

# UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

## SENATE

20th March 2019

## MINUTES

Present: Professor Sir David Eastwood (Vice-Chancellor and Principal, in the Chair); Professor K Armour (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education)); Professor R Black (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College); Professor S Busby; Professor T Cable; Dr S Conner; Dr J Curnow; Dr A Davies; Professor E Fulton; Professor A Ginger; Mr A Goldstone; Professor J Green (Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education)); Professor L Green (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College); Dr C Greenway (Director of Student Engagement); Professor D Hannah; Dr A Hidalgo; Mr A Jaatinen; Professor P Jackson; Dr L Jeffery; Dr L Jenkins; Professor T Jones (Provost and Vice-Principal); Professor P Kearns; Mr Z Khan; Professor P Kraftl; Dr T Lockwood; Professor F Lough; Professor P Lumley; Professor M Mahlberg; Professor R Mason (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (International)); Professor M Mazzocco; Ms G Palazzi; Professor J Pritchard; Professor K Rowlingson; Professor G Schaffer (Director of Postgraduate Studies); Professor A Schofield (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College); Professor D Shepherd; Ms J Small; Professor T Softley (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research)); Professor J Taylor; Dr G Timmins; Professor M Whitby (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College); Professor N Wilkin; and Ms B Williams.

Also present: Ms C Gilbert (Director of External Relations) (for Minute 19/04); Mr S McAuliffe (Academic Registrar); Mr L Sanders (Registrar and Secretary); Mr N Sidney (Governance Officer); Professor H Widdows (Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Research (Impact)) (for Minute 19/06).

Apologies: Professor D Adams (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College); Professor J Arthur (Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Staffing)); Dr D Bailey; Professor C Constantinou; Professor M Hannon; Professor U Martin (Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Equalities)); Professor P Moss; Professor C Needham; Professor I Szmigin; Professor M Sterling.

Absent: Professor M Simmons; Dr N Sigona; Dr H Yusuf.

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

19/01 Minutes of previous meeting

**Resolved:** that the minutes of the meeting held on 7th November 2018 be approved (SEN.19.03.01).

19/02 Matters Arising from the minutes not addressed elsewhere on the agenda

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

19/03 Vice-Chancellor's Items

**Noted:** a report from the Vice-Chancellor (SEN.19.03.02).

**Reported** that:

- (a) Dame Shirley Pearce was leading the independent review of the Teaching Excellence Framework, and the University had submitted its response to the formal consultation on 1st March 2019. A further update would be provided to Senate in June 2019;

- (b) the University was continuing to review and update its planning for Brexit, with a particular focus on mitigating the staff and student-related and operational risks that would arise from a 'no-deal' Brexit, including working with Universities UK on 'no-deal' guidance.

19/04 Recruitment and Admissions Update

**COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE**

**Considered:** the Recruitment and Admissions Update (SEN.19.03.03).

**Reported** that:

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

19/05 Education Update

**Considered:** an update from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) (SEN.19.03.04).

**Reported** that:

- (a) University Education Committee had agreed proposals to enhance the Peer Observation of Teaching process, which would be re-named 'Peer Enrichment of Teaching' to reflect the greater emphasis on developmental aspects, enhancement, reflection and the sharing of best practice;
- (b) in addition, the Higher Education Futures Institute (HEFi) was piloting a new initiative ('The Open Classroom') to encourage staff to offer informal opportunities to learn with colleagues in different disciplinary settings;
- (c) HEFi also planned to expand its group of HEFi Fellows and Scholars and would be shortly be launching a call for applications;
- (d) the University was seeking to develop more contemporary and responsive approaches to enhance how student feedback was captured and used, including real-time engagement with students;
- (e) Panopto was welcomed by students as a tool that provided enrichment to the learning experience, and also provided opportunity to deliver benefits for staff. The Code of Practice on Lecture Capture, which had been considered through the University Education Committee, set out further information for staff on the arrangements for the use of lecture capture technology.

19/06 Research Excellence Framework (REF) and Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF)

(1) REF Progress Update

**Considered:** an update on the University's preparations for REF 2021 (SEN.19.03.05).

**Reported** that:

- (a) the University would make its submission to REF 2021 by the deadline of November 27th 2020, and would include an entry for 28 Units of Assessment (UoAs). The final 'Guidance on Submissions' and 'Panel Criteria and Working Methods' documents, which set the rules for submission, were published by the Research England REF Team at the end of January 2019;
- (b) the most significant change from REF 2014 was that the University was required for 2021 to submit 100% of staff who 'have a significant responsibility for research' and who met the test of being an 'independent researcher' (meaning there was no opportunity to select staff, as was the case for 2014);
- (c) all Colleges had undertaken a further round of review of submittable outputs during Autumn 2018 (the third round that had been undertaken since REF preparation had commenced). **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION];**

- (d) the Impact development process agreed by REF Board for 2018/19 had progressed, with individual review meetings having been held by the Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research Impact) with virtually all Impact Case Study (ICS) leads and College REF leadership during Autumn 2018. This was considered to have been a successful exercise, which had progressed the development of the draft ICS forms and had also resulted in College leadership having a detailed understanding of the position with each ICS for all UoAs in their College;
- (e) feedback had been provided to UoA leads on draft Environment Templates via College Directors of Research, and guidance had been circulated by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) on material to be included;
- (f) the University's Code of Practice, which documented the University's processes for selection of the outputs making up UoA portfolios, and for identification of which staff had significant responsibility for research and were independent (whilst also taking equality and diversity considerations into account), was in development and currently under review by UEB. Following this, a University consultation would be undertaken during April 2019. The full draft Code of Practice would then be approved by UEB and submitted to Research England for approval by the deadline of 7th June 2019;
- (g) the outcomes arising from the University's REF 2021 submission would be of significance in determining the University's longer-term research standing.

**Noted:** the update on progress towards the University's REF 2021 submission, as set out in Paper SEN.19.03.05.

19/07 (2) KEF – Update and Consultation Response

**Considered:** an update on the proposed design and implementation plan for the first iteration of the KEF and the University's initial consultation response (SEN.19.03.06).

**Reported** that:

- (a) Paper SEN.19.03.06 described the proposed design and implementation plan for the first iteration of the Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF) for English higher education institutions and outlined the University's response to the KEF consultation being run by Research England, which closed on March 14th 2019;
- (b) the KEF was designed to create easily accessible and comparable information on higher education institution performance in a wide range of knowledge exchange activities for the purposes of transparency and public accountability;
- (c) the KEF would be an institutional level exercise made up of two parts:
  - (i) the Concordat: a self-assessment and public record of the commitment by senior university management to Knowledge Exchange (KE). This would be similar to the Researcher Concordat and a demonstration of commitment to high standards of KE and continuous improvement;
  - (ii) the metrics: these were ratios that were to be derived mainly from data that higher education institutions already provided to Research England annually via the separate HESA and HEBCIS data collections, plus a degree of narrative. These metrics would be made public for 'clusters' of universities, rather than having a single 'league table', and the University was currently assigned to cluster V, alongside fifteen other Russell Group universities;
- (d) the validity of the metrics would initially be tested in a 'pilot' being run by Research England between February and April 2019. The University's initial modelling suggested that for the 13 metrics on which the University was able to access public data, the University's position within the cluster of 16 Russell Group Universities would be in the top quartile for 4 of the above metrics; in the second quartile for 3 of the metrics; third quartile for 3 metrics; and fourth quartile for 3 metrics;
- (e) the KEF consultation sought feedback on the metrics chosen, the method for cluster generation, design of narrative statement templates, visualising the data and the

- approach to implementation. The University was broadly supportive of the approach outlined in the consultation, with a few caveats on specific metrics;
- (f) no direct link between the KEF outcomes and funding implications had yet been established. However, this would be reviewed by Research England following the pilot exercise.

**Noted**: the update on the proposed design and implementation plan for the first iteration of the KEF and the University's initial consultation response, as set out in Paper SEN.19.03.06.

19/08 Research Grants Performance – 2018/19

**COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE**

**Considered**: the research grants performance information for the six month period from 1st August 2018 to 31st January 2019 (SEN.19.03.07).

**Reported** that:

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

19/09 Access and Participation Plan

**Considered**: a report on the work undertaken to develop the University's approach to its Access and Participation Plan (SEN.19.03.08).

**Reported** that:

- (a) having an approved Access and Participation Plan (APP) in place was an ongoing condition of registration with the Office for Students (OfS), and a condition of being able to charge the higher fee limit (condition A1 of registration). The University had an approved plan in place for 2019/20 following successful registration with the OfS in August 2018;
- (b) the University had established an APP Working Group to review the University's approach to the APP and produce the next plan;
- (c) new OfS guidance on developing Access and Participation Plans for 2020 onwards was published on 28th February 2019. The deadline for submission of the new APP was 24th May 2019;
- (d) the OfS had recently supplied official data on which targets should be based, and the APP Working Group was now working to consider if the targets identified were appropriate. Aligned to this would be a full assessment of current investment in access and participation activities to develop a clear idea of the cost of delivering the revised APP targets. The Working Group would also use these to produce the Access and Participation Plan;
- (e) to (g) **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**
- (h) methods to be employed by the University to support the achievement of this target would include:
  - (i) enhancement of the University's scholarships and financial support package, which would target students in low participation neighbourhoods as eligibility would be based on being a Quintile 1 student;
  - (ii) targeting of schools in low participation (Quintile 1) neighbourhoods, and those schools with high proportions of Quintile 1 students achieving good grades;
  - (iii) focusing of digital marketing efforts on prospective students in Quintile 1 postcodes;
- (i) to support achievement of the remaining three targets in the progression and outcomes of some student groups, which were related to 'In-Reach' activities, work would be based around the Birmingham Scholar programme, targeted School-level interventions in key areas, and staff training and toolkits, as well as highlighting the significant investment made by the University in the University of Birmingham School;

- (j) the University was already working with the Guild on student engagement with producing the APP, and the Guild Education Officer welcomed this approach;
- (k) Council would consider a paper on the APP in April 2019, which would seek approval for the final version of the APP to be delegated to the Pro-Chancellor and Chair of Council, on behalf of Council, and submitted to the OfS by 24th May 2019, given OfS required Council approval and Council would not meet again until after the OfS deadline;
- (l) the final version of the APP would be shared with Senate in June 2019, following submission to the OfS.

**Resolved:** that the University's approach to producing the Access and Participation Plan be endorsed, as set out in Paper SEN.19.03.08.

19/10 Reports from Heads of College

**Noted:** the report from the Heads of College regarding recent developments (SEN.19.03.09).

19/11 Report from the Honorary Degrees Committee

**Noted:** a report from the Honorary Degrees Committee held on 26th February 2019 (SEN.19.03.10).

**Resolved:** that the recommendations for the award of honorary degrees be approved as set out in Paper SEN.19.03.10.

19/12 Report from the Research Committee

**Noted:** a report from the meeting of the Research Committee held on 13th November 2018 and 22nd January 2019 (SEN.19.03.11).

19/13 Report from the University Education Committee

**Noted:** a report from the meetings of the University Education Committee held on 21st November 2018 and 23rd January 2019 (SEN.19.03.12).

19/14 Report to Senate on the work of Council-approved Panels during 2018

**Noted:** the report to Senate on the work of Council-approved Panels during 2018 (SEN.19.03.13).

19/15 Programme of Meetings

**Noted:** the programme of meetings of Senate:

2018/19

Wednesday 12th June 2019 at 2.00pm

2019/20

Wednesday 6th November 2019 at 2.00pm

Wednesday 18th March 2020 at 2.00pm

Wednesday 10th June 2020 at 2.00pm