UNCONFIRMED

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER

MEETING OF SENATE

Minutes of a meeting held on
Wednesday 29 June 2016

Present: The President and Vice Chancellor (Chair)

Professor Andrew	Dr Hewitt (*vice* Dr Norman)
Professor Atkinson	Professor Hughes
Mrs Baas (*vice* Mr Athwal)	Dr James
Mrs Bailey	Professor Ketley
Professor Challiss (*vice* Professor Schwabe)	Professor Monks
Professor Coffey	Professor O'Brien
Professor Coleman	Dr Parry
Professor Davidchack	Professor Peel
Dr Dickinson	Professor Pritchard
Professor Du Bois	Professor Radnor
Dr Dudley (*vice* Dr Macleod)	Professor Raven
Professor England	Professor Scott
Professor Fulcher	Dr Tansey
Dr Gibson	Ms Taylor
Professor Gillespie	Dr Thomas
Professor Heckel	

In attendance: Dr Willmott (for item M12), Dr Lorber (UCU), Mr Brain (UNITE), Registrar and Secretary, Director of Finance, Academic Registrar (Secretary) and Mr A Petersen (Assistant Secretary)

Apologies for Absence were received from Mr Athwal, Professor Baker, Professor Chakraborti, Professor Hainsworth, Professor Hall, Ms Holland, Dr Macleod, Dr Maltby, Professor Marshall, Professor Martin, Dr Norman, Professor Phythian, Professor Samani, Professor Schwabe, Dr Shaw and Professor Wood

UNRESERVED (ONLY) BUSINESS

16/M12   **PERSONAL TUTORING**

Senate received a paper and presentation outlining amendments to the Personal Tutoring system for 2016/17 onwards designed to ensure that the quality of pastoral support provided to students was effective and consistent across departments and modes of study. Senate noted that these included amendments to the Code of Practice on the Personal Support of Students, and also noted that the revisions had been approved by the Academic Policy Committee under delegated authority from Senate.

The recommendations fell into the following key areas:

a)   Senior Tutor

A new role of Senior Tutor would be created. There would be approximately three roles per college, designed to monitor the implementation of the Code, analyse the output of monitoring to identify enhancements and provide support to tutors.

b)   Training

Online personal tutoring training would be developed by the Leicester Learning Institute and made mandatory for all staff undertaking personal tutoring roles.

c)   Signposting

An infographic and other web based resources had been designed for staff to signpost students to the appropriate support service for their needs.

d)   Frequency

The code specified a minimum of four personal tutor meeting sessions take place per year, although this was a threshold requirement that departments may choose to exceed. All departments would also be expected to have a personal tutoring week as a designated opportunity for students to meet with their personal tutor..

e)   Monitoring

A simple web based form would be introduced to log all personal tutoring meetings, to serve as a record for the ongoing support of students, and also to allow for analysis of the successful implementation of the Code.

f)   Workload and Recognition

It was proposed that the workload associated with acting as a personal tutor should be formally recognised and accounted for within workload allocation models.

Senate welcomed the proposals. Senate noted that the consideration had been given to an alternative model of separating academic and personal support for students, however it had been agreed there was greater value to ensuring cohesion and a single point of support for students in the first instance.

Senate considered whether central support might be available for timetabling personal tutoring weeks and activities. It was noted that support was available however departmental practice varied and therefore it would be necessary to engage with the central timetabling office to consider what support could be provided in each case.

Senate noted the role of Heads of Department in the implementation of the new code. Senate noted the core drivers in terms of enhancing student support and the student experience, with the consequent benefits for student satisfaction and league tables. Senate agreed that members should emphasise the importance of engaging with the recommendations within their departments, raise this in relevant departmental fora and provide support where required for Senior Tutors seeking to achieve consistent application of the new processes among both staff and students.

Senate thanked Dr Willmott and the working group for its considered approach to the review of personal tutoring and for the resulting amendments to policy.

16/M13   **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

Senate considered the minutes of meetings held on 9 March and 5 May 2016.

Senate approved the minutes as an accurate record of each meeting.

16/M14   **MATTERS ARISING**

No Matters Arising were identified which were not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

16/M15   **PRESIDENT AND VICE-CHANCELLOR'S BUSINESS**

(a)   League Tables

Senate received a report outlining the University's performance the recent Guardian League Table. Senate was disappointed to note the fall in the University's ranking to 47th. Senate noted the significant weighting accorded to NSS results within the CUG metrics and that the fall in league table positions reflected the recent decline in NSS outcomes.

(b)   Mock Teaching Excellence Framework

The President and Vice-Chancellor reported that in advance of the introduction of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) a mock exercise had been undertaken to benchmark the performance of the institution in key metrics. The indicative position of the University in a ranking based on these outcomes would be 77th.

Senate noted that the outcome indicated a strong performance in employability or students proceeding to further study. However, for full time students the University's score in Assessment and Feedback was below what might be hoped. For part-time students there was also a below average score for Academic support.

While the current outcome would place the University in the 'Excellent' category, Senate noted that the outcome was below where the University should expect to be performing. Senate further noted the role of the student experience metrics in calculating this outcome, which further emphasised the extent of the work required to address the issues identified in the NSS.

(c)   Outcome of EU Referendum

The President and Vice-Chancellor made a statement regarding the outcome of the recent referendum in which the United Kingdom elected to leave the European Union.

In the short term loans to EU students studying in the UK in 2016 had been guaranteed. However, in the longer term the UK could become a less attractive destination for EU students as they would be required to pay international fees and would not have access to the same loan book. Similarly, UK students may lose access to the ERASMUS scheme. In terms of research funding it was noted that while in the EU the UK received more money than it contributed in terms of research grants, and also that restrictions on available funding and the movement of people could hamper international collaborations.

The President and Vice-Chancellor reported that he and other colleagues were continuing to lobby on behalf of higher education, to attempt to find a means of ensuring that overall funding for teaching and research did not decrease as a result of the outcome of the referendum.

(d)   Institutional Transformation

The Provost provided a verbal update on the ongoing Institutional Transformation. Discussions with departments and the Trade Unions were ongoing and a Transformation Group was meeting weekly to manage the process. Senate also noted that following a number of all staff consultation events a series of further forums would

be organised over the summer and autumn terms relating to research funding and support, the role and funding of the Professional Services and the development of the estate.

The Provost also confirmed that recruitment targets for Clearing 2016 had been agreed, and thanked departments for their engagement with this process.

16/M16   **STRATEGY AND POLICY**

(a)   Budget for 2016/17 and Financial Forecasts to 2019/20

Senate considered the budget for 2016/17 and the Financial Forecasts to 2019/20. Representatives of the Campus Trade Unions were invited to attend for this item. The Director of Finance drew Senate's attention to particular aspects of the budget and forecasts.

Senate noted that following an excellent financial performance in 2014/15 the budget and forecasts for 2016/17 onwards presented a more challenging situation. A surplus of £4.2 million was projected for the 2015/16 academic year, which was beyond original projects in part due to a number of savings in-year. However, for 2016/17 a significant reduction in fee income was projected which would lead to the University almost certainly having to run a deficit budget for that academic year of approximately 4%.

Senate noted the range of measures in place to maximise income and minimise expenditure. It was noted that a major element of the deficit in 2016/17 related to the one-off costs of the current process of institutional transformation. However, income was projected to rise over the course of the forecast period as a result of ambitious recruitment targets and projected growth in research income. Senate noted that the process of transformation was seeking to establish a more sustainable financial basis for the institution, which would include an overall reduction in the cost of staffing as a proportion of overall University expenditure.

Senate noted the continuing capital programme (M16 (c) refers) and a series of other investments to support the delivery of the Strategic Plan in the areas of learning, research, culture and environment.

Senate noted proposals for further borrowing over the period. It was noted that as a result of the current financial circumstances there was a risk that the institution may break one of its banking covenants, and that the Director of Finance was negotiating with the banks regarding this. It was not anticipated that this would impact upon the overall cost of institutional borrowing in the future.

The Director of Finances added additional comments with regard to the potential consequences of the UK's exit from the EU. In addition to points already raised regarding the impact upon fee income, funding and staff and student mobility, it was also noted that this may impact upon the University's pension fund contributions, ability to borrow from specific sources and increase the general level of risk in financial markets.

Senate thanked the Director of Finance and his team for the production of the Budgets and Financial Forecasts.

Senate noted the Budgets and Financial Forecasts for submission to Council.

(b)   Discovery Enabling International Strategy

Senate received a draft of the Discovery Enabling International Strategy. The key elements of the strategy were introduced by the Provost.

Senate noted that the strategy was one of internationalisation for the whole institution. It interacted directly with the University Strategic Plan in order to enhance the opportunities available to all staff and students. The Strategy aimed to restore international recruitment rates through securing more sustainable routes via links with specific partners. The Strategy also emphasised support for international collaboration in research and increasing opportunities for students to spend a period studying abroad as part of their programme. Finally, the Strategy introduced means by which the University may seek to establish a more substantial physical presence in key overseas markets.

Senate **endorsed** the International Strategy for submission to Council.

(c)   Discovery Enabling Physical Environment Strategy

Senate received a draft of the Discovery Enabling Physical Environment Strategy. The key elements of the strategy were introduced by the Registrar and Chief Operating Officer.

Senate noted that the Strategy had previously been presented in detail at a meeting of the University Executive Board. The core of the Strategy was making more effective and flexible use of the existing estate through a series of enabling works followed by more transformational work to a series of buildings. Senate noted a series of headline projects including the creation of a multidisciplinary laboratory facility, refurbishment of the Charles Wilson Building to create a Student Centre, redevelopment of the Attenborough buildings and refurbishment of the Maurice Shock Building.

Senate noted that the works would entail some disruption and that it would be helpful to provide an indicative schedule of works and associated relocations, and to present this widely to staff through a series of roadshows.

Senate **endorsed** the Physical Environment Strategy for submission to Council.

(d)   Senate Members Elected to Council

The Secretary announced that following a ballot the following two members of Senate were elected to Council:

Professor Paul O'Brien, Department of Physics and Astronomy

Professor John Schwabe, Department of Molecular and Cell Biology

Each was elected for a three year term commencing on 1 August 2016 and ending on 31 July 2019.

(e)   Departmental Restructuring

Senate considered a proposal to restructure several departments within the College of Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities into three Schools as follows:

      (i)   The Department of Economics and the School of Management to become a single School;

(ii)   The School of History and the Department of Politics and International Relations to become a single School;

(iii)   The Department of Media and Communication and the Department of Sociology to become a single School;

Senate noted that the new schools were designed to facilitate further closer collaboration across intertwined disciplines, enhance the research and PGR environment and increase critical mass and operational efficiency.

The new Schools would formally come into existence on 1 August 2016. Senate noted that the precise titles of the Schools under (i), (ii) and (iii) above was subject to further discussion.

Senate **approved** the proposal to restructure the departments into Schools and authorised the President and Vice-Chancellor to approve the final title of the schools when this was agreed.

(f)   Departmental Disestablishment

Senate considered a proposal to disestablish the Vaughan Centre for Lifelong Learning as an academic unit of the University.

Senate recognised the considerable role played by the Vaughan Centre in providing high quality adult education to the city and the region. It was however noted that the Centre had required a significant financial subsidy for several years. A review of the Centre in late 2015 had demonstrated that there was little opportunity to either refresh the portfolio of programmes offered or to generate additional fee income through significant growth in student numbers. It was also noted that widening participation measures were increasingly embedded within all University departments and the model operated by the Vaughan Centre, whilst having much to commend it, did not represent the only or arguably the most effective method of delivering adult education. Under the proposal all programmes would be suspended for new entrants in 2016. Those current students would be supported to complete the award for which they were currently registered and a small number of programmes would move to other departments.

Senate noted that a formal consultation process was underway and all options raised through that process were being given due consideration.

Senate received statements of support for the continuation of VCLL from the Trade Unions, the current Head of the Centre and the Students' Union. These statements highlighted the importance of adult education to the community and argued that this should remain as a central element of wider University strategy. In particular, it was noted that the Trade Unions had requested that the Centre remain open for one further year to allow additional time for a consultation on its future.

Senate considered the proposal in detail. It was acknowledged that the closure may have a reputational impact and affect the University's relationship with the city. However, it was further noted that the PROUD strategy was based on the published priorities in the Mayoral Manifesto and the University was actively seeking other means of engaging with the community.

Following due consideration, Senate provided the following comment for consideration by Council.

Senate wished to state its continuing support for the principle of lifelong learning and acknowledged the role that staff at the Vaughan Centre and its predecessors had played in the broader effort to increase access to and successful participation in higher education. Senate recognised that the disestablishment of the Vaughan Centre would diminish a specific aspect of the University's contribution in this area, but also noted that many other programmes and departments were actively and imaginatively engaged in efforts to enhance access and participation for students from a wide range of backgrounds, including adult learners. Senate concluded that if, following completion of the consultation process, it was agreed that the Vaughan Centre should be closed, this would be a regrettable but necessary consequence of the University's current challenging circumstances.

Senate wished finally to put on record its sincere appreciation for the work that the Vaughan Centre had undertaken over many years in the community and in developing the University's approach to the ongoing challenge of widening participation and encouraging lifelong learning.

(g)   Departmental Re-titling

Senate considered a proposal to change the name of the Department of Computer Science to the Department of Informatics, with effect from 1 August 2016.

Senate noted that the proposal was designed to meet the growing need for expertise in applied and interdisciplinary teaching and research in this area, and **approved** the new title.

(h)   Amendment to Ordinances: Emeritus Titles

Senate considered a proposal to amend the process for the award of Emeritus and other honorary titles.

Senate noted that under the revised process the award of Emeritus titles would not be automatic, and would instead be considered by the University Staffing Committee upon receipt of a nomination from the relevant Head of Department. Other University Honorary titles would be awarded by College Staffing Committees. The revised process would be reflected through amendments to Ordinances 19 and 9(6).

Senate considered the issue of whether emeritus professors should be able to supervise or examine PhD theses, which was currently not permitted under regulations. Senate noted the arguments on both sides and agreed that this should be referred to the Postgraduate Research Policy Committee for consideration.

Senate **endorsed** the amendments to Ordinances for submission to Council.

(i)   Amendment to Ordinances: Review of Court

Senate considered a report which outlined the process and outcome of a review of Court which had recently been completed. The report recommended a number of amendments to Ordinances. These were primarily to reflect the creation of Full and Associate member classes of Court and the impact of this on the overall membership and operation of that body.

Senate **endorsed** the proposed amendments to Ordinances 2, 11, 12, 13 and 30 for submission to Council.

16/M17   **RESEARCH AND ENTERPRISE**

(a)   Research Applicant and Grant performance

Senate considered a paper on research application and grant performance in the 2015/16 academic year to date. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) drew Senate's attention to specific aspects of the paper.

2014/15 had been a very active year for research grant applications. It was however noted that the conversion rate of application to award had not been as strong as may be hoped, and that application rates for the equivalent period in 2015/16 were significantly lower than the previous year.

The University was therefore significantly below the target set in terms of research grant income for the period (61%), although it was noted that there was variation between the colleges. The University was aiming for a 7.5% year on year growth in research grant income, and Senate therefore noted that there was progress to be made in this regard.

In support of this, Senate noted that a Funder Group had been set up in each College to enhance relationships with funding councils and that four new research institutes would be launched on 30 June to focus on areas of excellence. Additional staffing in the Research Support Office was also identified as a positive means of enhancing application and grant capture rates. Senate also expressed its appreciation to the significant number of staff who had engaged in the application process to the Global Challenge Research fund.

In conclusion, Senate noted the current position and the range of activities underway to improve institutional performance. The President and Vice-Chancellor emphasised the role of peer mentoring in developing successful grant applications, and further encouraged members to ensure that such a system was embedded within their departments.

(b)   Research Strategy, Policy and Performance Committee

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) presented reports of the meetings of the Research Strategy, Policy and Performance Committee that had taken place on 17 March, 12 May and 2 June 2016.

Senate considered amendments to the Research Code of Conduct. The updates included additional guidance on confidential information, expansion of the guidance for supervisors with regard to appraisal and flexible working, and a number of updates to reflect external changes in policy or legislation.

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

Senate considered a newly developed policy on Researching and Handling Sensitive, Extreme or Radical Material. Senate noted that the policy had been developed in order to ensure that the University had an effective procedure in order to meet the terms of the PREVENT duty, as set out in the Security and Counter Terrorism Act 2015. The new policy would require researchers to assess whether their research would fall under this remit via completion of a questionnaire. Where identified, such research would need to be reviewed by internal assessors and approved and, if necessary, a risk assessment completed.

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

Senate noted the Committee's approval of a policy to increase contribution rates on research grants from April 2016 and the development of training to support colleagues in correctly accounting for costs associated with the use of physical and other resources. Senate also noted the role of the Committee in developing and approving the new institutional research centres. Finally, Senate noted the Committee's continuing oversight of preparations for REF 2021.

Senate **approved** the reports.

16/M18   **LEARNING AND TEACHING**

(a)   Report of the QAA Higher Education Review

Senate noted that the report of the Higher Education Review that had taken place in February 2016 had been published by the QAA. Senate noted that the University met expectations in all four core judgements and had also received a number of commendations. Senate noted that the recommendations in the report had been addressed (M12 above and M18(c) below refer), and that the required action plan would be submitted in July.

(b)   Degree Classification Profile, midsummer 2016

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 336 finalists.

Senate noted:

	2013/14		2014/15		2015/16	
I	589	22.8%	504	20.9%	473	22.1%
2(i)	1446	56.0%	1367	56.7%	1100	51.5%
2(ii)	447	18.5%	455	18.9%	494	23.1%
3	69	2.7%	86	3.55%	67	3.1%
Pass	4	0.2%	1	0.05%	3	0.1%
Aegrotat	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	2585	100%	2413	100%	2137	100%

Percentage of Firsts/Upper Seconds:

2011/12	**2012/13**	**2013/14**	**2014/15**	**2015/16**
75.4%	79.3%	78.8%	77.5%	73.6%

(c)   Summary Reports of External Examiners reports and responses

Senate considered summaries of the reports from the external examiners for undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes in the 2014/15 academic year. The summaries had been compiled by the Academic Directors of the Colleges following a detailed review of the reports. The summary had been considered by the Academic Policy Committee and proposals for action where required had been included for the information of Senate.

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. Senate has also noted a small number of areas identified by the Academic Policy Committee for further action, and the proposals for addressing these.

(i)   Undergraduate programmes

Senate noted that the points raised regarding the operation of borderlines within the scheme of assessment would be addressed through the upcoming review of Senate Regulation 5 and that a review of the operation of mitigating circumstances regulations was also planned.

Senate also noted that additional guidance would be developed for departments regarding provision of opportunities for external examiners to meet students, the management of the relationship between the department and its external examiners, and the format for departmental responses to external examiners' reports. Senate also noted that it would be further emphasised to departments that external examiners' reports should be a standing item on Student-Staff Committee meetings.

(ii)   Postgraduate programmes

The summary report identified only one issue where further University guidance or policy development was required, namely encouraging greater variation in assessment methods. Senate noted that the upcoming Curriculum Transformation process would provide such an opportunity and that the supporting resources would allow departments to reconsider their assessment strategy in detail.

Senate **approved** the reports and endorsed the proposals for action.

(d)   Academic Policy Committee

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) presented reports of the meetings of the Academic Policy Committee that had taken place on 7 April, 18 May and 23 June 2016.

Senate considered proposed amendments to Senate Regulations as follows:

(i)   Senate Regulation 1 governing entry requirements

The proposed amendments arose from a review of the University's English Language Requirements for entry. The revisions clarified the definition of prior study in the medium of English, extended the list of accepted English language qualifications, and identified a number of specific institutions from where an undergraduate degree would be considered sufficient evidence of English language competency.

(ii)   Senate Regulation 4 governing student obligations

Senate noted that a revised Attendance Monitoring Policy had been considered and approved by the Academic Policy Committee. The Policy introduced an automated, centrally co-ordinated system which would require students to tap in using their student card in all centrally managed teaching spaces. The policy also

articulated a staged process for the management of unauthorised absence which could, ultimately, lead to withdrawal of a student's registration.

Senate noted that this revised policy required consequent amendments to Senate Regulation 4 governing student obligations in order to reflect the processes for the management of student attendance and to establish these as being distinct from the wider issue of neglect of academic obligations.

(iii)   Senate Regulation 5 governing undergraduate programmes of study

Senate considered proposed amendments to Senate Regulation 5 in order to revise the progression and award requirements set out in Senate Regulation 5 in light of the introduction of Major/Minor Pathways.

Under the proposals, students undertaking minor subjects would be required to pass at honours level at least one module in each level of their minor in order to progress and to achieve an award, thus ensuring that students were able to demonstrate an appropriate level of achievement in order to meet threshold standards on their Minor subject area.

Senate **approved** all of the proposed amendments to Senate Regulations.

Senate noted the development of a Policy for Postgraduate Research Students who Teach. The policy clarified existing processes in this area and confirmed that all students who undertook teaching were required to complete mandatory training, and that all such students should be paid at the rate agreed for the work undertaken.

Senate noted that the Committee had approved the Reflect Lecture Capture Policy. This had followed extensive consultation with staff throughout the institution and the final policy included a number of amendments in response to issues raised through this process, including the issue of performance rights. It was noted that for certain pre-defined learning events, audio and presentation slides capture would be automatic unless a member of staff opted out. In such circumstances, the Head of Department would be responsible for working with the staff member in question to ensure that equivalent academic content was made available via other means.

Senate noted the Committee's ongoing oversight of the Pathways Project and the Curriculum Transformation project, which included development of a process and timescale for the approval of all revisions to the University curricula. Senate also noted the Committee's development of measures to encourage academic staff to apply for HEA Fellowship or other teaching qualifications, especially in light of this metric being used in future TEF exercises.

Senate noted the outcomes of Programme Approval Panels and Periodic Developmental Review Panel as detailed in the reports. Senate also noted the approval of External Examiners for a range of programmes as detailed in the reports.

Senate **approved** the reports.

16/M19   **BUSINESS TO REPORT**

(a)   Postgraduate Research Policy Committee

Senate received reports of the meetings of the Postgraduate Research Policy Committee that had taken place on 9 May and 6 June 2016.

Senate considered and **approved** a recommendation for minor amendment to Senate Regulation 9.100 with regard to the minimum required frequency of supervisory meetings.

Senate also noted that the review of support for Postgraduate Research and associated recommendations had been considered by both the University Leadership Team and the University Executive Board. As a result of the review, the Graduate School would be restructured into a Doctoral College which would have more clearly defined and dedicated academic and Professional Services leadership, as well as enhancements to the physical space dedicated to PGR students at University and College level.

Senate **approved** the reports.

(b)   Programmes of Study

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

16/M20   **DATES OF MEETINGS IN 2016/17**

Senate noted the dates of its meetings in the 2016/17 academic year as follows:

Wednesday 9 November 2016, 2:00pm
Wednesday 8 March 2016, 2:00pm
Wednesday 28 June 2016, 2:00pm

DURATION OF MEETING: TWO HOURS AND TEN MINUTES

CHAIR