

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER

MEETING OF SENATE

DRAFT Minutes of a meeting held on
Wednesday 15 February 2023 in Council Room 1 & 2, Fielding Johnson Building

Present:	Nishan Canagarajah (Chair)	
Anwar Afhim		Liz Jones
Phil Baker		Sally Kyd
Huw Barton		Jayne Marshall
Tilly Blyth		Henrietta O'Connor
Steven Bull		Gemma Parker
John Challiss		Linda Ralphs
Sarah Davies		Thompson Robinson
Anne-Marie Deeb		Anex Saju
Nuala Devlin		Teela Sanders
Elizabeth Draper		Jacqui Shaw
Stewart Fishwick		Alison Snape
Daniel Ladley		Ian Somerville
Pranabashis Haldar		Richard Thomas
Ljiliana Marjanovic-Halburd		Simon Vaughan
Sandeep Handa		Geerten Vuister
Richard Holland		Steve Williams
Rhiannon Jenkins		Chris Wilkins

In attendance: Alison Benson (Assistant Secretary), Geoff Green (Registrar and Secretary), Kerry Law (for Item 23/M04) and Joe Suffield (Governance Office)

Apologies for absence were received from Yassine Amrani, Tracey Dodman, Sandra Dudley, Ian Forristal, Liu Lu, Eamonn Mallon and David Wright.

UNRESERVED BUSINESS

23/M01 WELCOME

The Vice-Chancellor welcomed Senators, attendees and observers to the meeting.

23/M02 STANDING BUSINESS

(a) Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

(b) Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Senate **approved** the minutes of the meeting held on 5 October 2022 as an accurate record.

(c) Matters Arising

Senate **noted** that a response had been provided to the matter arising.

23/M03 CHAIR'S UPDATE

The Vice-Chancellor provided a report on key developments within the wider HE sector and the University.

Senate **noted** that there had been a restructure of central Government departments, in which responsibility for universities had not been explicitly referenced. This could potentially have a negative impact on opportunities for joined-up working on higher education matters.

Senate **noted** that the Freedom of Speech (Higher Education) Bill remained in the stage known as 'ping pong' between the House of Commons and House of Lords. A key area of dissent remained the provision of a statutory tort whereby those who were 'no platformed' at a campus could have the right to sue the relevant university and/or its students' union. Further updates on the provisions of the legislation would be given to Senate when the timeline on its passage and implementation become clearer.

Senate **noted** that Degree Apprenticeships were a high priority for the Government. Although the diversification of the further and higher education sectors was a positive development, it was highlighted that not all courses and fields were suitable as Degree Apprenticeships and therefore they should be deployed appropriately.

Senate **noted** the latest updates within the University, including 96 new high-quality PhD student scholarships which had recently commenced.

23/M04 STRATEGIC BUSINESS TO CONSIDER**(a) Strategic Theme Update: Our Citizens**

Senate **considered** an update on the Our Citizens theme of the University Strategy from Kerry Law, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Professional Services). This was the first time that Senate had received a holistic overview of the aims and priorities incorporated within the Our Citizens theme. The first year had focussed on introducing the structures and support for this theme. The four strategic aims of partnerships; policy and impact; creating a powerful network of change makers, and social impact were outlined to Senate. Some of the challenges faced to date had included engagement with students and how to monitor the work that had been undertaken.

Senate **noted** that it would be important for Our Citizens to engage closely with the academic community, through closer work with the community, such as lectures, projects and policy input.

Senate **noted** the importance of the proposed Customer Relationship Management (CRM) solution in respect of improving student experience. The proposed system would be more cost effective, allow more data to be gathered and enable more targeted and ultimately more successful engagement. The University required this system in order to align with competitors.

(b) Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) Submission

Senate **considered** a presentation on the TEF submission from Liz Jones, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education), to be circulated to members for reference after the meeting.

It was reported that the University aimed and expected to maintain its rating of TEF Silver in the 2023 exercise. The submission included data, a provider submission and an independent student submission.

The presentation highlighted that the University had provided the narrative of a distinctive undergraduate student experience, with a diverse student body and a unique position within the HE sector. The submission had highlighted that the University provided more than employability and skills beyond core teaching and learning; there was a social purpose to the University, its education was research-inspired and students were enabled to think critically.

It was outlined that the data collated had identified gaps between full-time and part-time provision, with data indicators in respect of part-time provision consistently in the TEF Bronze region. It was clarified that part-time provision made up a much smaller proportion of the student population.

Senate also **considered** a presentation on the independent student submission which had been produced by the Students' Union. The Students' Union had surveyed students and had received 882 responses which accurately reflected the makeup of the student population. The student submission had outlined a number of strengths, such as a positive partnership with the University, its student-centred approach and its focus on employability. Areas of weakness covered had included attendance and timetabling; hybrid teaching; learning resources; some issues in relation to estates and facilities; accessibility and the ongoing impact of industrial action.

Senate **noted** that the TEF was a retrospective look at teaching excellence but would be used to inform the continuous improvement of teaching in the future.

Senate discussed the ethnic attainment gap, which was already a key priority within the University Strategy. To date a significant amount of work had been carried out to understand the attainment gap, and it was understood that additional factors of poverty, privilege and previous educational offer all impacted student performance. Steps had also been taken to improve the diversity of teaching and academic staff, as well as to support students into postgraduate education.

(c) Annual Academic Assurance Statement

Senate **considered** a presentation on the annual Academic Assurance Statement from Liz Jones, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) and Nuala Devlin, Academic Registrar. In contrast to the focus of the TEF, it was highlighted that the Academic Assurance Statement focussed on baseline provision as expressed in the Office for Students' "B" conditions of registration. The University had to meet these baselines continuously in order to continue to operate as a registered higher education provider.

In small groups, Senate discussed some of the key themes within the Academic Assurance Statement, and provided feedback on the approach to the Statement, including on the information provided for Senate to assure itself.

Senate **recommended** the Annual Academic Assurance Statement **to Council for approval**.

(d) Honorary Degrees [RESERVED]

Senate **received** the minutes of the Honorary Degrees Board meeting held on 7 February 2023, and the proposals for Honorary Degrees.

Senate **queried** whether Lady Adderley should also be considered for an Honorary Degree. [**ACTION:** Secretary, Honorary Degrees Board]

Senate noted its concern over the gender split of proposed Honorary Degree recipients, which echoed that of the Honorary Degrees Board. It was highlighted that an additional nomination round and meeting of the Board in March 2023 had been organised to address this. The nomination form had been reopened and Senate members were encouraged to propose suitable nominees.

Senate **recommended** the eleven existing proposals for Honorary Degrees **to Council for approval**.

23/M05 SECRETARY'S BUSINESS

Senate **considered** a summary report of business items for approval.

In relation to the Financial Conflict of Interest Policy (for US Department of Health & Human Services and US Public Health Service Funded Projects only), Senate **queried** whether there would be an issue with the travel requirements of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), particularly if colleagues would need to be in an area for more than one reason. [**ACTION:** Research Ethics and Integrity Manager to respond]

Senate queried if the Directors of Research Institutes should be included in the membership of the Research and Enterprise Committee for the next academic year. [**ACTION:** Secretary, Research and Enterprise Committee]

Senate noted their concern about changes to Senate Regulation 11, particularly in relation to:

- There needed to be more clarity over whether an assessment mark would be capped or if it would be the module result which would be capped.
- That markers should be sufficiently trained to understand the difference between minor and major infringements.
- Where misconduct has taken place in appropriate subjects, this should be linked to the Fitness to Practice team.

Senate did not approve the changes to Senate Regulation 11 and requested that their concerns were shared with Education Committee and Senate Student Discipline Committee prior to a further approval round [**ACTION:** Chairs and Secretaries of Education Committee and Senate Student Discipline Committee].

Senate **recommended** the following items **to Council for approval**:

1. Student Protection Plan 2022/23 (Education Committee)
2. Degree Outcomes Statement 2022 (Education Committee)

Senate **approved** the following items:

1. Undergraduate Examiners' Summary Report (Education Committee)
2. Education Committee Terms of Reference Update (Education Committee)
3. Financial Conflict of Interest Policy (for US Department of Health & Human Services and US Public Health Service Funded Projects only) (Research & Enterprise Committee)
4. Research and Enterprise Committee Terms of Reference 2022/23 (Research & Enterprise Committee)

23/M06 REPORTED BUSINESS

Senate **considered** the following reports from Committees

a. Education Committee

Senate **noted** reports from the meetings of the Education Committee held on 19 October 2022, 21 November 2022 and 24 January 2023.

Senate **noted** the other business set out and **approved** the reports.

b. Research and Enterprise Committee

Senate **noted** reports from the meetings of the Research and Enterprise Committee held on 28 September 2022 and 7 December 2022.

Senate **noted** the other business set out and **approved** the reports.

c. Reputation, Recruitment and Performance Board

Senate **noted** the report of the meeting of the Reputation, Recruitment and Performance Board held on 6 September 2022.

Senate **noted** the other business set out and **approved** the report.

d. Senate Student Discipline Committee

Senate **noted** the report of the meeting of the Senate Student Discipline Committee held on 14 December 2022.

Senate **noted** the other business set out and approved the report.

e. University Officer appointments

Senate **noted** the senior recruitment update summary report.

f. Programmes Approved and Withdrawn

Senate **noted** the report of programmes approved in principle, in full and those withdrawn since its last meeting.

g. Outcomes of Senate Discipline Panels

Senate **received** the outcomes of recent Senate Student Discipline Panels.

Senate **noted** that an issue with a specific cohort of students had led to an increase in the number of expulsions within a short timeframe. Steps had been taken to address similar issues if they occurred again. [**ACTION:** Chair, SSDC to present an item on Student Discipline to the next meeting of Senate] *[Forward Business]*

23/M07**DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

Senate **noted** the final meeting date scheduled for 2022-23 as follows:

- Wednesday 14 June 2023 at 2pm

CHAIR

Duration of meeting: 115 minutes