

## UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

## SENATE

14th June 2017

## 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 (Pro-Vice-Chancellor); Professor J Arthur (Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Staffing)); Ms D Baskin-Atkinson; Dr S Conner; Dr A Davies; Professor J Green; Professor A Guariglia; Professor M Hannon; Dr N Hotchin (Director of Postgraduate Studies); Dr L Jeffery; Professor T Jones (Provost and Vice-Principal); Professor P Kearns; Professor P Kraftl; Professor P Kumar; Dr T Lockwood; Professor P Lumley; Ms N Ma; Professor I Mandel; Professor J Martin; Professor U Martin; Dr D Moran; Dr C Needham; Mr K Nelson; Professor M Nimmo (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College); Professor Z Pikramenou; Dr J Pritchard; Professor C Ross; Professor J Rowe; Professor A Schofield (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College); Professor D Shepherd; Professor M Simmons; Professor T Softley (Pro-Vice-Chancellor); Professor M Sterling; Dr G Timmins; Dr K Voelz; Mr C Wilkinson (Education Officer, Guild of Students); Dr H Yusuf.

Also present: Mr S McAuliffe (Academic Registrar); Ms C McDonough (Assistant Secretary); Mr L Sanders (Registrar & Secretary).

Apologies: Dr D Bailey; Professor S Becker (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College); Ms R Bennett; Professor C Bunce; Dr D Fuller; Dr J Gilson (Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience)); Professor D Hannah; Professor F Lough; Professor M Mahlberg; Professor R Mason, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (International); Professor H Mehanna; Professor P Moss; Professor K Rowlingson; Professor M Whitby (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College); Professor N Wilkin.

Absent: Dr R Brandstaetter; Professor G Watson; Ms C White.

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

17/19 Minutes of previous meeting

**Resolved:** that the minutes of the meeting held on 22nd March 2017 be approved (SEN.17.06.01).

17/20 Matters Arising from the minutes not addressed elsewhere on the agenda

**Reported:** that there were no matters arising.

17/21 Vice-Chancellor's Items

**Considered:** a report from the Vice-Chancellor (SEN.17.06.02).

**Reported:**

- (a) that the announcement of the results of the TEF had been deferred, pending the appointment of the next Minister for Universities and Science. This appointment had now been made (Jo Johnson having been re-appointed) so current indications were that the announcement could be made the following week;
- (b) that experimental statistics on employment and earnings of higher education

- graduates using matched data from different government departments, known as Longitudinal Educational Outcomes data, had been published by the government the previous day. This was being analysed by the University;
- (c) the implications of the outcome of the General Election for higher education. These included the potential impacts on future tuition fee increases and international student recruitment.

17/22 Birmingham 2026

**Considered:** the long-term vision for the size, shape, and performance of the University - 'Birmingham 2026' (SEN.17.06.03).

**Reported** that:

(a) to (g) **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**

**Resolved:** that the long-term vision for the size, shape, and performance of the University - 'Birmingham 2026' - be endorsed by Senate for submission to Council on 28th June 2017.

17/23 Institute for Global Innovation and Development

**Considered:** an update on the Institute for Global Innovation and Development (IGID) following the completion of a consultation exercise (SEN.17.06.04).

**Reported** that:

(a) to (d) **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**

**Resolved:** that the establishment of the IGID was welcomed by Senate as set out in Paper SEN.17.06.04.

17/24 Research Performance Update

**COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE**

**Considered:** the research grants performance information for the nine month period to 30th April 2017 (SEN.17.06.05).

**Reported:**

(a) that the research grants performance information for May had been received since the papers for Senate had been circulated.

(b) to (e) **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**

(f) Senate noted that work was under way to enhance post-award support (for example, by refinement and communication of the post awards process and by the strengthening of a sense of partnership working between research grant holders and professional services research support team members). Ian Lyne, currently Director of Research and Enterprise Services at Lancaster University, would be joining the University in July as Director of Research Support Services to lead this work.

**Noted:** that a report on the final research grants performance for 2016/17 would be submitted to Senate in November 2017.

17/25 Education Update

**Considered:** the education update from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) (SEN.17.06.06).

**Reported:** that PwC was partnering with the University to create a new fully-funded technology degree apprenticeship, to help grow the next generation of UK technology talent.

Starting in September 2018, the innovative programme for 80 students per year would combine university life with practical work-based technology projects at PwC. The initiative was one of the first and largest examples of the new Level 6 Degree Apprenticeships in action.

## 17/26 Education Committee Structure

**Considered**: the proposed revision of the Education Committee Structure (SEN.17.06.07).

**Reported** that:

- (a) as the University's principal academic body, Senate regulated the academic work of the University as well as overseeing quality assurance and standards of the education provided. Committees were integral to ensuring the success of this work, through delegated authority, and as the regulatory landscape of the sector had begun to shift it was necessary for the University to consider its committee structures, in order to ensure that they were not only time-efficient and streamlined for their members but that they also met the demands of this new external backdrop;
- (b) the review of the education committee structure had been led by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) and had been considered by University Education Committee (UEC). The changes proposed centred on UEC being established as the primary education-related committee reporting to Senate, in order to ensure a more strategic and effective oversight of education activity as a whole. Delegated responsibilities would include education-related Key Performance Targets, quality assurance, academic policy, regulations and standards, and the student academic experience. All other education-related committees would become sub-committees of UEC (activity and scope for which would continue to be delegated from Senate). As such, changes to some committee reporting lines were proposed together with the disestablishment of two University-level committees (the Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC) and the University Programme Approval Review Committee (UPARC)). The remit of other committees would expand to ensure the continuing robust management of quality assurance processes and academic standards;
- (c) the aim of the revised structure was to improve the flow, efficiency and effectiveness of education committee work in order to ensure that outcomes for students and academic staff time are optimised. The proposed structure achieved this aim while ensuring the integrity of the activity being undertaken on behalf of Senate;
- (d) the education committee structures at College, School and Department level had also been rationalised to align with the new structure headed by UEC;
- (e) under the leadership of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) and Academic Registrar, each Committee would also be tasked with reviewing and streamlining their processes and forms to reduce bureaucracy and to report back to UEB on this by the Summer term 2018;
- (f) the effectiveness of the new arrangements would be reviewed by UEB after one year of operation, particularly in relation to (e) above;
- (g) the effectiveness of scrutiny would not be weakened by this revision. For example, the scrutiny role performed by APRC would continue to be delivered robustly and effectively by the University Quality Assurance Committee chaired by the Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education);
- (h) the Guild Education Officer was encouraged to liaise directly with the Academic Registrar and other key contacts in Student Services to resolve day-to-day issues, such as faults in teaching rooms, so that these could be resolved quickly (rather than waiting to raise them at Committee).

**Resolved**: that the revised education committee structure as set out in Paper SEN.17.06.07 be approved.

17/27 University Strategic Framework Key Performance Targets

**COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE**

**Considered:** the University Strategic Framework Key Performance Targets Update (SEN.17.06.08).

**Reported:**

(a) **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**

(b) that the KPT Update would be considered by Council on 28th June 2017.

17/28 Quality Assurance

(1) UG/PGT Annual Review 2015/16

**Considered:** a report on the outcomes of the University-wide annual review processes pertaining to undergraduate and postgraduate taught provision in the academic year 2015/16. (SEN.17.06.09)

**Reported** that:

- (a) no significant or widespread concerns had been raised by School and College annual review summary forms. Examples of good practice and educational enhancement identified through the processes had been collated and disseminated in an annual summary report;
- (b) in line with the University's commitment in its APR Enhancement Plan, a revised annual review process would be implemented from Summer 2017 (i.e. reviewing the academic year 2016/17). The revised process would be more strategic and forward-looking, aligning annual review with School Education Plans. Timescales for carrying out annual review would be brought forward so that it was completed primarily during the summer rather than the autumn, in order to ensure that the process fitted with the timing of Annual Provider Review and was better placed within the academic planning cycle.

(2) UG and PGT External Examiners Reports 2015/16

**Considered:** a summary of comments made by external examiners assigned to undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate programmes (PGT) for the academic session 2015/16 (SEN.17.06.10).

**Reported** that:

- (a) the vast majority of comments from UG and PGT External Examiners were positive and confirmed that academic standards were consistent with those across the sector;
- (b) following discussion at UQAC, the University summary reports, alongside College-specific summaries, were considered at College Quality Assurance Committees (or equivalent) to ensure actions to address any identified issues were taken forward and items of good practice were disseminated to School colleagues.

(3) Student Complaints, Appeals and Grievances to Council and Complaints to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator

**Considered:** data on complaints, appeals and grievances to Council and complaints to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) by students of the University for 2015/16 (SEN.17.06.11).

**Reported** that:

(a) to (b) **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**

17/29 Recruitment and Admissions Update

**COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE**

**Noted:** the Recruitment and Admissions Update (SEN.17.06.12).

17/30 **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**

17/31 Reports from Heads of College

**Noted:** the report from the Heads of College regarding recent developments (SEN.17.06.14).

17/32 Report from the Nominations Committee

**Considered:** a report from the Nominations Committee (SEN.17.06.15).

**Resolved:** that the recommendation for the election of two members of Nominations Committee be approved as set out in Paper SEN.17.06.15.

17/33 Report from the Research Committee

**Noted:** a report from the meetings of the Research Committee held on 21st March and 17th May 2017 (SEN.17.06.16).

17/34 Report from the Academic Policy and Regulations Committee

**Noted:** a report from the meeting of the Academic Policy and Regulations Committee held on 5th April 2017 (SEN.17.06.17).

17/35 Report from the University Education Committee

**Noted:** a report from the meetings of the University Education Committee held on 16th March and 23rd May 2017 (SEN.17.06.18).

17/36 Programme of Meetings 2017/18

**Noted:** the programme of meetings of Senate for 2017/18:

Wednesday 8th November 2017 at 2.00pm

Wednesday 21st March 2018 at 2.00pm

Wednesday 13th June 2018 at 2.00pm

17/37 Closing Remarks

On behalf of Senate, the Vice-Chancellor thanked:

(a) the student members of Senate for their contributions throughout the year;

(b) Dr Neil Hotchin for his work as Head of the Graduate School whilst Professor Gavin Schaffer had been on sabbatical.