of the remaining cases could be dealt with via supplementary assessments and fell within the normal degree of failure expected. Registry would be in communication with the Faculties to monitor the cases which required higher credits to progress. The projection for Postgraduate students was that there would be an 85% pass rate, with the rest of the results continuing to emerge. This would need to be continually monitored alongside the Faculties however it was noted that there were new exit awards in place which, if necessary, could be used.

Looking further into the academic year it was expected there would be some continued disruption for some students which would be informed by the Faculties and brought to Senate. The PVC (Education & Global) noted to the Senate that they would bring back a report of the lessons learned from the MAB which would include the use of Senate in steering decisions. It was pleasing to note that finalists from 2022/23 were not graduated with false or inflated grades and that the results achieved were based on the student's hard work and grades.

Discussion covered the following points:-

It was questioned if all students had completed a first attempt of assessments and how this would affect supplementary assessments. It was confirmed that an extremely small number of students had not had a first attempt and all students had 'normally failed' meaning that the supplementary assessments they undertook would be the same as previous years but held at a later point in the academic year.

It was asked whether there had been a knock on effect for final year students in relation to graduate schemes, international Masters or similar. The response was that there had been some issues raised but all were dealt with at Faculty or Registry level. Support was provided to students by their Personal Tutors and Directors of Studies with bespoke solutions being sought.

It was noted that discussion was still needed for students who had been in their penultimate year in 2022/23 but needed to complete training units in 2023/24. The numbers of students affected was small and so could be dealt with on a case by case basis.

Senate noted the update.

## **15363.0 Degree Outcomes Statement - S23/24 - 15**

---

**Minute** by Andrew Browning

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) introduced the draft of the University's Degree Outcomes Statement for 2023. UUK members recommitted in 2022, in-line with the previous Statement of Intent from the UK Standing Committee of Quality Assessment (UKSCQA), to institutional reviews of degree outcomes resulting in the production of annual Degree Outcome Statements. The statement, due to be published in December, was not an OfS requirement; however, its publication was a partial way of demonstrating compliance. The paper reflected on the five years ending 2021/22 and identified the need to address some gaps in terms of ethnicity and disability. A proposal was put forward for Senate to approve and recommend to

Council the statement as a factual document, with a commitment to bringing a more detailed analysis, to include the recent APP analysis and submission, to the next Senate meeting.

A question about the possibility of obtaining a departmental breakdown was answered with the need to be careful not to risk identifying individual students, where some departmental numbers were low.

#### **Decision** by Andrew Browning

Senate approved the Degree Outcomes Statement for recommendation to Council, subject to a) the addition of a statement on condolence and compensation to Appendix 1 and b) a more detailed analysis to be brought to a future senate meeting.

#### **Action** by Andrew Browning

To add a statement on condolence and compensation to appendix 1 of the degree outcome statement

Action Status - Completed | Due by - 23 Nov 2023 | Assigned to - Julian Chaudhuri

#### **Action** by Andrew Browning

Action Description - A detailed analysis of the Degree Outcomes Statement for a future meeting of Senate

Action Status - Not Started | Due by - 31 Jan 2024 | Assigned to - Julian Chaudhuri

## **15364.0 Student Numbers Report - S23/24 -16**

---

#### **Minute** by Andrew Browning

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) presented the Student Numbers Report which updated Senate on registrations onto undergraduate and postgraduate programmes as of 31st October 2023, and on trends and developments from the 2022/23 admissions cycle.

The conversion rates for international postgraduate students in the 2023 cycle were lower than expected. The University is carrying out a review into this. Potential reasons include that fewer waivers were offered for deposits. Also, the University's scholarships were widely publicised but there were not enough scholarships to offer in response to the applications subsequently received. The University is looking to take a more measured approach in the next cycle. A sector-wide review is being conducted into the low international conversion rates as it is suspected that other universities experienced them as well.

Concern was expressed with regards to the University's performance against APP targets. The University is considering ways to improve its performance, such as by targeting contextual offers and reviewing its bursaries. It was noted that Bath's reputation as a predominantly white middle-class city can put off applicants from more diverse backgrounds, in turn creating a self-perpetuating problem.

Senate noted the report.

## **15365.0 Academic Quality & Standards Policy - S23/24 - 17**

---

**Minute** by Andrew Browning

The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) explained that the work being done was intended to turn what was a lengthy and proscriptive document into a policy addressing the three core areas, which would be published on the website with clarity on roles and responsibilities. The policy would not sit alone with the related Quality Code of Practice also being updated and reviewed by the Education, Quality and Standards Committee.

A thorough mapping of the Office for Student codes and the university's compliance with them has been commissioned.

It was agreed that the principles are very helpful, and that it would be good to see more detail. It was confirmed that this was in progress and would come to Senate in the future.

**Decision** by Andrew Browning

Senate approved the Academic Quality & Standards Policy, effective immediately, notwithstanding the ongoing work.

## **15366.0 Generative AI in Education - S23/24 -18**

Purpose - For Approval

---

**Minute** by Andrew Browning

The Director of the Centre of Learning and Teaching presented a report proposing that the University aligns itself with the set of principles for the use of Generative AI in Education, as recently published by the Russell Group.

It was noted that some of the best mitigations against Generative AI are strong assessment design and clarity around mark schemes. It is hoped that by implementing these principles, the University would prevent the unpicking of the progress made around assessments in recent years in reaction to the risk of Generative AI.

Additional thought will need to be given to the application of the principles in the doctoral space. The Centre of Learning and Teaching will be working with the Doctoral College on how to support postgraduate students to use Generative AI in their research in ways that do not conflict with funding obligations or publishers' guidelines.

While these proposals focus on the education space, Generative AI will have a broad impact across the whole institution and consideration will need to be given to other areas going forward.

It was noted that Generative AI tools are likely to be trained with content produced by academics. Permission may not always be sought for using academic work in this way and it would be useful to consider this before the University is presented with such scenarios in the future.

The Centre of Learning and Teaching is working with DDAT on how the University can explore the use of different Generative AI tools while also being careful about inputting content where no IP agreement exists. The importance of being aware of the potential biases that these tools can show was also highlighted.

Senate supported the University's alignment with the principles on the use of Generative AI in education as had recently been published by the Russell Group.

## 15367.0 Student Safeguarding Policy Review - S23/24 -19

---

**Minute** by Andrew Browning

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) presented the report. Discussion covered the following points.

It was questioned if support existed within the policy for staff members who were involved in Student Complaints cases. It was confirmed that support did exist for staff members investigating cases but this needed to be made explicit in the procedure. The Student Complaints process is not directed at an individual member of staff and rather a service, with individual staff complaints being referred to the Dignity & Respect Procedure. It was however noted that individual staff members could be implicated in a complaint and as such it was important to add support for implicated staff into the procedure.

The changing of the Fitness to Study Policy to the Health, Wellbeing and Support for Study Policy was welcomed as a benefit to students engaged in the procedure. It was noted that the existing email address would need to be updated once the policy changes were approved.

It was noted that there was an increasing use of specialist barristers in University processes, particularly in relation to the Student Discipline process which could have an effect on staff members involved in the process if they could not draw upon specialist legal knowledge. The use of lawyers being involved in processes was emerging as a sector wide issue and was being discussed within the institution.

Would there be cases where a Student Complaint investigation and Dignity and Respect policy run separately and struggle to report back correctly due to being interwoven. There were cases where two processes were carried out simultaneously, but these were rare. The timelines should be the same for both and so should run together smoothly.

**Decision** by Andrew Browning

Senate delegated authority to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) to add an amendment to the Student Complaints policy regarding support for implicated staff. The Policies were approved subject to this amendment being made.

## 15368.0 PGR Independent Advisor Report & UEB Response - S23/24 - 20

Purpose - For Discussion

---

**Minute** by Andrew Browning

The Independent Advisor attended to present the report. The Pro-Vice-Chancellors (Student Experience and Research & Enterprise) presented the University Executive Board's response to the report. It was noted that there was still a very small percentage of students engaging with the Independent Advisors however the issues being brought forward were increasingly serious. A lot of positive work had been done over the past academic year but there were still struggles



which needed acknowledging.

There was a wider piece of work which needed undertaking relating to academics taking on PhD students and not engaging. This was not an issue unique to Bath and was affecting institutions across the sector. Thanks were given to colleagues in the Doctoral College for their work in improving relationships and engendering a stronger research culture for Postgraduate Research Students. It was noted that recruitment was underway for a new Independent Advisor. Discussion covered the following points:-

It was noted that the paper presented did not reflect the current workload of the Independent Advisors in relation to their workload allocation but this had been changed in October 2023.

The split between individually supervised students and those involved in CDTs was questioned. It was noted that it was less common for a student to come forward from a CDT however when they did the issue was significantly more serious.

## **15369.0 Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) Analysis - S23/24 - 21**

Purpose - For Discussion

---

**Minute** by Andrew Browning

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) introduced the report. The survey, administered by Advance HE, was optional and therefore there was no benchmarking data. For the first time this year part-time PGT students studying on the five 100% online MSc courses facilitated through Wiley were surveyed.

The response rate for full-time students was 50.9% compared with 12.4% for part-time students. The overall response rate for Bath was 29.1% which compared with the sector average of 21.4% (Russell Group, 19.2%).

This year's results for part-time and full-time respondents had been presented separately. Overall satisfaction for Bath was 80%, placing Bath 73rd out of 101 institutions and in the third quartile. In 2022 the University was 59th out of 90 institutions and in the 3rd quartile.

Overall satisfaction for part-time students was 69% which was 8% below the sector average. Full-time students were relatively satisfied; however, it was acknowledged that there was a need for the University to improve. Work was also underway to better understand what PGT students wanted.

A comment was made about the structure of the Wiley online programme and the fact that it was asynchronous. One of the SU's Top Ten this academic year was to 'Develop a range of activities to reduce isolation and improve overall experience for PGT students'.

A comment was also raised about the wide array of post-graduate teaching which was not reflected in the numbers. The Education Advisory Board would consider the future inclusion of part-time students in PTES 2024.

## 15370.0 Outcome of UDSC Review - S23/24 - 22<sup>S2324 - 37</sup>

---

**Decision** by Andrew Browning

The changes to the Terms of Reference and membership of the University Doctoral Studies Committee and the Doctoral Board of Studies as detailed in the paper presented by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) were approved by Senate.

## 15371.0 EQSC - S23/24 - 23

Purpose - For Noting

---

**Minute** by Andrew Browning

Senate noted the report from the Education Quality and Standards Committee and approved the amendments to the Terms of Reference and Membership

## 15372.0 Course Approvals - S23/24 - 24

Purpose - For Approval

---

**Minute** by Andrew Browning

Senate noted the report of the Courses and Partnership Approval Committee (CPAC).

**Decision** by Andrew Browning

1) Senate approved the new full-time and part-time MRes Sociotechnical Future & Digital Methods Course.

2) Senate approved the new full-time and part-time MRes Global Challenges Course

## 15373.0 Annual Academic Programme Withdrawals Report - S23/24 - 25

Purpose - For Noting

---

**Minute** by Andrew Browning

Senate noted the summary of programmes withdrawn by the Academic Programme Committee during academic year 2022/2023.

## **15374.0 RKEC - S23/24 - 26**

Purpose - For Noting

---

**Minute** by Andrew Browning

Senate noted the report from the Research Knowledge Exchange Committee.

## **15375.0 AEIC - S23/24 - 27**

Purpose - For Noting

---

**Minute** by Andrew Browning

Senate noted the the report from the Academic Ethics and Integrity Committee.

## **15376.0 Senate Business and Operational Review - S23/24 - 28**

Purpose - For Noting

---

**Minute** by Andrew Browning

Senate noted the final draft report of Senate Benchmarking report. The interim Head of Governance said that he would be looking to get this finalised and the working group would be reconvened. He said that a more detailed update on the report and its implementation would come to the next meeting of Senate.

## **15377.0 Student Policy and Safeguarding Annual Report - S23/24 - 29**

Purpose - For Noting

---

**Minute** by Andrew Browning

The Annual Student Policy and Safeguarding Report was noted by Senate.

## **15378.0 Senate Committee Membership - S23/24 - 30<sup>S2324 - 37</sup>**

Purpose - For Noting

---

**Minute** by Andrew Browning

The membership of the Senate Committees for 2023/2024 noted by Senate.

## **15379.0 Changes to Academic Dress - S23/24 - 31**

Purpose - For Noting

---

**Minute** by Andrew Browning

The changes to the regulations relating to academic dress was noted by Senate.

## **15380.0 Annual Plan of Senate Business for Upcoming Year**

Purpose - For Noting

---

**Minute** by Andrew Browning

Senate noted its annual plan of business.

## **15381.0 Board of Studies minutes**

**Minute** by Andrew Browning

The minutes of the Board of Studies were noted by Senate.

## **15382.0 Any Other Business**

Purpose - For Noting

---

**Minute** by Andrew Browning

There was no other business.