

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER

MEETING OF SENATE

**Minutes of a meeting held on
Wednesday 12 November 2014**

Present: The President and Vice-Chancellor (Chair)

Dr Aissaoui	Professor Lester
Professor Andrew	Dr Lewis
Professor Atkinson	Professor Lilley
Professor Barstow	Professor Marshall
Professor Beck	Dr Norman
Professor Brilliantov (<i>Vice Professor Davidchack</i>)	Professor Pan
Professor Chapman	Dr Parry
Professor Coffey	Professor Peel
Professor Coleman	Professor Phythian
Professor England	Professor Pritchard
Professor Foxhall	Dr Royle (<i>vice Professor Ketley</i>)
Professor Fulcher	Professor Samani
Professor Fry	Professor Schurer
Dr Gibson	Professor Schwabe
Dr Grubb	Ms Taylor
Professor Hall	Professor Twell
Professor Heckel	Professor Wilson
Professor Hope (<i>vice Processor Raven</i>)	Professor Wynford-Thomas
Professor Hughes	Professor Yeoman
Ms Hyde (<i>vice Mr Athwal</i>)	
Dr James (<i>vice Dr Marsh</i>)	
Professor King	Mr M Rubin (SU)
Professor Lawson	Mr Y Nikolov (SU)

Campus Trade Union Representatives in attendance for M29 Ms S Hendy and Mr A Icke

In attendance: Director of the Research Support Office (for M35 a)), Director of Enterprise and Business Development (for M35 c)), Director of Finance, Registrar and Secretary, Academic Registrar (Secretary) and Mr A Petersen (Assistant Secretary)

Apologies for Absence were received from Mr Athwal, Professor Davidchack, Professor Du Bois, Professor Ketley, Dr MacLeod, Dr Maltby, Dr Marsh, Professor Raven, Professor Thompson, Professor Wallace

UNRESERVED BUSINESS

14/M28 INTRODUCTION FROM THE PRESIDENT AND VICE-CHANCELLOR

The President and Vice-Chancellor (Chair) welcomed members to the first meeting of Senate in the 2014/15 academic year.

The Chair reported that following visits to the majority of academic departments he was pleased to note the clear sense of collegiality and the range of innovation in teaching

and research evident within the institution. However, he stressed the importance of the University more actively communicating its strengths in these areas. Although the University was not ranked in the top 20 institutions in terms of research income, there were clearly a number of areas of excellence which formed the basis for further development. The range of disciplinary coverage within the departments of the University was significant and represented an opportunity to develop a level of interdisciplinary teaching and research which, combined with opportunities such as the Pathways Project, could allow the University to demonstrate its distinctiveness within the sector.

The Chair reported that the senior committee structure of the University had been revised and would now comprise a University Leadership Team (ULT) chaired by the President and Vice-Chancellor and including the Pro-Vice-Chancellors, the Registrar and Secretary and the Director of Finance. This body would be considering the development of University strategy going forwards, and the Chair emphasised that this would be a consultative process. He noted the importance of evidenced based decision making, particularly for the purposes of prioritising investment in academic departments and the Professional Services.

ULT would be supported by a University Executive Board consisting of the above, the five other Heads of the Divisions of Corporate Services, the Graduate Dean and the President of the Students' Union. The Chair reported that the wider governance structure of the University was currently under review and that that this process would address a range of issues including the delegation of powers between Committees and seeking to ensure more equal representation of all groups within the governance framework.

The Chair noted that the University was in a challenging financial position and that the strategic discussions at University level would include options for the future expansion of income streams. It was noted that while increasing student numbers was one potential area of expansion, this should be considered within a wider strategy which took into account the overall profile of teaching within the institution and the need to increase our average tariff score and to grow income from research and enterprise activities. He also noted that the current system of cross-subsidy between departments and colleges may require review in due course.

Finally, the Chair emphasised that Senate had an important role in discussing and debating the range of institutional level considerations outlined above, and that a full and open dialogue with Heads of Department and other academic leaders was central to the strategic development of the University.

14/M29 UNIVERSITY ACCOUNTS 2013/14

Senate received an extract from the University accounts for the 2013/14 academic year. These had already been submitted to the Audit Committee. The central features of the accounts were presented to Senate by the Director of Finance. Representatives of the Campus Trade Unions were present for this item.

Senate noted that the University had achieved a total income of £287 million in 2013/14 which included a surplus of £7.6 million, equivalent to 2.6% of income. This was at a similar level to last year and met the requirements set out in the budget for the academic year.

Senate noted that when compared with the wider sector the University's operating surplus as a proportion of total income was slightly below the average for research intensive universities. Senate noted however that further work would be required to ensure that an appropriate level of surplus was maintained to ensure financial sustainability. Senate noted minor variance in the final accounts compared with initial year end forecasts due to accounting adjustments that had been necessary due to pension costs and underspending in some budget areas.

Senate thanked the Director of Finance and his team for producing the reports. Senate **endorsed** the 2013/14 accounts for submission to Council.

14/M30 MEMBERSHIP AND POWERS OF SENATE

Senate received its constitution and membership as set out in Ordinance 10.

Senate noted that as part of the review of University governance (M28 refers) proposals relating to the role and membership of Senate would be considered in due course.

14/M31 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Senate considered the minutes of a meeting held on 1 July 2014.

Senate **approved** the minutes as a correct record.

14/M32 MATTERS ARISING

Arising from M18 (h) Senate received a report from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of the College of Medicine, Biological Sciences and Psychology regarding the closure of the School of Social Work. Senate noted that a working group had been established to oversee the process of supporting the remaining students in the completion of their studies. An acting Head of School had been appointed to provide academic leadership, and administrative support would be being provided through an internal secondment to undertake the day to day management of the teaching programme.

14/M33 PRESIDENT AND VICE-CHANCELLOR'S BUSINESS

(a) Approval of University Orator

Senate considered and approved the appointment of Dr Grubb (Department of Cell Physiology and Pharmacology) as the second University Orator for a three year term ending in July 2017.

Senate recorded its thanks to Professor Petersen, now retired, for his service in the role of Orator.

(b) Higher Education Review

The President and Vice-Chancellor reported that the University had received confirmation that its Higher Education Review will take place in the first week of February 2016. Senate noted that Higher Education Review is the new methodology used by the QAA and there is a clear emphasis on compliance with all aspects of the Quality Code. Senate noted that the institutional preparations for the Higher Education Review would be led by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) and the Academic Registrar, and that it was essential that the University achieves a positive judgement on each aspect of the Code. The President and Vice-Chancellor emphasised that the

preparations led by the HER Steering Group would require engagement by colleagues across the University.

14/M34 **STRATEGY AND POLICY**

(a) University Risk Register for the Autumn term

Senate considered amendments to the University Corporate Strategic Risk Register for the Summer term.

Senate **approved** the Risk Register for onward submission to Council.

(b) Admissions target setting for 2015/16 and Registration figures for 2014/15

Senate received a paper which reported the registration figures for October 2014 and set out the process for the agreement of student intake targets for the 2015/16 academic year. Senate noted that registration figures for home and EU students were slightly below target, however the proportion of off-quota students had risen. Senate also noted that recruitment at postgraduate taught level had however fallen significantly below target with home recruitment down by 25% and overseas down by 13.5%.

Senate noted that the process of target setting was underway supported by the Division of External Relations and the International Office, and that proposed targets for 2015/16 entry would be considered by the University Leadership Team on 8th December.

(c) Progression routes for academic staff on teaching dominant contracts

This agenda item was withdrawn pending further development, and would be presented to Senate in due course.

(d) Change of Departmental Title

Senate considered a proposal from the College of Medicine, Biological Sciences and Psychology to amend the title of the Department of Cancer Studies and Molecular Medicine to the Department of Cancer Studies, which was considered to be more reflective of the Department's research profile.

Senate applied its power under Ordinance 10 (10) to **approve** the change of departmental title.

(e) Summary of League Table performance, 2014

Senate noted the position of the University in league tables recently published in the Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide (20th) and the Higher Table of Tables (18th). Senate also noted the University's position in major international league tables such as the Times Higher Education World Rankings (199th), the QA World University Rankings (211th) and the US News Best Global University's Ranking (254th). Senate noted that with the exception of the final ranking, the University's position had fallen in all of the published tables to date.

Senate noted that the fall in the overall National Student Survey scores for 2014 (M36 c) refers) was a significant contributing factor within the league table rankings, and that

this may also be evidenced in the remaining domestic tables due to be published in 2015.

14/M35 **RESEARCH AND ENTERPRISE**

(a) Research Grant Income

Senate received a presentation from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) detailing research grant income across Colleges and Departments.

Senate noted that overall across the previous four years there had been an increase in the amount of institutional research income. The University's percentage growth in research funding also compared favourably within the sector, with Leicester ranked 7th in terms of percentage growth over the period. However, there was significant variation at departmental level. Senate noted that only a small number of departments had achieved top 20 positions nationally in terms of overall research income, and that only three were ranked in the top 10. While it was noted that some of the factors which affected the award of research grants were outside of the control of individual departments, Senate recognised that there was a need to seek more consistently strong performance across the institution.

In terms of overall volume of research awards, the University sat outside of the top 20 recipients of funding for the majority of research councils. Furthermore, the data demonstrated a relatively heavy reliance on a small number of high profile individuals in receipt of substantial research grants, and Senate recognised the need to broaden the base of major award holders.

Senate noted that the University's success rate in the conversion of applications to grant awards was strong, but that application rates overall had declined. Senate therefore agreed that it was essential to provide guidance to staff in how to target appropriate funding opportunities. Senate noted that in addition to seeking to expand research council funding, the University should also increase applications for EU funding and opportunities for international research collaborations.

Senate also noted that the University was below average in the contribution rates calculated for research grants. Senate agreed that it would be helpful for the Research Support Office to develop notes of guidance to support academic staff in calculating the value of staff time, direct and indirect costs for inclusion in research grant applications.

(b) Research Policy Committee

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) presented a report of the meeting of the Research Policy Committee held on 16 October 2014.

Senate considered and **approved** the Terms of Reference and Membership for the Committee for the 2014/15 academic year.

Senate considered a draft revised Research Code of Conduct. Senate noted that this had been the subject of extensive consultation throughout the institution and that the Code set out a clear and public statement of the University's research policies and practices, including the obligations on all University staff undertaking research. Senate **approved** the Code of Conduct for immediate implementation, and noted its thanks to members of the working group which had produced the document.

Senate also noted in particular the strategic priorities identified by the Committee for consideration in the 2014/15 academic year which included development and launch of an Impact Strategy and ensuring that the University Policies toward Open Access and Research Data Management were embedded.

Senate **approved** the report.

(c) Enterprise Policy Committee

(i) Committee Report

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) presented a report of the meeting of the Enterprise Policy Committee held on 13 October 2014.

Senate considered and **approved** the Terms of Reference and Membership of the Committee for the 2014/15 academic year

Senate noted the remaining contents and **approved** the report.

(ii) Areas for Development

Senate received a verbal report from the Director of Enterprise and Business Development regarding the current work of the office and potential areas for development. Senate was pleased to note that the overall ranking of the University in terms of enterprise income had improved from 45th to 24th since 2011/12, driven in part by a large increase in commercial contracts and the success of a number of spin-out companies. A governance structure had been established to support enterprise at College level.

Senate noted that the main areas of development identified were in the expansion of knowledge transfer and contract research, the development of non-credit bearing CPD provision, and increasing academic engagement in enterprise activities.

Senate welcomed the development of this stream of activity and noted that it would be helpful to consider means for further expanding this at a future meeting.

14/M36 **LEARNING AND TEACHING**

(a) Proposals to amend the structure of the academic year and harmonise the University credit framework

Senate considered a paper and a presentation from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of the College of Arts, Humanities and Law and the Academic Registrar which outlined proposals to restructure the academic year and adopt a more standardised credit framework. Senate noted that a wide consultation had taken place with colleagues in academic departments and the Professional Services as well as the Students' Union and that the proposals reflected feedback gained through this process.

Senate noted that the current structure of the academic year split the teaching in the second semester which impacted upon the student experience, and resulted in a shorter overall teaching period thus compressing the requirements upon staff and did not allow for efficient use of the University estate. It was proposed to amend the academic year to extend the two main teaching periods and reduce the Christmas and Easter vacations. The final term following Easter would not include any teaching and would be solely for the purposes of examinations and marking. The proposals were

designed to enhance the learning experience by ensuring unbroken periods of study but also to ensure that sufficient time was available for staff to undertake research and marking.

Senate noted that the future timing of the re-sit examinations would be considered by the Academic Policy Committee shortly. Senate also noted that under the proposed model there would be years when the Easter weekend fell outside of the designated vacation period. While this was not uncommon across the sector, Senate agreed that it was essential to ensure that account was taken of staff and students' caring responsibilities in such circumstances.

Senate considered the proposals relating to the harmonisation of the University credit framework. Senate noted that the proposals to increase the workload allocation from 7.5 to 10 hours per credit would ensure that the University was consistent with the wider sector. Senate also noted that the consultation had demonstrated the variation in assessment loads on programmes across the institution and agreed that this represented an opportunity to review assessment methods and loading, which would be taken forwards at College level.

Senate considered proposals to formally designate a minor pathway as 30 credits and a major pathway as 90 credits. To facilitate this, it was proposed to move towards a more standardised module credit weighting across the institution of 15 or 30 credits. Although it was intended for the majority of modules to move to the standardised ratings, Senate noted that there could be some discretion where modules were only used within one department, or to meet the requirements of Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies.

Senate welcomed the open and collegiate approach that had been taken in ensuring that all stakeholders within the University had been given the opportunity to contribute to the process. Senate approved all of the recommendations for amendment to the academic year and credit framework, and the proposals for reviewing assessment loading for full implementation for the academic year 2017-18. Senate further agreed that effective communication of the proposed changes to staff and students was critical in order to ensure the quality of the student experience during the transitional period.

(b) Report on the process of programme development and approval, 2013/14

Senate considered a report which analysed the operation of the Code of Practice for the development, approval and modification of taught provision over the 2013/14 academic year, and reported actions which had been proposed by the Academic Policy Committee to enhance the process.

Senate was pleased to note that the report confirmed that Senate could have confidence that the operation of the Code of Practice was ensuring the academic standards and quality of the University's programmes of study.

Senate noted that as a result of the review the Academic Policy Committee was developing a number of amendments to the Code of Practice. Senate noted that a formal requirement would be introduced to reconsider business cases where a proposal had not proceeded to full academic approval within 18 months. Senate also noted proposals to introduce alternate approval mechanisms for revisions to existing programme titles and the introduction of specialisms which were more proportionate

to the lower risk involved. Senate also noted the development of additional training resources for Programme Approval Panel members.

Overall Senate welcomed the confirmation of the academic standards of new and modified programmes, and **endorsed** the proposals for action.

(c) National Student Survey

Senate considered a paper which outlined the outcome of the National Student Survey for 2014 and proposed actions to improve performance in the 2015 Survey

Senate noted that the University's overall satisfaction scores had fallen in 2014. Senate noted that in response Departments and Colleges had considered the results in detail and a working group led by the Academic Registrar had proposed a series of actions. These included a campaign to demonstrate where action had already been taken in response to student feedback, enhancing processes for feedback on assessed work and investment in the timetabling system.

Senate considered proposals for an awareness campaign to enhance student engagement with the NSS. This would include additional promotion before and during the survey window, and an incentives programme which would offer students the opportunity to win a graduation pack. Senate also noted the need to ensure effective and concise communication with students through a range of media.

Senate **approved** the actions proposed at institutional level as well as the plans for the awareness campaign.

(d) Academic Policy Committee

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of the College of Arts, Humanities and Law presented reports of the meetings of the Academic Policy Committee held on 17 September and 17 October 2014

Senate considered and **approved** the Terms of Reference and Membership for the Committee for the 2014/15 academic year.

Senate also considered proposed amendments to Senate Regulation 12 governing student complaints. The amendments were proposed with the intention of clarifying sections of the regulations, particularly the submission of evidence to support complaints, the process for collective complaints, and the process for stage two considerations. Senate **approved** the proposed amendments for immediate implementation.

Senate noted in particular that the Committee was developing processes for the approval and management of short courses and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and that these would be circulated to colleagues in due course. Senate also noted that the Committee had commenced a review of Senate Regulation 6 governing taught postgraduate programmes of study, and Senate Regulation 2 governing admission and registration with particular reference to processes for the Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL). Senate noted that consultation with colleges and academic departments regarding these proposals would take place shortly, and that proposals for amendments to regulations where appropriate would be considered by the Academic Policy Committee in the new year.

Senate **approved** the reports.

(e) Career Development Advisory Board

The Academic Registrar presented the report of the meeting of the Career Development Advisory Board held on 3 November.

Senate considered and **approved** the Terms of Reference and Membership of the Committee for the 2014/15 academic year.

Senate noted in particular the development of Career Development Journey for all undergraduate students which would further embed employability skills within the curricula.

Senate approved the **report**.

(f) Postgraduate Research Policy Committee

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) presented reports of the meetings of the Postgraduate Research Policy Committee held on 15 September and 6 October 2014

Senate considered and **approved** the Terms of Reference and Membership for the Committee for the 2014/15 academic year.

Senate noted in particular that the Committee had approved revisions to the annual reporting format for students to submit to the Graduate Dean. Senate also noted that following a report which demonstrated that almost 40% of the postgraduate research community within the institution was made up of mature students, the Committee and the Graduate School were developing proposals for how to meet the specific support needs of this student group.

Senate **approved** the reports.

(g) Honorary Degrees Board

The Vice-Chancellor presented a report of the meeting of the Honorary Degrees Board held on 3 November 2014.

Senate considered the nominations for the conferment of honorary degrees and distinguished honorary fellowships at the July 2015 ceremonies, and at subsequent ceremonies as applicable.

Senate **approved** the report and **resolved to recommend** to Council that these nominations be approved.

(h) Programmes of Study

Senate received for information a list of programmes of study recently approved or withdrawn.

14/M37

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

(a) Staffing Policy Committee

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) presented a report of the meeting of the Staffing Policy Committee held on 23 October 2014.

Senate considered and **approved** the membership for the Committee for the 2014/15 academic year, noting that the terms of reference were currently subject to review and would be presented for the approval of Senate in due course.

Senate considered proposed amendments to the current policy and procedures for flexible working. The amendments were relatively minor in nature and were designed to reflect recent changes in national legislation which extended the eligibility of staff to request flexible working and allow greater flexibility in the timescales for meetings and actions associated with the process. The new policy also allowed for the review of flexible working where operational needs changed and formalised the process for requesting flexible working.

Senate noted that the policy had been discussed with the Campus Trade Unions and endorsed. Senate also noted that the policy contributed towards the University's compliance with key agendas such as Athena Swan and the Research Concordat. Senate **approved** the proposed amendments for submission to Council

Senate **approved** the report for onward submission to Council.

(b) Information and Communications Strategy Committee

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of the College of Science and Engineering presented a report of the meeting of the Information and Communications Strategy Committee held on 16 October 2014.

Senate considered and **approved** the terms of reference and membership for the Committee for the 2014/15 academic year.

Senate **approved** the report for onward submission to Council.

14/M38 **DATES OF MEETINGS IN 2014/15**

Senate noted the time and date of meetings in the 2014/15 academic year as follows:

Wednesday 11 March 2015

Wednesday 1 July 2015

14/M39 **RESEARCH EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK OUTCOME**

Senate noted that the University would receive the outcome of the REF for the institution on 16 December 2014. The outcomes for the wider sector would be circulated to Universities on 17th December and published nationally on 18th December.

CHAIR