

## **SENATE**

6 November 2024 / Council Chamber

MINUTES

S2425 - 41

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### **15509.0 Welcome and Quorum**

Purpose - For Information

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#### **REPORTED**

Huw Ford the Student Representative on Senate for 2024/2025 was welcomed to his first meeting.

The meeting was quorate.

### **15510.0 Declarations of Interest**

Purpose - For Information

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There were no declarations of interest.

### **15511.0 Minutes of the Previous Meeting - S24/25 - 16**

Purpose - For Approval

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The minutes of the meeting of 2 October 2024 were approved by Senate.

### **15512.0 Actions and Matters Arising - S24/25 - 17**

Purpose - For Noting

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The actions within the action tracker were considered and the responses were as follows:

**Turing Fund Impact** - The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education & Global) said that the final provisions of the Turing Fund had yet to be signed off. He said that the changes were likely to lead to an overall reduction in funding and as a consequence WP and SEND students would be prioritised.

**DVC Responsibilities** - Senate were provided with role descriptions for the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Global), Director of Advancement, and University Secretary, all of which were currently out for recruitment.

**Fitness to Practise ("FTP") and Health & Health Wellbeing and Support for Study ("HWSS") Policy** - The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) responded to the question which was raised at the last meeting as to why the HWSS procedure had 3 formal stages and the FtP had 2 stages. She said that they were two completely separate procedures. The FtP was a more binary question as to whether the student was fit to practice and therefore only had two stages. The HWSS covered a more grey area and that was why it contained three stages.

## **15513.0 Institutional update - S24/25 - 18**

Purpose - For Noting

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### **REPORTED**

The Vice-Chancellor highlighted the following:

- Council had visited the proposed Bath Quays North site during its Away Day and had an encouraging discussion about what might be possible, impactful, and make economic sense. Work would continue to explore how the University might best utilise this opportunity, and a meeting with B&NES to discuss constraints and requirements had been positive.
- The increase in Employers' National Insurance contributions was estimated to cost the University an additional £4.5 million whereas the increase in home undergraduate tuition fees would increase income by £3.5 million, leaving the University net £1million down. Work had started to consider how to address this. When announcing the increase in tuition fees the Government had also set out four areas where improved performance was expected. It was hoped that if the sector responded well inflationary increases could continue, which would have a material impact and improve financial sustainability.
- A task and finish group had been established which would review promotions and progression criteria, with a view to moving away from volume to quality indicators and considering a broader range of ways people could demonstrate their contributions to the University.
- The State of Disappearance Art Exhibition had been a success. The Vice-Chancellor had requested that an Art on Campus Group be established to consider other meaningful exhibitions in the future. The terms of reference for this group were being developed, and student representatives would be on the Group.
- The Vice-Chancellor thanked Teslim Bukoye and Jane White for their work on Black History Month.
- The University had received the University Mental Health Charter.
- Work on the SU Top 10 KPIs was ongoing.

## DISCUSSION

The Students' Union congratulated the University on achieving the Mental Health Charter award.

It was asked if the University was doing any work or student consultation to address the NSS results. It was confirmed that UEB considers that results; and that there would be interventions in any departments that had fallen below the benchmark on teaching and/or marking and assessment.

More widely, work was taking place across the University on assessment and marking, which was being led by CLT, with assessment feedback leads appointed in every department, which students could feed into. This was also reflected in the strategic plan. Students also had the opportunity to provide feedback through SSLCs. It was also noted that departments had annual action plans that included engagement.

It was further clarified that the below benchmark scores were on feedback, with assessment above or at benchmark. Peer-led review was taking place, with departments that had good feedback scores running sessions for others.

A question was asked about the University's partnerships and the validation process for appointing partners. It was suggested that internationalisation had not been a focus in the way it should have been, with no clear strategy for partnerships, which generally came from departments or faculties. Although many partnerships were not productive, they were also not likely to be shut down. It was clarified that the International Educational Working Group had a checklist based on risk and partner characteristics to assess risk and quality before approving partnerships. These then passed through APC and CPAC, which assessed strategic benefit and educational quality. A new process had come in over the summer and it was expected that there would be stronger assurance soon.

Work was continuing on engagement monitoring. It had been decided to keep engagement and attendance monitoring separate. A new student app was being piloted, which it was hoped would have the capacity to do both in the future, however there was slow progress setting up all the different necessary systems. The main focus would be on automating processes to de-risk. It was noted that attendance monitoring was already happening in many departments, with other requests coming through, and this would be the approach before moving to an institution-wide system. Any institution-wide system would return to Senate.

A concern was raised about the lack of opportunities for international PG students at the recruitment fair. It was agreed that comms and awareness for these students should be improved, as there were other fairs that had specific opportunities for international students.

Senate received an update on student numbers, which showed an increase in home UG and PGT students, but a drop in overseas PGT students. Overseas UG students were below target, but were higher than last year. Informal surveys across comparator institutions showed a drop of 15% in overseas PGT students, so the University's drop of 7% was not as bad comparatively. The University would need to be active and agile in the recruitment of overseas PGT students and a working group had been set up in UEB to agree strategy, which it was hoped would also positively impact PTES results as well. The working group would also consider scholarships and fee

reductions that came through agreements with embassies and funding bodies. Any entry grade reduction would need to be carefully considered as there would need to be a high enough tariff to ensure students would succeed. It was also noted that a new Head of Marketing had been appointed.

It was noted that home Widening Participation student numbers had slipped against last year, and that work had already started in UEB to address access to the University. It was confirmed that the WP plan had been signed off by the OFS, so the University was not likely to be sanctioned, but it would be necessary to move as fast as possible to meet WP targets.

## **15514.0 Strategic Plan - Update and Discussion - S24/25 - 19**

Purpose - For Discussion

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### **REPORTED**

Senate received an update on the Strategic Plan from the Vice-Chancellor. The ideas in the presentation had been collated following a Strategy Day (facilitated by NOUS) and a Leadership Forum, which created initial ideas towards a strategic plan. The aim was to create a plan to sit underneath the current high level strategy, which allowed for prioritisation of actions.

### **DISCUSSION**

Discussion following the presentation focused on the following areas:

- Laying the foundations and consideration of what was going to be put on top of these foundations. It was confirmed that the 'laying the foundations' aim was developed after the groups had defined what kind of University they wanted Bath to be. This consideration would be discussed further in the follow up day on the 14 November.
- Consideration of external shocks beyond the University's control. The aim was that laying foundations would make the University more resilient to external shocks. Again, this would be built into follow up discussions.
- Moving away from being prescribed by rankings and the possible effect of becoming reactive to trends. It was acknowledged that the University needed to build and maintain confidence that we know the right actions to take.
- That there may be several areas that the University chooses not to invest in, not just UG experience.
- Senate members appreciated the update and transparency regarding plans for the strategy.

## **15516.0 Self Archiving and Copyright Proposal (Rights**

## Retention) S24/25 - 21

Purpose - For Decision

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*The Head of Library Services joined the meeting*

### REPORTED

Senate received the proposal for a University 'Scholarly Publications: Self Archiving and Copyright Statement' and for additional text to be added to Ordinance 22.3.

The rights retention approach was being proposed in response to Open Access mandates and the new REF 2029 Open Access Policy. While the University had a strong selection of publisher agreements in place, authors could still interact with publishers or journals that did not offer Open Access funding and need to negotiate waivers themselves. The proposed actions would support these authors by implementing a consistent approach for copyright ownership.

### DISCUSSION

It was noted that the proposal had undergone considerable work and scrutiny and had been discussed at various meetings of RKEC.

### DECISION

Senate **approved** the Scholarly Publications: Self-Archiving and Copyright Statement.

Senate agreed to recommend the proposed changes to Ordinance 22.3 to Council.

*The Head of Library Services left the meeting*

## 15517.0 Doctoral Academic Milestone Proposal - S24/25 - 22

Purpose - For Discussion

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### REPORTED

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research & Enterprise) presented the proposal which was part of the overall Doctoral Strategy which had previously been seen by the University Executive Board. Feedback from staff and students about the current PhD student experience suggested that the reporting burden was too high on students. Senate were being asked for their comment on the Doctoral Academic Milestone Proposal, with wider consultation with the wider academic community also taking place.

### DISCUSSION

It was noted that part time students were often not included in the consideration of new proposals so it was good that they had been explicitly included within the proposal. All PhD students had a unique experience and it was important when putting together the proposal that awareness was given to the diversity of groups and paths taken in completing a PhD.

## 15518.0 Research Institute Reporting - S24/25 - 23

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### REPORTED

Senate received the proposal for a revised Research Institute reporting process. It was noted that the current reporting process required Research Institutes to produce written reports on an annual basis and the respective Institute Directors were then invited to discuss these at RKEC meetings.

Under the new process, a dedicated subgroup of RKEC would be set up to meet with each Institute to review their progress and constructively challenge them where needed. These meetings would be reported on to RKEC and were intended to allow for richer discussions with the Institutes.

### DISCUSSION

Senate sought clarification on the reporting process used for the Institute of Coding. While the Institute had a board which met on a regular basis, it was not known to formally report further than this. It would not be covered by the proposed process as it was not a Research Institute and focused on education and skills instead.

### DECISION

Senate approved the revised Research Institute reporting process.

### ACTION

Institute of Coding

Action Description - To report back on the reporting process used for the Institute of Coding

Due by - 29 Jan 2025 | Assigned to - Sarah Hainsworth

## 15519.0 Degrees Outcome Statement S24/25 - 24

Purpose - For Decision

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### REPORTED

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education & Global) presented the Degree Outcomes Statement for

recommendation to Council. It was noted the data had previously been submitted to Senate in June 2024 with higher detail but there had been no other changes to the degree outcomes analysis. The Degree Outcomes Statement would be published on the University website once approved by Council with the aim to have this completed before the end of the calendar year.

## **DISCUSSION**

It was noted that the breakdown of degree outcomes for Black students was not included within the current Degree Outcomes Statement as the numbers were too low with a risk of identification within the published statement. The full breakdown of degree outcomes which had been submitted to Senate in June did include this information.

The use of the BAME acronym within the statement was questioned. It was confirmed that the use of BAME and other EDI related acronyms had been discussed at EDIC with further consultation taking place before a University stance was reached. It was noted that there had been a sector move away from the use of BAME as an acronym. Before the paper was submitted to Council it was agreed that a note would be included that Academic Registry would update the statement with the correct terminology was agreed.

It was queried whether the external examiners had made any comments on attainment. Academic Registry provided a summary of external examiners reports to EQSC so that any trends or areas of concern but for further information it would be necessary to look at individual departmental updates.

## **DECISION**

Senate agreed to recommend the Degree Outcomes Statement to Council for approval.

# **15520.0 PTES Analysis, Initiatives, and Actions - S24/25 - 25**

Purpose - For Discussion

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## **REPORTED**

Senate received an update on the university's performance in the Advance HE Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) 2024. The report was presented in the same format as previous years.

The report included initiatives to improve the postgraduate experience. It also detailed targeted interventions in three departments (Computer Science, Economics and School of Management) that had underperformed on either of the two survey scales which aligned with the university's strategic KPIs on Teaching and Assessment.

## **DISCUSSION**

Senate members welcomed the interventions included in the paper and were reassured that this

approach would allow colleagues to identify any common themes causing issues, such as size or scale problems with particular programmes.

## **15521.0 Curriculum Management Project Update - S24/25 - 26**

Purpose - For Decision

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### **REPORTED**

It was noted that work was ongoing between Senate and the Education Advisory Board to implement the Curriculum Planner as a single source of truth; and that with the other pieces of longer-term work progressing elsewhere there was no need to continue with this group. Education Advisory Board had approved the disestablishment in September and recommended to Senate.

### **DECISION**

Senate approved the disestablishment of the Curriculum Management Academic Working Group.

## **15522.0 Digital Accessibility Policy - S24/25 - 31**

Purpose - For Approval

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*The Vice-President (Community and Inclusion) joined the meeting*

### **REPORTED**

Senate received the proposed Digital Accessibility Policy which was the first policy produced following the 2018 national regulations about how everyone should be enabled to access digital content and associated processes. Over the past six months a special interest group had been formed which brought together people who had already been working in this area, to support the development of this policy.

### **DISCUSSION**

Discussion of this item covered the following points:

- The process for students to raise any questions or issues. This would be clearly defined in the procedures and dissemination of information, yet to be confirmed.
- It was confirmed that the policy would cover all bath.ac.uk webpages.
- Relating to paragraph 4.1.a) stating that the University would 'provide the necessary tools to ensure that staff who are involved in creating digital content, are able to do so in an



accessible format', it was confirmed that use would be made of communities of practice, so that a support mechanism was in place.

- Relating to paragraph 3.1 regarding scope of the policy, it was confirmed that the policy covered Moodle content. It was acknowledged that everyone needed to learn how to create digitally accessible materials.
- This policy focused on digital content only. The policy of making sure that that lecture materials were available in advance did not fall within this policy; however, this was something being discussed in the inclusive education work. An issue was also raised about having a reliable WiFi connection to access digital content which did not fall within the scope of this policy, but would be raised as an issue with the appropriate team.

## **DECISION**

Senate **approved** the Digital Accessibility Policy

## **ACTION**

Digital Accessibility Policy follow-up

Vice-President Community and Inclusion to:

- a) Report back to Senate on the procedure for students to raise any issues or concerns relating to the policy.
- b) Raise the issue regarding unreliable WiFi preventing access to digital content with the appropriate team.

Due by - 15 Jan 2025 | Assigned to - Jane White

*The Vice-President (Community & Inclusion) left the meeting.*

## **15524.0 Academic Programmes Committee - Collaborative Provision Agreements - S24/25 - 27**

Purpose - For Noting

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The report of the Academic Programmes Committee and the updates to the Central Register were noted by Senate.

## **15525.0 Academic Ethics and Integrity Committee Summary Report and Terms of Reference - S24/25 - 28**

Purpose - For Approval

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The summary report of the Academic Ethics and Integrity Committee was noted by Senate.

**DECISION**

The terms of reference of the Academic Ethics and Integrity Committee were **approved** by Senate.

**15526.0 University Doctoral School Committee - S24/25 - 29**

Purpose - For Approval

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**DECISION**

Senate **approved** the amendments to the Terms of Reference of the University Doctoral School Committee.

**15527.0 Changes to Online Unit Evaluation questions for distance learning - S24/25 - 30**

Purpose - For Approval

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**DECISION**

Senate **approved** the proposed changes to the Online Unit Evaluation question for Distance Learning units.

**15528.0 Education, Quality and Standards Committee  
Summary Report and Terms of Reference - S24/25 - 32 A and B**

Purpose - For Approval

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Senate noted the summary report of EQSC.

**DECISION**

Senate **approved** the terms of reference for EQSC for academic year 2024/2025.

## **15529.0 Honorary Degrees Summary Report and Terms of Reference - S24/25 - 33**

Purpose - For Decision

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### **DECISION**

Senate **approved** the recommended individuals for the award of honorary degrees.

Senate **approved** the Terms of Reference of the Honorary Degrees Committee.

## **15530.0 Equality Diversity & Inclusion Committee Summary Report and Terms of Reference- S23/24 - 40**

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Senate noted the Summary Report of the Equality Diversity and Inclusion Committee and recommended to Council the proposed amendments to its Terms of Reference.

## **15531.0 Governance Framework Review Project Update - S24/25 - 34**

Purpose - For Noting

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Senate noted the Governance Framework Review Project Update.

## **15532.0 Report from Council S24/25 - 35**

Purpose - For Noting

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Senate noted the report from Council.

## **15533.0 Update to the Awards and Prizes Procedure webpage - S24/25 - 37**

Purpose - For Approval

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## **DECISION**

Senate **approved** the temporary update to the Awards and Prizes procedure webpage.

### **15534.0 Boards of Studies and Governing Committee Minutes**

Purpose - For Noting

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The minutes from the Boards of Studies were noted by Senate.

### **15535.0 Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee Summary Report - S24/25 - 38**

Purpose - For Noting

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The summary report from RKEC was noted by Senate.

### **15536.0 Academic Programmes Committee Summary - S24/25 - 39**

Purpose - For Noting

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Senate noted the summary report of Academic Programmes Committee.

# Attendees

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## **Members Attended**

Jimena Alamo

Teslim Bukoye

Zoe Burke

Julian Chaudhuri

Duncan Craig

Annabelle Deakin

Adrian Evans

Huw Ford

Sabina Gheduzzi

Fiona Gillison

Nathalia Gjersoe

Sarah Hainsworth

Marion Harney

Sophia Hatzisavvidou

Alan Hayes

Andrew Heath

Jo Hyde

Nigel Johnston

Zuber Lakhani

Peter Lambert

Michael Lewis

Ryan Lucas

David Moon

Fei Qin

Ben Ralph

Caroline Ransford

Kate Robinson

Paul Shepherd

Amber Snary

Phil Taylor – Vice-Chancellor (Chair)

Jennifer Thomson

Edmund Thompson

Cassie Wilson

Deborah Wilson

Jun Zang

**In Attendance**

Ian Blenkharn

Andrew Browning – Secretary to meeting

Rachel Sheer

**Apologies**

Chris Bonfield

Steve Brammer

James Davenport

Tim Ibell