



Confirmed Minutes of Open Meeting

Senate

Wednesday 2 February 2022, at 2.15pm

Location: 4 West, 1.2 and remotely, via TEAMS

Present:

Professor Ian White, Chair

Professor Andrea Abbas

Dr Peter Allen

Dr Fran Amery

Professor Julie Barnett, Associate Dean (Research)

Professor David Bird

Professor Nick Brook, Dean of Science

Professor Julian Chaudhuri, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education)

Dr Rita Chawla-Duggan

Professor James Davenport

Professor Matt Davidson

Dr Sabina Gheduzzi

Professor Sarah Hainsworth, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research)

Dr Marion Harney

Dr Alan Hayes, Chair of Academic Assembly

Professor Momna Hejmadi, Associate Dean (Education)

Professor Tim Ibell, Dean of Engineering and Design

Dr Nigel Johnston

Professor Jonathan Knight, Vice-President (Enterprise)

Dr Frances Laughton

Dr Dai Moon

Professor Bruce Rayton, Chair Programmes and Partnerships Approval Committee

Kate Robinson, Librarian

Dr Paul Shepherd

Siddharth Singh, SU Postgraduate Officer

Professor Brian Squire

Professor Danae Stanton-Fraser

Dr Steve Wharton

Annie Willingham, SU President

Professor Cassie Wilson, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience)

Jacob Withington, SU Education Officer

Remote attendance

Professor Steve Brammer, Dean of School of Management

Dr Rob Branston

Professor David Galbreath, Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences

Professor Robert Kelsh
Professor Marcelle McManus
Dr John Troyer
Professor Lorraine Whitmarsh
Dr Jun Zang

In attendance

Dr Christopher Bonfield, Director of the Centre for Learning and Teaching
Ann-Marie Hartland, Director of Administration (remote attendance for item 15086)
Professor Neil McHugh, Head of Department, Pharmacy and Pharmacology (remote attendance for item 15080)
Rachel Sheer, Director of Academic Registry
Charlie Slack, Head of Student Voice & Engagement, Students' Union (remote attendance)
Professor David Tosh, Head of Department, Biology and Biochemistry (remote attendance for item 15080)
Keith Zimmerman, Chief Operating Officer (remote attendance for item 15086)

Secretariat

Emily Commander, Secretary
Fiona Blackmore, Member of secretariat
Jane Eyles, Member of Secretariat
Greg Noakes, Member of secretariat
Caroline Pringle, Member of Secretariat

Apologies

Professor Guy McCusker

Introductory items

15074 - Welcome and Quorum

The Chair welcomed Senators and attendees and confirmed that a quorum was present. He extended a particular welcome to the new Pro-Vice-Chancellors, Professor Sarah Hainsworth and Professor Julian Chaudhuri, who were attending their first formal meeting of Senate since taking up post on 1 December 2021.

15075 - Declarations of Interest

Members were asked to declare any potential conflicts of interest. In respect of item 15080 it was noted that Dr Dai Moon had a potential conflict of interest as UCU Branch President.

15076 - Minutes of the Previous Meeting – S21/22 – 42

The minutes of the previous meeting of Senate held on 17 November 2021 were approved subject to two amendments to minute 15043 set out below:

- In the second bullet point, after 'institutional response to this' to add 'which was to adjust the workload model'.
- To replace the fourth bullet point with the following text: 'Concern was expressed over course completion rates, but Professor Davenport explained that, while several students were taking gaps between modules, as the course delivery model allowed,

the true dropout rate was just under 7%, which he considered to be better than reasonable for a part-time online MSc.'

Action: Corrected minutes to be published on the website.

15077 - Actions and Matters Arising – S21/22 – 43

A copy of the Senate action log was circulated under this item. The Vice-Chancellor invited questions or comments on any of the open actions.

15010 Education – Governance: Senate members had requested a full and comprehensive organisational flow chart to take account of the increased number of boards, working groups and task and finish groups which had had been developed in the previous 18 months. An update was requested in relation to this.

The Head of Governance informed Senate that a full review of the Scheme of Delegation was underway. This would give rise to a governance chart. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) informed Senate that the Education Board had met for the first time last week and approved its Terms of Reference, membership and sub-groups. The Education Board would be formalising the Terms of Reference and membership of the sub-groups shortly.

Action: HoG to update Senate in June on the progress of Scheme of Delegation review.

Action: Governance chart to include Education Board Oversight Committee and other sub-groups.

15051 Academic Integrity: The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) provided an oral update to Senate on the illegal publication of University of Bath content on various student websites. Advice has been taken from the University's legal team and copyright adviser. The Academic Integrity group would be taking this forward and reviewing best practice across the sector.

Matters arising

An appeals training session had been arranged for current members of the Senate Appeals Committee and any member of Senate who might be interested in hearing student appeals in future. It would take place on Wednesday 23 February. Senators were advised to contact Governance to register their interest.

Part I: Items in this part of the agenda are for discussion

15078 – Institutional updates – S21/22 – 44

The Vice-Chancellor thanked colleagues for their hard work and cooperation to deliver teaching, assessments and research in semester 1. The University was adopting a slightly more cautious approach to the lifting of Covid restrictions than government guidance could allow, but case rates among students had remained low, suggesting that the policies adopted in semester 1 to manage the risk were the right ones. Staff rates were higher but seemed to be linked to transmission from schools, rather than the University campus.

He hoped that students would not be affected significantly by the upcoming industrial action relating to the USS pension scheme planned for later this month. There were ongoing negotiations regarding the governance of the scheme and he said that he would like the University to engage more in local discussions about the issue.

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) informed Senate that the government's 'Levelling-Up' White Paper proposed increased R&D spending outside of the South East and that the University would be looking at how it could benefit from this policy change.

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) informed Senate that the University had submitted a response to the OfS TEF consultation.

Senate discussed the update on the online MSc in Artificial Intelligence (appendix 1 paragraphs 45 – 62). The following points were made:

- The original student numbers had been exceeded, which had an impact on workload. The Department had reached agreement with Wylie to cap the number of students accepted for the May cohort.
- To increase staffing levels the Department was considering a number of options, including the use external agency tutors. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) reassured Senate that this would be a short-term measure to tackle the acute problem and would be limited to the online MSc courses.
- It was important that staff were supported and students had a good experience.
- Student views had been sought via town hall meetings.

15079 – Review of Education in Semester 1 and planning for Semester 2– S21/22 – 45 (A and B)

Professor Julian Chaudhuri, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education), introduced paper S21/22 – 45A, which reported key points of an internal audit on the clarity of communications with students about how teaching and assessment would be delivered in 2021-22, with particular focus on delivery against Competition and Markets Authority ('CMA') requirements and lessons learned.

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) thanked everyone who had helped to deliver teaching and support to students in semester 1. He informed Senate that the audit had not identified any critical issues or any non-compliance with CMA requirements. There were, however, some areas for improvement identified, for example there was inconsistency across the University as to how "structured learning activities" was defined.

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) then introduced paper S21/22 – 45B which summarised the Faculty and School plans for NSS 2022, implementing lessons learned from NSS 2021 and the semester 1 21-22 student 'Pulse survey' analysis. The delivery of teaching would continue as planned for semester 2 and, as part of the Curriculum Transformation Phase 3 planning, all departments would be reviewing their assessment and feedback policies with student NSS and 'Pulse' Survey in mind.

Senate noted the review of education in semester 1 and the update of preparations for semester 2.

15080 – Department of Life Sciences – S21/22 – 46

Item taken after 15081.

The Dean of the Faculty of Science, Head of Department for Pharmacy and Pharmacology and Head of Department for Biology and Biochemistry introduced paper S21/22 – 46 on the creation of a new Department of Life Sciences. This would bring together the current Department of Biology & Biochemistry with the Department of Pharmacy & Pharmacology.

The case for the new Department had been considered and recommended by the external review panel.

The Departments were enthusiastic about the merger, which would provide more opportunities for extending research and teaching capacity. Consultation with staff and Trade Unions had commenced. Project milestones would be set within the next few weeks.

The following points were made in the discussion:

- The need to establish a clear identity for Pharmacy at the University was noted: this had yet to be resolved.
- The General Pharmaceutical Council (“GPhC”) had been consulted and had no concerns about the merger of the Departments; it would not have implications for the accreditation process.
- The need for investment had been emphasised but there was nothing in the paper which committed the University to this. It was clarified that the intention was to set the direction of travel by approving the formation of the new Department and to consider business cases for investment at a later stage.
- There had been discussions with the existing Departments and executive search agencies to identify a leader for the new Department. This work was ongoing and would take account of research priorities.
- In response to a question about engaging with staff, it was noted that the report from the external review panel had been shared with both Departments before Christmas. Since then there had been a Town Hall session and Q&A and a shared research day to bring staff from the two Departments together.
- The creation of a Department of Life Sciences at this stage would not affect future decisions about the creation of further faculties.

Senate agreed, subject to consultation with the campus trade unions, to recommend to Council that the University proceeds with the creation of the new Department of Life Sciences, as recommended by the review panel, by 1 August 2022.

15081 – Curriculum Transformation– S21/22 – 47 (A and B)

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) presented paper S21/22 – 47A on Curriculum Transformation (CT). Phase 2 work had been completed. The Education Quality and Standards Committee (“EQSC”) had approved the phase 3 development papers and work for the undergraduate programme was on track to launch in February 2022. The postgraduate programme would launch a year later. A dedicated CT project manager had been appointed, subject to references, which would help to move the work forward.

The Director of Academic Registry presented paper S21/22 – 47B which presented further proposals towards postgraduate taught (“PGT”) regulations through the adaption of the rules in the current Appendix 14 in NFAAR-PGT. Appendix 1 of the paper set out the proposed rules which had been developed following previous Senate decisions and consultation with CT leads.

Senate welcomed the proposal for simplification. It was noted that it was not uncommon for the final year of integrated masters programmes to have a blend of undergraduate and postgraduate units, and that care needed to be given when considering which units, if any could be “borrowed” from PGT.

Senate noted the update on Curriculum Transformation and approved the proposed set of rules for postgraduate taught assessment and award.

15082 – Admissions Cycle 2022– S21/22 – 48

The Interim Director of Student Recruitment and Admissions presented paper S21/22 – 48 on the 2022 Admissions Cycle.

Postgraduate applications were tracking last year with declines in applications from China being offset by a growth in applications from India and Thailand. Existing efforts to boost applications from China were being re-doubled.

The Interim Director of Student Recruitment and Admissions informed Senate that, since writing the paper, the UCAS deadline had passed and Bath had received an additional 6,000 undergraduate applications. He updated Senate with the latest admissions data, relative to last year:

	UCAS	Bath
UK applications	+2.2%	+12.3%
EU applications	-17%	-15%
Overseas applications	+7.5%	-11.3%

The Vice-Chancellor paid tribute to everyone involved in the admissions process but emphasised the need to look at overseas recruitment.

The following points were made in discussion:

- It was suggested that Bath’s practice of making offers later than some other institutions may have a negative impact on acceptances. However it was stated that, in practice, the time lag between application and offer seemed to bear no relation to the number of firm acceptances.
- The Undergraduate Admissions Office scored and ranked applications as they were received but until the full set of applications was received, it was difficult to know how many applications would receive top rankings. As soon as the complete set of top-ranked applications had been identified, offers would be released.
- The University had been very clear about its timelines with applicants and had received minimal push back. Bath’s considered approach to making offers was consistent with other universities.

Senate noted the update on the admissions cycle for 2022.

15083 – Degree Outcomes and Degree Outcomes Statement– S21/22 – 49 (A and B)

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) introduced the departmental level analysis of degree outcomes 2015/16 to 2021/22, which had been discussed at EQSC at its last meeting. The paper built upon the degree outcomes paper, which had been presented to Senate in November.

The following points were made in the discussion:

- There would be a need to monitor the data as the national debate surrounding grade inflation was still live.

- The need for good and reliable data was emphasised, so that the University could understand where the issues lay and how to address them; decision-making should be driven by data.
- There was discussion around the factors which could contribute to the BME attainment gap. It was acknowledged that efforts to erase the attainment gap would lift teaching across the board.

Senate noted the report on the department level exercise analysing degree outcomes 2015/16 to 2020/21 and setting out future plans. Senate agreed to recommend to Council the updated institutional Degree Outcomes Statement.

Action: Report including national benchmarking to come to June Senate.

Action: Council to consider the Degree Outcomes Statement at its next meeting.

15084 – New courses and partnerships– S21/22 – 50

Senate approved the two new course proposals below, on the recommendation of the Courses and Partnerships Approval Committee:

- the MSc Football Medicine in association with FIFA, with Postgraduate Diploma exit award, to commence in 2022/23
- the MSc Clinical Associate Psychology (Adults) and MSc Clinical Associate Psychology (Children and Young People) degree apprenticeship courses to commence in 2022/23.

15085 – Online Unit evaluations– S21/22 – 51

The Director of the Centre for Learning and Teaching introduced paper S21/22 – 51. The paper sought approval for:

- a standardised set of questions across professional doctorates; and
- changes to questions for students on placement.

In response to a question about gender bias in online evaluations, it was confirmed that there was an intention to decouple online unit evaluations from Human Resources processes such as probation and promotion.

Senate approved the recommendation from EQSC on the introduction of a specific set of questions for professional doctorates. Senate approved the recommendation from EQSC on changes to questions for students on placement.

15086 – Library– S21/22 – 52

The University Librarian introduced the annual report from the Library. She thanked Library colleagues for their hard work and dedication to the library services and its users.

Senate commended the Library for the service it provided to the University community and requested that the Vice-Chancellor commended the Library at the next Council meeting. It was also noted that the equality, diversity and inclusion impact section of the annual report was very well considered and an example of good practice.

Action: The Vice-Chancellor to commend the Library and its Annual Report to Council at its next meeting.

15087 – Digital strategy– S21/22 – 53

The Chief Operating Officer presented the Digital Strategy for comment. The pandemic had shown how dependent the University was on its digital infrastructure, but also that its aspirations went far beyond what the existing services could offer.

A wide consultation process was undertaken to understand the organisation's issues and priorities. This involved in-depth interviews with nearly 50 staff and students from across the organisation. This information was used to develop a current state report.

The current state report formed the basis of the strategy together with additional feedback from staff and student focus groups. A series of senior stakeholder workshops were then held to refine the digital strategy to ensure it reflected institutional needs. Dr Gamila Shoib from the School of Management had also provided academic expertise. The strategy had been tested with wider stakeholder groups, including at weekly "Ask Me Anything" sessions, and had been considered by the University Executive Board ("UEB"). Engagement with stakeholders at all levels would continue going forwards to ensure that the strategy responded to emerging needs and issues.

The next stage would be to identify key principles. Those which had emerged so far had focused on data maturity and governance, digital architecture, CRM systems, digital skills development, and creating a coherent experience for staff and students. Core priorities would develop over the coming months as the Education and Research plans were developed.

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) emphasised that research had become increasingly dependent on digital technology and that the University needed to have a digital system underpinning its research to allow it to be compliant but also agile and responsive. Having a digital strategy that looked forward to exploiting the benefit of digital technologies was very important.

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) told Senate that he wanted the digital strategy to drive the University's high standing. The student digital experience would become increasingly important as would how the University supported staff development and workload through digital systems. He emphasised how data and insight from digital systems could be used to drive future actions.

The following points were made in the discussion:

- It was recognised that user-centred design had not always been present in previous digital systems. All of the work on the digital strategy would be driven by user need.
- UEB had approved the strategy in principle but requested that it go to Senate for comment. It would be considered by UEB again, after which a business case would be drafted with specific objectives and processes.
- The digital strategy would be run as a programme of discrete projects so it could be managed at a granular level.
- There was sufficient allowance for implementation of the strategy in the University's financial plans, particularly within the existing capital budget.

Part 2: Items in this part of the agenda are to be confirmed, rejected or referred back without debate

15088 – Award ceremonies– S21/22 – 54

In response to a question from Senate, it was confirmed that there was no intention to use Saturdays for award ceremonies, once the backlog of degree ceremonies caused by the pandemic had been cleared.

It was also confirmed that there had been full consultation with Departments and Faculties over the proposed changes to the award ceremony dates. If any changes were required to the dates of the Continuing Boards of Studies, these could be made under the delegated authority of the Secretary to Senate.

Senate approved:

- A change in the dates of award ceremonies for 2022 Finalists from week commencing 11 July 2022 to week commencing 18 July 2022.
- Consequential adjustments to the timing of:
 - meetings of the Finalist Boards of Studies, moving them from 29 June 2022 to 6 July 2022; and
 - meetings of the Continuing Boards of Studies, moving them from 12 July 2022 to 19 and 20 July 2022.
- The dates of ceremonies planned for graduates from 2020 and 2021 who have not yet attended an award ceremony.
- The proposal that planned ceremonies will be held in Bath Abbey assuming circumstances, including public health guidance, allow.

Action: Changes to calendars to be published on website.

15089 – Embedding Knowledge Exchange in the committee structure – S21/22 – 55

Senate approved:

- Amendments to the Terms of Reference of Faculty/School Research and Knowledge Exchange Committees;
- A change in the name of Department Research Committees to Department Research and Knowledge Exchange Committees; and
- Amendments to the Terms of Reference of Department Research Committees.

Action: Faculty/School Research and Knowledge Exchange Committees' Terms of Reference to be published on the website.

Action: Department Research Committees name to be updated on the website and Terms of Reference to be published online.

15090 – Committee membership – S21/22 – 56 (A and B)

Paper S21/22 – 56A proposed changes to the membership of the University Doctoral Studies Committee, which included removing the Directors of Study from membership of the Committee.

A question was asked about the removal of the Directors of Study from the Committee: it was felt that they had useful experience that they could bring to the work of the Committee.

In response, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) explained that the rationale for the proposed change was a desire to separate out the operational aspect of doctoral studies from more strategic issues.

Senate agreed to approve the changes to the membership of the University Doctoral Studies Committee and the Board of Studies (Doctoral), subject to a review of the membership in a year's time.

Action: Membership to be updated on the website.

Action: Membership of the University Doctoral Studies Committee and the Board of Studies (Doctoral) to be reviewed after a year.

Senate approved changes to the membership of the Godfrey and Sue Hall Postgraduate Research Student Prize Committee.

Action: Membership to be updated on the website.

Part 3: Items in this part of the agenda are for noting without discussion

15091 – Annual Report from Research Institutes– S21/22 – 57 (A and B)

Senate noted annual reports from:

- A. The Institute for Mathematical Innovation (IMI); and
- B. The Institute for Policy Research (IPR).

15092 – Professorial pay– S21/22 – 58

Senate noted that the new professorial pay structure was reaching maturity in negotiation with UCU (which has collective responsibility for negotiating on behalf of the Professoriate).

15093 – Student Numbers – S21/22 – 59

Senate noted:

- A summary of student numbers as at 1 December 2021; and
- A summary of postgraduate taught admissions for 2021/22 entry.

15094 – Minutes of Boards of Studies – S21/22 – 60 (A - D)

Senate received minutes of the following Boards of Studies:

- A. Faculty of Science meetings of 18 November 2021 and 12 January 2022
- B. School of Management meetings of 18 November 2021 and 12 January 2022
- C. Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences meeting of 18 November 2021 and 12 January 2022
- D. Faculty of Engineering and Design meeting of 18 November 2021

15095 – Committee minutes – S21/22 – 61 (A-D)

Senate received minutes of the following meetings of Senate committees and Joint Senate/Council Committees:

- A. Curriculum Transformation Committee meetings of 30 November 2021, 12 December 2021 and 14 January 2022.

- B. University Doctoral Studies Committee meeting of 4 November 2021.
- C. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee meetings of 30 September and 4 November 2021.
- D. Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee meetings of 28 September and 30 November 2021.

15096 – Programme of Meetings for 2021/22 – S21/22 – 62

Senate noted the programme of meetings of Senate for 2021/22 and noted the draft business for the meeting on 6 April 2022. The meetings would be as follows:

- Wednesday 6 April 2022 at 2.15pm
- Wednesday 8 June 2022 at 2.15pm

Members of Senate were asked to notify the Secretary of any agenda items for the next meeting of Senate.

15097 – Any Other Business

Academic integrity

Prior to the meeting the Secretary to Senate had been notified of two motions, proposed by Professor David Bird and seconded by Dr Fran Laughton. The motions were as follows:

‘Academic integrity is fundamental to the standing of the University and preserving confidence in our assessments is fundamental to the maintenance of academic integrity. Senate has a responsibility to oversee academic standards and to assure Council of the robustness of our academic qualifications. Over the past four end-of-semester assessment periods, University examinations have not been invigilated. There have been good reasons for this, but we must recognise that non-invigilated exams pose a risk to academic integrity – we cannot know with certainty who has produced or contributed to the submitted exam scripts.

The University has decided that the default position for semester 2 examinations is that these should continue to be non-invigilated, and invigilated exams are being treated as an exception that needs specific approval.

Senate is invited to consider two proposals:

- 1. From academic year 2022/23 and onwards any department that wishes to run invigilated exams for all or some of their units will be allowed to do so as a standard part of normal University business, with the same level of University support as in pre-pandemic times.*
- 2. From academic year 2022/23 and onwards any department that wishes to run non-invigilated exams for any of their units will be required to make a case to the Faculty Board of Studies to do this, and that permission will be granted only if a convincing case is made that the exams will have the equivalent level of academic integrity to an invigilated exam.’*

The following points were raised in the discussion:

- Senate agreed that academic integrity was of fundamental importance and that there was a need for invigilated exams.
- Some members of Senate were supportive of both motions and considered that there was a need for Senate to make a decision in principle to provide clarity going forwards and allow for proper planning of exams in the following year.
- Other members of Senate were cautious about taking a decision on the motions at this stage and considered that this was an opportunity for the institution to review the practices it had developed in response to the pandemic and to use the learning to re-shape student assessments to create a more inclusive curriculum and assessment process.
- A number of EDI issues were raised. It was recognised that non-invigilated and online exams had both advantages and disadvantages in terms of EDI and widening participation.
- The pandemic had provided an opportunity for the university to review its practices in relation to assessments and exams, and it would be important to retain some of the advances made during this period.

Senate agreed that this was an important and complex issue. It was agreed that an informal working group should be established to consider and consult on options for ensuring that academic integrity was maintained in the assessment process. The Vice-Chancellor thanked Professor Bird and Dr Laughton for bringing the motions to Senate for consideration.

Action: PVC (Education) to form a working group to establish a plan for ensuring integrity in arrangements for exams and invigilation and report back to Senate.

Professor David Bird

The Vice-Chancellor noted that this was Professor Bird's last Senate meeting before his retirement at the end of March and expressed his thanks to Professor Bird for his long and dedicated service to the University, including through several terms on Senate.