

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER

MEETING OF SENATE

**Minutes of a meeting held on
Wednesday 27 June 2018**

Present:

Paul Boyle (Chair)

Jon Challiss	Gill Nicholls
Alex Clark	Bob Norman
Sarah Davies	Paul O'Brien
Roger Dickinson	Henrietta O'Connor
Francois Du Bois	Jose Prados
Sandra Dudley	Mark Purnell
Andrew Ellis	Zoe Radnor
Andrew Fry	Rajeev Raman (vice R Heckel)
Stephen Garrett (vice J Chambers)	Jon Scott
Lisanne Gibson	Lisa Smith (vice N Chakraborti)
Alison Goodall	Ian Somerville (vice J Hughes)
Rose Griffiths	Simona Storchi (vice M Halliwell)
Colin Hewitt	Caroline Taylor
Richard Holland	Andrew Wardlaw
George Lewis	Kate Williams
Paul Monks	Graham Wynn
Amy Moran	

In attendance: David Hall, Geoff Green (Secretary), Andrew Petersen (Assistant Secretary), Paul Brook and Sarah Seaton (UCU), and Barney Casson (Unison)

Apologies for absence were received from Liz Bailey, Phil Baker, Martin Barstow, Neil Chakraborti, Jonathan Chambers, Iain Gillespie, Reiko Heckel, Jason Hughes, David Lambert, Anne Thomas and Andrew Wardlaw

UNRESERVED (ONLY) BUSINESS

18/M06 **STANDING BUSINESS**

(a) Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

(b) Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Senate considered the minutes of the Ordinary meeting held on 7 March and the Extraordinary meeting held on 13 March 2018.

Senate approved the minutes as an accurate record.

(c) Matters Arising

Arising from M02 Senate noted that the refreshed Learning Strategy had been approved by Council.

(d) Chair's Business

i) Degree classification outcomes, 2018

Senate received a report on the outcome of the midsummer examinations for undergraduate programmes within the University. Senate noted that at the time of its meeting three departments had not yet returned final results and therefore the figures presented excluded approximately 150 finalists.

Senate noted:

	2015/16		2016/17		2017/18	
I	561	20.30%	647	21.99%	697	24.87%
2(i)	1464	52.99%	1619	55.03%	1464	52.23%
2(ii)	582	21.06%	531	18.05%	505	18.02%
3	84	3.04%	89	3.03%	90	3.21%
Pass	7	0.25%	2	0.07%	1	0.04%
Aegrotat	1	0.04	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Total	2709		2888		2803	

Percentage of Firsts/Upper Seconds:

2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
78.8%	77.5%	73.3%	77.0%	77.1%

Senate noted that the proportion of good honours was in line with previous years and that there was no evidence of grade inflation.

ii) Post-18 Review

The President and Vice-Chancellor reported that the Government review of Post-18 education was due to commence shortly. The review would encompass skills based training, Further Education (FE) and Higher Education (HE). Senate noted the general perception nationally that FE had not historically been well funded and that this may be a significant factor within the review. This could ultimately have an impact upon the balance of funding between HE and FE.

iii) Appointment of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor

The President and Vice-Chancellor reported the appointment of Professor Edmund Burke as Deputy Vice-Chancellor, commencing in early July.

The President and Vice-Chancellor thanked G Nicholls, Interim Provost, for her contribution to the University and the work of Senate during her period in the role.

iv) League Tables

The President and Vice Chancellor reported the outcome of the recent Guardian League Tables 2019 in which the University had seen a significant drop. Senate noted that the fall had resulted partly from a change in methodology, but that there were also material elements relating to the University's performance in key metrics which needed to be given priority consideration going forwards. Senate noted that a more detailed analysis of the outcome, underlying reasons and the actions necessary in response would be considered at the upcoming meeting of UEB.

v) TEF Subject Level Pilot

The President and Vice-Chancellor reported that the results of the TEF Subject level pilot had been released to contributing institutions.

Senate noted the overall outcome for the institution, and the methodology employed. Under the methodology the overall institutional rating was based upon the outcomes for individual disciplines, weighted by volume of students. As a result large numbers of students in disciplines achieving a bronze rating would result in an institutional bronze rating, regardless of areas of excellence elsewhere in the institution. Senate noted that the outcome of the pilot exercise would be discussed in further detail at the upcoming meeting of the University Executive Board.

vi) Financial Sustainability

The President and Vice-Chancellor noted that a letter had been sent to all staff which set out the current position and the range of external and internal factors that were impacting upon the institution. The letter emphasised that the University was seeking to build upon its areas of strength and enhance its overall financial sustainability by reductions in its cost base.

The President and Vice-Chancellor highlighted the mechanisms that were already in place to enhance the University's financial sustainability which included the highly effective post control process, the opening of a Voluntary Severance Scheme and the reduction in use of temporary staffing. Senate noted that a small number of business cases for compulsory redundancy had been proposed and that these would be subject to a consultation period with the staff affected.

(e) Senate Members appointed to Council

Senate noted that two nominations had been received to fill the two positions becoming vacant and as such there had been no need for a ballot. The two members appointed to Council for a three year term commencing in July 2018 were:

Professor S Davies (School of Geography, Geology and the Environment)

Dr S Dudley (School of Museum Studies)

Senate congratulated both on their appointments.

(f) Summary Report of Items for Approval

Senate considered a summary report of business for consideration arising from reports from subsidiary Committees and other areas where Senate's approval is required.

Summary report on PGT External Examiners' reports and responses

Senate considered a summary of the reports from the external examiners for taught postgraduate programmes in the 2016/17 academic year following a detailed review of the reports. The summary had been considered by the Academic Policy Committee.

Senate was pleased to note that the reports confirmed that Senate could have confidence in the standards of the University's awards and the operation of the external examining process. The reports also noted that the quality of the learning opportunities

for students were at an appropriate level and identified many examples of good practice, with areas identified by the Academic Policy Committee for further action.

Senate **noted** the outcome of the External Examiner review process.

Term Dates

Senate noted that the Academic Policy Committee had considered and endorsed the dates of terms, semesters, assessment periods and graduation ceremonies for the period 2019/20 to 2023/24. Senate noted that the dates followed the model established through the implementation of the new academic year structure agreed initially by Senate in 2014 and subsequently in 2016, and implemented from 2017/18.

Senate noted the movement of the January graduation from 2018/19 and further noted that the timing of the July graduation ceremonies for 2021 onwards was under review.

Senate **approved** the dates set out for the period above.

Senate Regulation 1

Senate considered minor amendments to Senate Regulation 1 governing minimum entry requirements and language requirements for taught programmes of study. These resulted from the recommendations of an internal audit. The subsequent review recommended an expansion of the list of accepted English language qualifications to include specific qualifications from Ireland, Luxembourg and Scotland. It also proposed amendments to the list of English language equivalences to clarify the requirements with relation to ILETS, the Cambridge International GCSE and the Swedish Fullstandigt fran Gymnasieskolan.

Senate **approved** the amendments for immediate implementation.

Senate Regulation 9

Senate considered amendments to Senate Regulation 9 governing research degree programmes. The amendments were designed to strengthen the regulations with regard to plagiarism checks, and to make a series of further revisions regarding offers of admission, clarifications regarding the writing up period, appointment and training of supervisors and other minor technical amendments.

Senate **approved** the amendments for implementation from 1 August 2018.

Research Code of Conduct

Senate considered amendments to the Research Code of Conduct. A review of the Code had been undertaken by a Group with representation from across the University. The amendments were primarily in the areas of ensuring compliance with data protection requirements, updating sections on research governance and sponsorship mechanisms and the reporting and investigation of research misconduct.

Senate **approved** the amendments to the Code of Conduct for immediate implementation.

Summary report on the Operation of the Code of Practice for Programme Development, Approval and Modification

Senate considered a summary report monitoring the operation of the Code of Practice on Programme Development, Approval and Modification. Senate noted that the

operation of the Code of Practice was managed on its behalf by the Academic Policy Committee. Senate noted that the principles for the operation of the development, approval and modification of programmes was aligned with the indicators of good practice defined by the Quality Assurance Agency. Senate noted the conclusions and recommendations which confirmed that the authority delegated from Senate for the development, approval and modification of programmes was being exercised in accordance with external benchmarks and internal best practice.

Senate welcomed the clear evidence of the effective operation of its delegated authority for programme development and approval, **approved** the report and **endorsed** the areas for further action.

18/M07

BUSINESS TO CONSIDER

(a) Office for Students and the new regulatory environment

Senate received a presentation on the framework for regulation of the Higher Education sector by the Office for Students (OfS). Senate received for information the registration documentation that had been submitted to the OfS.

Senate noted the role of the OfS as a sector regulator and a champion of students' rights as consumers. The OfS would undertake a much more risk based approach driven by metrics and student outcomes. This was reflected in the process for registration and the ongoing conditions of registration that universities would be required to meet. Senate noted the emphasis placed by the OfS on student engagement and the student voice within institutions, and upon value for money. Senate noted that maintaining registration with the OfS was a strategic requirement as it represented the gateway to student and grant funding, highly trusted status and overall degree awarding powers.

Registration required that the University meet a number of conditions. Some were met through existing mechanisms such as Annual Provider Review, whereas others required the development and submission of additional documentation. Senate noted the four specific documents that had been developed for this purpose:

- i) Access and Participation Plan
- ii) Consumer Law Self-Assessment
- iii) Management and Governance Self-Assessment
- iv) Student Protection Plan

Senate noted in particular that the Access and Participation Plan was a key document which not only set out the University's processes for widening access, but also addressed the other major component of supporting progression, success and outcomes for students from under-represented groups. Senate noted proposed revisions to the University governance structure (see M07 (b) below) that would ensure oversight of these and various other metrics. Senate also noted its role as academic authority in owning many of the themes and metrics central to the new regulatory environment, and that this would inform the structure of Senate's business going forwards.

Senate considered how the metrics set out in the Access and Participation plan were strategically aligned with the University's increasing tariff requirements in 2018/19. Senate noted that there was a commitment to a revised offer making process for underrepresented groups and historically the University had a strong track record in recruiting from among these groups under higher average tariff requirements.

(b) Code of Practice for Academic Governance

Senate considered draft proposals to revise the University's academic governance framework and an associated Code of Practice which articulated the revised framework along with a series of principles for operation, standardised terms of reference and role descriptors for academic leadership roles. The new structure was designed to ensure that there would be appropriate space moving forwards for a range of business, including priorities set by the Office for Students and the requirements of the Teaching Excellence Framework exercises. The introduction of the revised structure and associated role descriptors would also give College Directors of Learning and Teaching a greater institutional level role and achieve greater consistency at departmental level with regard to programme management.

Senate considered the timescale for the development and implementation of the revised structure, and noted that this was in part designed to ensure that the University's framework for academic governance clearly met the expectations of the Office for Students. Senate noted that the OfS in its role as regulator for the sector was undertaking a more metrics and outcome driven approach and therefore it was essential that the University's governance structure be clear and transparent with regard to where these issues were considered within the institution, and how decisions were taken. In line with this overall principle, it was proposed to introduce the new University and College level structure for the commencement of the 2018/19 academic year, with the amendments to departmental level structures to be phased in over the course of the 2018/19 academic year.

Senate noted a number of detailed comments from members regarding the composition of individual committees and the importance of ensuring appropriate representation from the wider academic community and Professional Services in the structure. Senate also noted comments regarding the inclusion of additional role descriptors and the importance of engaging colleagues at various levels of the institution with the implementation of the revised structures so that the process could benefit from the full range of perspectives. Senate was pleased to note that there would be the opportunity for College Academic Committees and other colleagues to contribute to this process via a series of implementation workshops over the summer, and this would include the opportunity to review the proposed memberships and other technical details at that stage.

Senate approved the overall Committee structure and timeline for implementation. Senate noted that the detailed comments regarding the membership and operation of individual Committees would be subject to further discussion over the summer. Senate noted that there may be minor amendments to the final Code of Practice resulting from these discussions, and authorised the newly constituted Learning and Teaching Committee to approve these on Senate's behalf.

(c) Retention and Progression

Senate considered a series of proposals to amend Senate Regulation 5 governing undergraduate programmes of study ahead of the Boards of Examiners in August 2018. Senate noted that a recent analysis of student outcomes on Re-sit without Residence years demonstrated that this approach to re-assessment did not always support positive student outcomes, and a significant proportion of students in this situation were unable to meet the requirements to proceed.

Senate considered a number of proposed amendments which would effectively remove the award of a re-sit without residence for first year students in August 2018, in all but exceptional circumstances.

Senate considered a proposal to amend the Proceed and Re-sit rules. Under the revised regulations in August students would be permitted to proceed to the next level of their programme and re-sit their failed year 1 modules as long as they had failed modules to the value of 30 credits or less, a credit weighted average across the year of 40% or higher, and no module marks below 15%. Senate noted that this option would not be available where the modules in question were pre-requisites for the next year of study. The award of a proceed and re-sit would be automatic, in the event that a student met the eligibility criteria.

Senate considered a proposal to pilot a scheme of additional in year re-sits for pre-requisite modules. Under the proposal students would be offered a further opportunity to re-sit failed pre-requisite modules up to a maximum of 30 credits in September 2018 in order to meet the progression requirements to proceed to the next year of their studies. This would only be available in pilot departments in 2018.

Senate noted that there may be circumstances under which students fail to meet the requirements to progress under either the revised proceed and re-sit rules, or following an exceptional re-sit attempt. Senate considered a proposal to award students in this category an automatic repeat year. The tuition fee for the repeat year would be waived as standard. The automatic award of a repeat year would be available to students that had failed 40 credits or less after re-sit and were unable to be awarded a proceed and re-sit. Senate noted that there may be circumstances where a student may be unable to undertake a repeat year, either due to mitigating circumstances or other personal or financial reasons. In such cases an exceptional RWR could be awarded at the discretion of the Academic Registrar.

Senate noted the support of the Students' Union for the proposals, subject to a number of clarifications regarding the mechanisms for the support of students under these mechanisms. Senate supported the proposal but proposed that further consideration be given to whether there may be circumstances under which a student that had failed more than 40 credits at the second attempt may be awarded a repeat year. Senate also requested clarification on the number of attempts that students would be eligible to undertake on a repeat year granted via this model.

Senate approved the amendments in principle to apply to progression decisions undertaken in the August 2018 re-assessment round. Senate noted that there would be detailed consideration of the operational aspects of the proposals over the coming month. Senate authorised the Academic Policy Committee to approve the final wording of the regulation and associated implementation plan for these amendments.

18/M08

BUSINESS TO NOTE**(a) Risk Registers, Summer term 2018**

Senate received for information the Strategic Risk Register, and extracts from the Corporate Risk Register relating to those areas under Senate's remit. Senate received a report which highlighted amendments to the registers since they were last received by Senate in March 2018. Senate noted the respective risk ratings associated with individual entries on the register. Senate noted that there had been no new risks or alterations to the ratings of individual risks in the register.

(b) Reports from Committees

(i) Academic Policy Committee

Senate received reports of the meetings of the Academic Policy Committee that had taken place on 20 March, 30 April, 23 May and 14 June 2018.

Senate noted that those elements which required approval had already been considered under item M06(f).

Senate noted the other business set out in the reports. Senate noted the discussion regarding the amendments to the Reflect Policy with respect to the legal basis for processing data under the General Data Protection Regulation and the assigning of performer's rights. Senate noted that the Trade Unions would be engaged in discussions on these points.

Senate noted the Committee's ongoing oversight of programme development, approval, monitoring and review as detailed in the reports. Senate also noted the appointment of External Examiners, as detailed in the reports.

Senate **approved** the reports.

(ii) Postgraduate Research Policy Committee

Senate received reports of the meetings of the Postgraduate Research Policy Committee that had taken place on 4 May and 4 June 2018.

Senate noted that those elements which required approval had already been considered under item M06(f).

Senate noted the other business set out in the reports

Senate **approved** the reports.

(iii) Research Strategy, Policy and Performance Committee

Senate received reports of the meetings of the Research Strategy, Policy and Performance Committee that had taken place on 15 March and 10 May 2018

Senate noted that those elements which required approval had already been considered under item M06(f).

Senate noted the other business set out in the reports.

Senate **approved** the reports.

(iv) Enterprise Strategy, Policy and Performance Committee

Senate received the report of the meeting of the Enterprise Strategy, Policy and Performance Committee that had taken place on 17 May 2018.

Senate noted the other business set out in the report.

Senate **approved** the report.

(c) University Officer Appointments

Senate received for information a list of all University Officer level appointments that had been made since 7 March 2018.

(d) Programmes Approved and Withdrawn

Senate received a list of programmes and pathways that had been approved in principle, in full and withdrawn.

(e) Senate Student Discipline Panels

Senate received the outcomes of recent Senate Student Discipline Panels.

18/M09 **DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

Senate noted the dates of its meetings in 2018/19 as follows:

Wednesday 7 November 2018, 2pm

Wednesday 6 March 2019, 2pm

Wednesday 26 June 2019, 2pm

Duration of meeting: 1 Hour