

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

SENATE

11th November 2015

MINUTES

Present: Professor Sir David Eastwood (Vice-Chancellor and Principal, in the Chair); Professor D Adams (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College); Professor K Armour; Professor T Arnull; Dr D Bailey; Professor J Bale (Pro-Vice-Chancellor); Professor S Becker (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College); Professor M Calvert; Ms R Evans; Professor M Fox; Dr D Fuller; Dr D Ghica; Professor J Green; Professor D Hannah; Professor M Hannon; Professor S Hunston; Professor P Kumar; Dr H Laville; Ms I Lenga (Vice-President of the Guild); Professor P Lumley; Professor A Lymer, Professor J Martin; Professor U Martin; Professor H Mehanna; Dr D Moran; Professor M Nimmo (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College); Ms M Parvaz; Professor Z Pikramenou; Dr S Quigley; Dr C Ray; Professor J Rowe; Professor K Rowlingson; Professor I Sansom; Professor G Schaffer; Professor A Schofield (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College); Professor D Shepherd; Professor M Simmons; Professor T Softley (Pro-Vice-Chancellor); Mr R Sowden; Professor A Tickell (Provost and Vice-Principal); Dr G Timmins and Professor M Whitby (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College).

Also present: Mr B Casey (Director of Academic Services); Dr J Gilson (Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor); Ms C McDonough (Assistant Secretary); Mr L Sanders (Registrar & Secretary); Ms A Simcox (Governance Officer) and Mr R Smith (Director of Admissions) for Minute 15/46.

Apologies: Professor J Arthur; Professor H Draper; Dr E Fulton; Professor A Guariglia; Professor C Miall; Professor P Moss; Dr A Phillips; Professor C Ross; Ms M Salama; Dr K Voelz and Dr N Wilkin.

Absent: Ms L Tulley and Professor G Watson.

Papers: The minute book contains copies of all written papers or reports to which reference is made below unless indicated otherwise.

15/40 Membership and Terms of Reference

Noted: the membership of Senate for 2015/16 and its terms of reference (SEN.15.11.01).

Resolved: to co-opt four members on the recommendation of the Vice-Chancellor as set out in Paper SEN.15.11.01.

15/41 Minutes of previous meeting

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting held on 10th June 2015 be approved (SEN.15.11.02), subject to the addition of Dr D Bailey to the record of those present at the meeting.

15/42 Matters Arising Minute 15/33, Report from the Nominations Committee

Reported: that the award of the honorary degree of DUniv to Mr John Crabtree had been approved by members of Senate over the Summer by correspondence. Mr Crabtree would be attending a ceremony in December 2015 to receive his honorary degree.

15/43 Vice-Chancellor's Items

Considered: a report from the Vice-Chancellor (SEN.15.11.03).

(1) University of the Year for Graduate Employability

Reported: that the University had been named University of the Year for Graduate Employability in The Times and The Sunday Times Good University Guide 2015-16. This placed Birmingham as the UK's number one university for securing graduate-level jobs.

(2) Green Paper

Reported that:

- (a) the Government had published its higher education Green Paper on 6th November 2015 - *Fulfilling our Potential: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice*. The proposals included the introduction of a new framework for assessing teaching quality (Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)), quicker routes to market for new providers, and a reformed regulatory infrastructure which would create an Office for Students. A detailed briefing on the proposals was tabled as Paper SEN.15.11.03A;
- (b) the publication of the findings of the Nurse Review of Research Councils was expected on 19th November 2015. This would inform national debate on future operation of the dual support system;
- (c) the University was preparing its formal response to the consultation on the Green Paper which had to be submitted by 15th January 2016.

(3) Strategic Framework – KPTs

Reported: that the 2015-20 Strategic Framework, *Making Things Happen*, had been formally launched on 22nd October 2015. The Framework set out the themes and priorities of the University for the forthcoming five years.

(4) Senior Appointment (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (International))

Reported that:

- (a) the role of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (International) would be responsible for the development and implementation of a strategy for the University's international activities, in order to raise further the institution's global profile and enhance its research and teaching through international partnership and collaborations;
- (b) the final interviews for Pro-Vice-Chancellor (International) had been held on 27th October 2015 and Professor Robin Mason, had thus been nominated by the Vice-Chancellor for appointment to the role (SEN.15.11.03A (tabled)). Professor Mason was currently Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Executive Dean of the University of Exeter Business School and Professor of Economics.

Resolved: that the support of Senate for the appointment of Professor Robin Mason as Pro-Vice-Chancellor (International) be confirmed, noting that the view of Senate would be reported to Council when it considered the nomination (by correspondence).

15/44 Higher Education Review Self-Evaluation Document

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15/45 PGR Quality Assurance

Considered:

- (a) the PGR Submission and Completion Rates 2001 to 2013 and resulting actions;

- (b) Research Progress and Awards Sub-Panel Decisions 2013/14;
- (c) PGR examination results 2013/14;
- (d) External Examiners' for Postgraduate Research Degrees Summary Feedback, January to December 2013;
- (e) the PGR Annual Review Report which identified areas of best practice and key issues, with mitigating actions (SEN.15.11.05).

(1) PGR Submission and Completion Rates 2001 to 2013 and Resulting Actions

Noted that:

- (a) the completion rate for the 2005 cohort, the most recent for which both part-time and full-time PGR students were expected to have submitted, was 81.5% for full-time and 45.8% for part-time;
- (b) the issues reducing both submission and completion rates were the same as in previous years (for example, high numbers of leavers amongst part-time PGRs and a proportionately high number of extensions in some Schools);
- (c) figures from HEFCE over a seven year period in comparison to other English HEIs from the Russell Group showed the University's projected completion rate as 73.6% (below sector-adjusted baseline of 75%). This placed the University 12th out of the 18 Russell Group HEIs included in the figures. However, the limitations of the data were recognised. The University's own observed data from earlier cohorts of full-time PGR students demonstrated a better past performance than HEFCE's projection;
- (d) action plans had been implemented by the GSMB to begin to address these issues. Further actions would be carried out by Colleges in 2015/16. The University would also seek to learn from good practice elsewhere. As a result, continued improvement was expected for the future.

(2) Research Progress and Awards Sub-Panel Decisions 2013/14

Noted: that there was a decreasing trend annually in the total number of referrals. The Sub-Panel dealt with 537 referrals in 2013-14 compared with 667 for the previous year.

(3) PGR Examination Results 2013/14

Noted: that the overall University performance was strong with over 70% of theses receiving a straight award or requiring only minor corrections and over 90% being awarded the qualification aimed at. A higher proportion of theses examined within the College of Social Sciences required major corrections (40%) compared to the other Colleges, which continued a trend from previous years. The College had been asked to investigate this further to identify any underlying issues that should be addressed.

(4) External Examiners' for Postgraduate Research Degrees Summary Feedback January to December 2014

Noted: that the feedback had been generally positive and had not raised any significant issues with the thesis examination process.

(5) PGR Annual Review Report

Noted: that the School and College Annual Review Reports had identified a number of areas of good practice and issues arising which had been addressed by the GSMB.

15/47 Research Performance

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(1) Research Grants 2014/15

(2) Reflections on Enhancing the Intellectual Environment

15/48 National Student Survey 2015 Results and Strategy for 2016

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15/49 Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences

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15/50 Amendment to Ordinance 4.3.3 – Term of Office of External Examiners

Considered: a minor amendment to Ordinance 4.3.3 to ensure it reflected current practice in relation to the terms of office of External Examiners (SEN.15.11.10).

Resolved: that the minor amendment to reflect current practice in relation to the terms of office of External Examiners in accordance with Ordinance 4.3.3 be approved as set out in Paper SEN.15.11.10.

15/51 Annual Research Integrity Statement to Council

Considered: the University's Annual Research Integrity Statement (SEN.15.11.11).

Reported: that the University had, by virtue of its membership of Universities UK, signed up to the commitments of the Universities UK Concordat to Support Research Integrity. The Concordat recommended that an annual statement be presented to the University's Council, including confirmation of actions taken during the year to support research integrity.

Recommended: the University's Annual Research Integrity Statement to Council for approval as at Appendix 1 to Paper SEN.15.11.11.

15/52 Membership of the Education Committee

Resolved: that the addition of the Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) and the Director of Alternative Modes of Delivery to the membership of the Education Committee be approved with immediate effect.

15/53 Report from Heads of Colleges

Noted: the report from the Heads of Colleges regarding recent developments (SEN.15.11.12).

15/54 Report from the Nominations Committee

Considered: a report from the meeting of the Nominations Committee held on 13th October 2015 (SEN.15.11.13).

Resolved: that the recommendations for the award of an honorary degree and re-appointment of Public Orators be approved as set out in Paper SEN.15.11.13.

15/55 Report from the Research Committee

Noted: a report from the joint meeting of the Research Committee and Knowledge Transfer and Engagement Sub-Committee held on 16th September 2015 (SEN.15.11.14).

15/56 Report from the Academic Policy and Regulations Committee

Noted: a report from the meetings of the Academic Policy and Regulations Committee held on 3rd July and 14th October 2015 (SEN.15.11.15).

15/57 Report from the University Education Committee

Noted: a report from the meetings of the University Education Committee held on 17th June and 15th October 2015 (SEN.15.11.16).

15/58 Report from the University Quality Assurance Committee

Noted: a report from the meeting of the University Quality Assurance Committee held on 8th October 2015 (SEN.15.11.17).

15/59 Programme of Meetings 2015/16

Noted: the programme of meetings of Senate for the remainder of 2015/16:
Wednesday 23rd March 2016 at 2.00pm
Wednesday 8th June 20016 at 2.00pm