



SENATE

MINUTES AND ACTIONS- DRAFT FOR APPROVAL 13 MARCH 2024- 14:00-17:00 - MICROSOFT TEAMS

NB text in BLACK is for publication; text in BLUE will be redacted for publication.

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ATTENDEES (listed according to the membership as detailed in [Ordinance 20](#))

- a) **Chair: Professor Lisa Roberts, President & Vice-Chancellor**
- b) Professor Dan Charman, Senior Vice-President & Provost
- c) Professor Krasi Tsaneva-Atanasova, Vice-President & Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research and Impact
Professor Tim Quine, Vice-President & Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Education and Student Experience
Professor Richard Follett, Vice-President & Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Global Engagement
Professor Martin Siegert, Vice-President & Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Cornwall
Stuart Brocklehurst, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Business Engagement and Innovation
- d) Professor Rob Freathy, Dean for Taught Students
Professor Stacey Hynd, Dean for Postgraduate Research and the Doctoral College
- e) Professor Alex Gerbasi (ESE)
- f) Professor Jo Bowtell (HLS)
Professor Anni Vanhatalo (HLS)
Professor Li Li (HASS)
Professor Adam Watt (HASS)
Professor Dave Hosken (ESE)
Professor Nick Stone (ESE)
- g) James Hutchinson, Director of Education Services and Student Experience

- h) Professor Claire Hulme (HLS)
 Professor Joanne Smith (HLS)
 Professor James Wakefield (HLS)
 Professor Mark Wilson (HLS)
 Professor Fiona Cox (HASS)
 Professor Clair Gammage (HASS)
 Professor Rebecca Langlands (HASS)
 Professor Jane Milling (HASS)
 Professor Tina Phillips (HASS)
 Professor Naomi Sykes (HASS)
 Professor Mat Collins (ESE)
 Professor Enrico Onali (ESE)
 Professor Ion Sucala (ESE)
 Professor Nicola Thomas (ESE)
- i) Dr Safi Darden (HLS)
 Dr Andrew Griffiths (HLS)
 Professor Ruth Garside (HLS)
 Dr Ioanna Kapantai (HLS)
 Professor Karen Knapp (HLS)
 Dr Maisha Reza (HLS)
 Dr Abby Russell (HLS)
 Professor Daniel Fountain (HASS)
 Professor David Jones (HASS)
 Dr Anna Kiernan (HASS)
 Professor Fabrizio Nevola (HASS)
 Professor Sue Prince (HASS)
 Professor Linda Williams (HASS)
 Professor Clare Saunders (HASS)
 Professor Barrie Cooper (ESE)
 Professor Adam Feldman (ESE)
 Dr Sarah Hodge (ESE)
 Professor Tim Naylor (ESE)
 Professor Christine Parkin Hughes (ESE)
 Dr Sharon Strawbridge (ESE)
 Professor Ben Zissimos (ESE)
- j) Mike Shore-Nye, Senior Vice-President and Registrar & Secretary
- k) Karen Glide, Academic Director, INTO
- l) Alex Stanley, Education Officer, Students' Guild
 Pip Shaw, Student Living Officer, Students' Guild
 Rhys Wallis, Societies and Employability Officer, Students' Guild
- m) Connie Chilcott, SU President Exeter

IN ATTENDANCE:

Totty Brobyn Jeremy	Committee Secretariat Administrator (Minutes)
Diaper Imelda Rogers	Assistant Director, Governance
Michael Wykes	Executive Divisional Director of Human Resources
Katherine Lloyd-Clark	Divisional Director of University Corporate Services <i>(for item 6)</i>
Linda Peka	Assistant Director, Admissions and UK Recruitment <i>(for item 7)</i> Deputy Registrar and Executive Divisional Director of Education and Academic Services <i>(for item 11)</i>
Steve Popham	Assistant Director, Research Finance <i>(for item 12)</i>
Gill Preston	Director, Enabling Strategy 2030 <i>(for item 13)</i>

APOLOGIES:

Professor William Gaze (HLS)
 Professor Tim Harries (ESE)
 Professor Dave Hodgson (ESE)
 Professor Ilke Inceoglu (ESE)
 Professor Sallie Lamb (HLS)
 Professor Jon Mill (HLS)
 Professor Anna Mountford-Zimdars (HASS)
 Professor Rajani Naidoo
 Dr Samuel Pollard (HLS)
 Professor Clare Saunders (HASS)
 Professor Gareth Stansfield (HASS)
 Emma de Saram (President, Students' Guild)
 Alison Chambers (CEO, Students' Guild)

ACTIONS AND DECISIONS

MINUTE	ACTION	LEAD
4.6	Stacey Hynd to submit more information on guidance for applications for doctoral training grants to UEB.	Stacey Hynd
6.9	Divisional Director (University Corporate Services) to provide a further update on Freedom of Speech following the outcomes of the OfS consultations and once additional guidance is made available.	Michael Wykes
6.9	Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Executive Dean (HASS) to bring an update on the Annual Review of Academic Freedom Agreement to a future meeting.	Gareth Stansfield
7.10	Further assurance report to be brought to Senate on the process for programme development.	Richard Follett
13.6	Deep dive on 20 March 2024 to consider how the University can most effectively deliver Enabling Strategy 2030 workstreams and how to engage with the organisation and identify opportunities for further enhancement.	Mike Shore-Nye and Dan Charman

1. Chair's introduction and Declarations of Interest

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed Senators to the meeting, particularly the new members, including: Professor Stacey Hynd, the newly appointed Dean of Postgraduate Research and the Doctoral College.
- 1.2 There were no new declarations of interest in relation to the agenda items.

2. Minutes from the meeting of 13 March 2024 (SEN/30/23-24) and Matters Arising.

- 2.1 The committee **APPROVED** the minutes of the meeting held on 13 November 2023 and noted that the outstanding actions from the November meeting were in progress.
- 2.2 There had been several routine items of business approved via Chair's Action since the previous meeting in November 2023 as detailed below;
- 2.3 Following endorsement by the University Executive Board (UEB) and the Education Board, the Chair of Senate and Council approved via Chair's Action, a minor amendment to the wording of Ordinance 24 to enable further strengthening of the Education Leadership Team at Dean level within the University and progress the creation of the roles of Dean of Professional Education and Dean of Online and Postgraduate Education.
- 2.4 The Dean for Taught Students would retain the roles and responsibilities described in the Charter, Statutes and Ordinances, and would be 'first among equals' in relation to the operation of the Education Board and the delivery of its functions and lead on all aspects of Undergraduate Provision.
- 2.5 The Dean for Taught Students would delegate duties to the Dean of Online and Postgraduate Education and to the Dean of Professional Education. Overarching recommendations regarding matters of quality and standards relating to students would be reserved to the Dean for Taught Students to ensure consistency of decision making and the maintenance of academic rigour with respect to UG, PGT and other taught provision;
- 2.6 All three Deans would report Director to the Vice-President and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience) and the Dean for Professional Education and partnerships will have dotted- line reporting to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Business Engagement);
- 2.7 The Chair of Senate and Council also approved via Chair's Action the new award of the Doctor of Forensic Psychology for inclusion within the Ordinances via Chair's action to enable the programme to start in September 2024 and to commence advertising/recruitment by January 2024. This new programme and award had also been endorsed by Education Board, Postgraduate Research Board and the Vice-President and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience) via the Programme Approval or Amendment Form (PAAF) process (including signatures across Professional Services, Senior Leadership and the Faculty/Department);

3. Report of the President and Vice-Chancellor, Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (SEN/31/23-24)

- 3.1 The Chair presented the report from the President & Vice-Chancellor, the Senior Vice-President & Provost, and the Vice-Presidents & Deputy Vice-Chancellors and provided further updates from across the University and wider Higher Education sector:
 - A visit from Susan Lapworth (the Chief Executive of the Office for Students (OfS)) had taken place on

Monday 11 March as part of a cycle of institutional visits following the House of Lords Industry and Regulators Committee report which had recommended that the OfS connect with universities on a regular basis. The visit had included a campus tour, a meet and greet with students and discussions with the President and Vice-Chancellor and other members of UEB on regulatory and sector wide issues;

- The government's spring budget published in the week commencing 4 March 2024 had not provided any significant additional funding for the higher education sector. Updates focused on research and development, including charity funded early careers researchers, the Alan Turing Institute and UK Public Sector Research and Innovation Infrastructure. It also confirmed there would be no support for students during the cost of living crisis
- the University had been awarded six new Turing Fellowships in addition to the five which had been renewed in autumn 2023, resulting in a total of 11 Fellowships across all three faculties out of 124 across the UK;
- The Home Secretary had commissioned the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) review to consider the graduate route for international students. The review would explore concerns that the number of postgraduate students attending institutions with the lowest UCAS entry requirements had increased by 250% between 2018 and 2022. This was particularly prevalent amongst lower tariff institutions where growth had exceeded other areas of the sector.
- A fall in student dependent applications was expected due to the government's decision not to allow families to join students.
- The Department for Education (DfE) was working closely with UUK on the review into international agents. A sector-wide adoption of the agent quality framework, of which the University was already a signatory, was believed to be the best defense against further regulatory measures.

3.2 The Vice-President and Deputy Vice Chancellor for Education and Student Experience responded to concerns around the implementation of the new ELE2 system and recognized that a number of issues had been experienced in relation to students having difficulty accessing feedback. The Dean for Taught Students highlighted that fortnightly faculty meetings had been scheduled to provide a mechanism for feedback and updates on resolutions. Work was continuing to address the concerns raised and minimise the impact on end users. Discussions in the Teaching Excellence Monitoring meetings had also indicated positive feedback had been received regarding the Turnitin studio;

3.3 The Dean for Taught Students also noted that the ELE2 project had been a large and complex project to implement, with the new marking and assessment tools simultaneously affecting all major constituencies of the University, including: academic, professional services and students. It was highlighted that as a result of this major transition it was to be expected that some issues would be experienced. A project closure report would be completed to look at the strengths, weaknesses and lessons learned. It was recognized that the timescales for the implementation of the project had been ambitious and would be considered within the report.

3.4 in response to a recent incident that had taken place in the Forum involving Jewish students a question was raised regarding provision of support. The President and Vice-Chancellor affirmed that the University continued to support all students within the University community and that an investigation had been launched into the incident. The Senior Vice-President and Registrar & Secretary added that there was a continued focus on maintaining constructive dialogue and relationships with representatives of different faiths, student groups and the Students' Union and Guild to ensure students were supported and that Freedom of Speech was maintained.

4. Education and PGR Board Reports (Verbal Updates)

4.1 The Dean for Postgraduate Research and the Doctoral College and the Dean for Taught Students gave verbal updates on the latest issues from their respective areas.

- 4.2 Professor Rob Freathy, the Dean for Taught Students, noted the following updates from the Education Board. Recent business had included:
- Establishment of a Professional Placement / Industrial Experience Task & Finish Group
 - Inclusive Education Project was endorsed with recommendations for EdSEEC
 - Review of Religion and Belief Policy
 - Integrity of assessment - “think piece” linked to AI discussion
 - OfS B3 Conditions Deep-Dive via the Student Outcomes Steering Group
 - The University’s Principal External Examiner, Billy Wong, had agreed to continue for another term of office.
- 4.3 A Senate member raised concerns around the use of generative AI and the potential risks relating to undermining of academic standards and integrity. The Vice-President and Deputy Vice Chancellor for Education noted that while there was future potential for generative AI to increase accessibility to education on a global level. The immediate mitigations had included revising assessment design to integrate AI usage as part of the assessment process, utilizing lock-down software during exams and training of staff and students to establish AI literacy and understanding of ethical and responsible uses of AI. The Dean for Taught Students added that academic integrity policies had been updated and that the most significant challenge was around detection. The newly formed EduExe newsletter regularly provided articles and stimulus for support on the issue of generative AI
- 4.4 The Assistant Director (Governance) confirmed there was an action from the previous meeting to schedule a deep dive into Generative AI. This would be scheduled for the third term of the academic year 2024-25 to ensure it could be informed by the Council discussion on generative AI at the strategic away day in February 2024.
- 4.5 Professor Stacey Hynd, the Dean for Postgraduate Research and Doctoral College, noted the following updates from the PGR Board:
- Finalizing the Doctoral College Strategy 2030 had been a priority, which was updated to reflect recent UKRI announcements on the new deal for postgraduate research. There was a particular emphasis on equality, diversity and inclusivity at all stages, increased flexibility in PGR models, employability training, consistency in supervision, PGR wellbeing and international student support. The strategy was due for consideration at REIC in the coming weeks.
 - In response to the UKRI announcement around future models for doctoral studentship funding with a shift to landscape and focal award schemes, work was ongoing to produce guidance documents clarifying the process for developing doctoral training grant bids to better support the needs of those completing the work.
 - The new Alternative Format Thesis Submissions Policy would allow PGRs to submit their theses fully or partially in a format other than the traditional 100,000 word written thesis. This could include elements such as websites, policy briefs, databases, 3D models, exhibitions or musical performance. It supported students to develop focus on impact and public engagement, transferable skills development, employability and supported potential reasonable adjustments for those with a disability. The policy positioned Exeter as a leader in innovative postgraduate research.
 - The fee scholarship scheme for those impacted by the ongoing conflict in Israel, Palestine and Middle East had been extended and was open for applications. Thanks were given to Fiona Pac-Soo, Assistant Director, Research Environment and Doctoral College and Tina Philips, Director of the Institute for Arab and Islamic Studies, for the work surrounding this scheme.
 - Allocated research culture funds were being used to improve support for neurodivergent PGR students and improving support for supervisors and examiners.
 - Work continued with the academic development team to develop new supervisor training on

supporting PGRs with the use of Generative AI.

- 4.6 The President and Vice-Chancellor requested more information to be submitted to UEB on the work going in to formulating guidance around applying for doctoral training grant bids.
- 4.7 Changes around the structure of courses available to international students seeking visas had impacted the Environment and Human Health Masters which was moving to a hybrid model of delivery. A Senate member queried what support was available for courses seeking to make delivery changes to get approval in time to attract international students.
- 4.8 The Vice-President and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience) responded that the Dean for Online and Postgraduate was created to reflect the need for multi-modality. The Dean for Taught Students added that anyone seeking support should contact the [Programme Design and Quality Enhancement Team](#) who would be able to signpost the most suitable route.
- 4.9 **ACTION: Stacey Hynd to submit more information on guidance for applications for doctoral training grants to UEB.**

5. Student President Reports (SEN/32/23-24) and (SEN/33/23-24)

- 5.1 The Exeter President of the Falmouth and Exeter Students' Union drew attention to the following points in their report:
 - The Student Sabbatical Officer Elections had resulted in Connie Chilcott being reelected as the Exeter President of the Falmouth and Exeter Students' Union.
 - Work continued on providing support to students during the cost of living crisis, with the creation of a soup kitchen and the possibility of a community fridge being explored.
 - The student Council had endorsed a number of new projects while current campaigns were coming to a close.
 - The Union continued to lobby FXPlus to become fully plant based.
 - The Union was collaborating with the University and the Students' Guild on the Access and Participation Plan and Curriculum for Change.
- 5.2 The Education Officer of the Students' Guild presented their report to Senate and highlighted the following points:
 - The second 'Feed your Flat' event took place at St Luke's resulting in the distribution of 200 food packages, each of which could feed five students, and received very positive feedback.
 - The new community fridge had been delivered and was ready to be launched.
 - Work on course costs and a subsequent survey found that 56% of students had been actively deterred from certain modules due to hidden course costs and 62% found that hidden course costs were unreasonable. A report outlining the findings will be submitted to ELT in late March.
 - The induction session for the Academic Advisory Boards took place in early March and gave an overview of what Curriculum for Change would look like.
 - With local elections soon, voter registration had been a focus, ensuring students got involved in the democratic process.
- 5.3 The Chair thanked both Alex Stanley, Education Officer, Students' Guild, and Connie Chilcott, Exeter President, Falmouth and Exeter Students' Union, for their work in this academic year.
- 5.4 A Senate member suggested that the Guild and Union contact academic departments to highlight the importance of voting in forthcoming General Election.

6. Update on Freedom of Speech (including OfS Consultations) (SEN/34/23-24)

- 6.1 The Divisional Director of University Corporate Services presented an update on Freedom of Speech (including OfS Consultations).
- 6.2 The Office for Students (OfS) was in the process of running two concurrent consultations, the first on proposals for a new complaints scheme and the second on regulating students' unions on free speech matters. The OfS's proposed complaints scheme and monitoring of Students' Union compliance with their new free speech duties would be enacted from August 1st 2024. The University expected to be able to brief colleagues and students on the outcomes of the consultations once clear guidance had been received.
- 6.3 The OfS stated that they "stand for the widest possible definition of Freedom of Speech: anything within the law", and were clear in their materials that free speech included lawful speech that may be offensive or hurtful to some.
- 6.4 The Complaints Scheme would allow those who felt their free speech had been impeded to complain to the OfS through a free process. Under the proposed scheme, it would be possible to complain to the OfS about a loss that they had suffered because a University, College or Students' Union had not taken steps to secure their free speech within the law following an internal review of the event by the institution in question. Following the conclusion of that process, a complaint could be made to the OfS who would then make a decision based on the evidence and issue a notice of the complaint outcome.
- 6.5 The Regulation of Students' Unions focused on the procedures in place to uphold their duties in terms of Freedom of Speech. The OfS would take action if they believed a Student's Union had failed, was failing or was at risk of failing to comply with its free speech duties.
- 6.6 The examples within the scheme guidelines only related to possible complaints from a student or staff member, and not a visiting speaker, which was still anticipated to result in the largest number of complaints. The importance of inviting visiting speakers through formal processes where risk assessments and due process had been followed was emphasized.
- 6.7 The proposals highlighted a concern around the risk of unintended consequences of creating free schemes that could divert OfS resource from their primary purpose of focusing on student experience, student outcomes and equality for all.
- 6.8 A student sabbatical officer added that in supporting the Russell Group response to the consultation, the Students' Guild had aired their concerns around the primacy of the legislation. The Director of Free Speech at the OfS, had hoped to launch a consultation into the primacy of law and other associated legal issues, which should result in some clearer guidance.
- 6.9 The Chair requested that a further update was provided to Senate when the consultations were finalized and there was further guidance. Pro-Vice-Chancellor & Executive Dean (HASS), would also provide an update on the Annual Review of Academic Freedom Agreement at a future meeting.
- 6.10 **ACTION: Divisional Director (University Corporate Services) to provide a further update on the outcomes of the consultations once further guidance was made available by the OfS.**
- 6.11 **ACTION: Pro-Vice-Chancellor & Executive Dean (HASS) to provide an update on the Annual Review of Academic Freedom Agreement to a future meeting.**

7. Admissions 2024 – Progress Report (SEN/35/23-24)

- 7.1 The Vice-President & Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Global Engagement) and the Head of Admissions reported on the admissions outlook for the University for the next academic year.

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8. Degree Outcomes

- 8.1 The Vice-President & Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience) presented the papers to Senate.
- 8.2 The Undergraduate Degree Classification Summary Report, with Overview, Developments and Next Steps (SEN/36/23-24)
- 8.3 Council were required by the regulator to receive assurance on the academic standards and integrity of Exeter awards, and were supported by Senate in scrutinizing and maintaining academic standards and receiving assurance. This report was intended to enable Senate and Council to fulfil this regulatory requirement. Thanks were extended to Catherine Taylor (Manager of Quality and Standards), for writing the report and Professor Rob Freathy (Dean for Taught Students,) for leading the Degree Outcome Steering Group.
- 8.4 The report captured high-level findings of the Degree Outcome Steering group. In June 2023, Senate received the Degree Outcomes Statement 2023 which summarised the reports for the 2021-22 academic year. This report formed the basis of the externally published 2024 Degree Outcome Statement, due to be submitted to Senate in June 2024 following publication of the sector data for 2022-23.
- 8.5 The Access and Participation Planning data was focused on UK domiciled data only, whereas the data within this report covered all students and therefore the outlook of awarding gaps would differ between the reports.
- 8.6 The paper captured the overall picture, highlighting the main themes of the full report and the past five years of significant change. The Covid-19 pandemic the move to teacher assessed or centre assessed grades and online open-book examinations indicated the significant fluctuations in the period and the likelihood that stabilisation was a few years off.

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- 8.7 The DVC (Education and Student Experience) noted that the overall reduction in the number of first class degree classifications was driven by the move away from wide-scale open-book examinations in areas where the type of knowledge and understanding being assessed required more secure closed book conditions. The Dean for Taught Students added that colleagues should use be encouraged to engage within the data within the report to discuss the many variables at programme and department level.

9. Degree Apprenticeships Annual Report (SEN/37/23-24)

- 9.1 The Vice-President & Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience) introduced the report, and highlighted the reasons for the University's involvement in Degree Apprenticeships:
- In areas of institutional expertise, the University was contributing to addressing national and regional productivity including the development of a highly skilled workforce aligned to the needs of employers
 - Providing a diversity of routes to a University of Exeter degree, thereby diversifying Exeter's learners and supporting Success for All
 - Helping build strong partnerships with industry and co-benefits of research.
- 9.2 The apprenticeship provision had grown rapidly and remained ahead of the sector in terms of quality, however some of the figures around retention and achievement were lower than expected. The team was producing quality improvement plans to address significant differences in outcomes for students

with declared disabilities.

- 9.3 The report highlighted the secured funding in portfolio development, receiving £500k from the OfS for development of apprenticeship programmes.
- 9.4 There was a significant diversity of intake with greater representation from disadvantaged and ethnically diverse populations in comparison to the on-campus student populace.
- 9.5 The report noted the success of individual apprentices, including Mamadou Kone from Amazon who won the transport and logistics category in the Multicultural Awards, and Evelina Slavova who was commended at the National Apprenticeship Awards, moving from a packer at Amazon to undertaking the senior leadership apprenticeship.
- 9.6 A Senate member highlighted the ongoing work with the Film team to produce skilled workers for the rapidly increasing film industry within the South-West, noting the challenge of establishing partnerships in the creative industries where short-term contracts were the norm. The Senate member was encouraged to communicate with Professor Rachael Johnstone (Associate Dean for Taught Students), to investigate the potential for exploring a partnership with Exeter College.

10. Update on Access and Participation (SEN/38/23-24 and SEN/38A/23-24)

- 10.1 The Vice-President & Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience) provided an update on Access and Participation.
- 10.2 The paper indicated the progress made, the recognition received over the preceding years and the analysis that had taken place to develop the approach to the plan. A change in the leadership in relation to Fair Access within the OfS had seen a shift in focus to the risks to equality and opportunity, requiring the University take steps to mitigate those risks.
- 10.3 The areas of intended focus were derived from several consultation events which took place through January and February 2024, including a deep dive with Council. The final plan which would comprise responses to feedback and specific targets, which was due to be approved by Council in May 2024 prior to formal submission to the OfS;
- 10.4 A Senate member queried if the University had reviewed how it recruited non-traditional university students, particularly in postgraduate degrees. Success for All and all its working groups had a focus on all students at every stage, together with inclusive postgraduate education. The Vice President and DVC (External Engagement) noted the varying approaches to attracting international students were also being trialled, including enhanced scholarships.
- 10.5 The requirement for universities to improve attainment in schools would be a challenge to monitor and assess. The University had strong relationships with schools and colleges in Exeter, was actively working with Further Education colleges in Cornwall, and would continue to model on that basis alongside partnerships with the Ted Wragg Multi Academy Trust and the Exeter Maths School.

11. Wellbeing Services Provision Statement and Framework for Consideration and Management of Risk (SEN/39/23-24)

- 11.1 The Deputy Registrar and Director of Education and Student Experience summarised the report and the positive overview of performance.

- 11.2 The report was produced as a result of the review into Mental Health and Wellbeing Services finalised in the summer of 2023. The document sought to set out the decision making and risk management processes framed by the University's objectives for its wellbeing services. It was intended to give assurance and clarity to students, family and staff around the decision-making processes. It also sought to ensure wellbeing practitioners felt safe and supported in their decision making.
- 11.3 Thanks were extended to Rhys Wallis (Societies and Employability Officer at the Students' Guild) James Hutchinson (Director of Education Services and Student Experience), and Mark Sawyer (Head of Wellbeing and Welfare), for their input into the framework. The sector-wide emerging mental health issues had been considered in the establishment of the framework and UUK guidance helped to shape the document.
- 11.4 The scope remained broad with the aim being to support all students to succeed in their studies and to manage their health as effectively as possible, while recognising and respecting that not all students will want to participate in the support mechanisms and may choose not to disclose or engage in activities.
- 11.5 The framework aimed to set out some clear principles and provide a step care model of how students could be supported across the range of their needs, with particular focus on early-stage, preventative work.
- 11.6 The document noted the importance of partnership working with the NHS, clearly stating that the University was not a clinical provider. It reflected on the diversity of provision and the needs of specific people and referred to the new pilot departmental pastoral model.
- 11.7 The framework also looked at the importance of effective risk management. The institutional approach was crucial, with suicide safe training packages available for staff.
- 11.8 Concerns were raised over the separation of Wellbeing Services and academic staff and departments, with no integration between the groups. The lack of communication between them had impacted on the support academic tutors were able to give to students. Discussions also highlighted that the stage at which parents/carers were to be involved would need clear boundaries as to what a parent/carer could expect from their involvement.
- 11.9 The challenge going forward was how the framework would be employed across the institution. The authors would continue to liaise with academic and pastoral tutors, Devon Partnership Trust, the student health centre, and the advice service in the Students' Union and Guild, to ensure a cohesive approach.
- 11.10 The Deputy Registrar and Director of Education and Student Experience emphasised that the framework would continue to evolve and along with the Mental Health Charter was a statement of intent and improvement of mental health and wellbeing services, rather than a list of operating protocols.

12. TRAC Data and Research Cost Recovery (SEN/40/23-24)

- 12.1 The Vice President & Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research and Impact) presented the report to Senate outlining the transparent approach to research costs.
- 12.2 The main headline was that the University had improved by 5 percentage points from 67% to 72% from 21/22 to 22/23, reflecting the collaborative efforts to increase the figures and allow the University to sustainably grow research activity.
- 12.3 Colleagues were encouraged to focus on staff in time allocation and facilities and costs budgeting within grants.

13. Enabling Strategy 2030

- 13.1 The President and Vice-Chancellor introduced the strategy to Senate which summarised the outcome of the consultation, the next steps and the development of the implementation plans.

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14. Student Protection Plan (SEN/41/23-24)

- 14.1 The Senior Vice-President and Registrar and Secretary introduced the Student Protection Plan which was part of the regulatory requirements of the University's registration with the OfS. The original version of the Plan had originally been submitted to the OfS for approval in 2018.
- 14.2 The version brought to Senate was updated to reflect the changes as a result of the Future Structures Programme and clearly highlight the various mitigations in place and ensure these measures were sufficient to protect student outcomes.
- 14.3 As detailed in the paper, the plan had been reviewed and updated by the Assistant Director (Governance) and General Counsel and Director of Legal and Student Cases in consultation with the Student Representatives. There were no major concerns anticipated to be raised by the OfS in response to the changes.
- 14.4 Senate **ENDORSED** the Student Protection Plan for Council approval via Chair's Action in prior to submission to the OfS.

15. Items Brought Forward from Part II (SEN/42/23-24)

- 15.1 A Senate member brought forward from Part II the University Exeter Procedural Guidelines for Elections. The Senior Vice-President and Registrar and Secretary responded to the queries.
- 15.2 The Election Procedural Guidelines were produced to ensure there was detailed guidance to support a clearly documented and transparent process for the running of elections for eligible representatives to join Senate and Council.
- 15.3 There were no specific policy or procedural guidelines currently in place to outline the process in detail and the elections had previously been based on longstanding institutional knowledge of running the process.
- 15.4 This was not uncommon across the sector and several institutions did not have openly accessible policies or procedural guidelines in place, so the guidelines were produced in an effort to enhance transparency surrounding the process and increase visibility and awareness of process for nominations to senior committees.
- 15.5 Procedural guidelines were based on the current process for running the elections that had been undertaken over several years. They were also informed by a desktop review of publicly available Election Policies, Procedures and Regulations across the Higher Education sector to identify opportunities to incorporate best practice within procedural guidelines – including increased reference to diversity and inclusion.
- 15.6 As per the Ordinances the Registrar and Secretary was ultimately responsible for the conduct of Council Professional Services elections and so there was a clause in place for them to uphold valid objections put forward by others or to ensure that no ineligible nominations were put forward.

- 15.7 This was principally to ensure there was a mechanism to ensure due process was maintained rather than improper use of power as returning officer. Transparency around decision making in these instances would continue.
- 15.8 The process for elections for Senate and Council was prescribed in the Ordinances 22 and 39. As per Ordinance 39 the election to Council of a Member of Professional Services was conducted by Registrar and Secretary and the 'detailed arrangements for an election, including the process for nominations, voting and candidate statements, will be determined by the Registrar and approved by the Chair of Council' so the procedural guidelines were in alignment with the Council approved governance framework (Including Statutes, Ordinances and Regulations).
- 15.9 The Single Transferable Vote was a commonly used system of proportional representation for electing people or governing bodies. The key principle was that more votes were included in deciding the outcome of the election than the first past the post system.
- 15.10 It ensured that as far as possible every vote had a positive contribution in helping to elect a candidate, that no voting power was wasted, and that no voter had a greater influence on the result than any other.
- 15.11 Single Transferrable Vote was commonly used across HE institutions and in the Russell Group (including Cambridge, QMUL).
- 15.12 Canvassing was not typically used in the election process to University Senates, Academic Boards or University Council, and several other institutions prohibit this (e.g. Sheffield). A far more common approach was towards introducing an interview process for all candidates, but there was concern this would impede efforts surrounding diversity and inclusion.
- 15.13 The University remained strongly committed to enhancing diversity of our senior governance committees and so the procedural guidelines also incorporated an increased focus on EDI and diversifying the membership of senior University committees by signposting that the University proactively encouraged nominations and applications from across the University, particularly from underrepresented groups.
- 15.14 As per the priority recommendations of the recent Senate Effectiveness Review, rather than consider canvassing at this stage, further consideration was given instead to a more proactive and widespread promotion of Senate elections to encourage nominations from underrepresented groups.

The following additional steps would be put in place for the forthcoming elections:

- Promotion of elections to Senate via relevant Faculty / Departmental newsletters and meetings;
- Targeted promotion of elections facilitated via Staff networks to raise awareness of elections;

- 15.15 The Secretariat would continue to reflect on the current process and consider further enhancements around consideration of inclusivity and diversity, including considering the use of data analysis to enhance diversity of representation. The Assistant Director (Culture and Inclusion) had been consulted on wording included with the procedural guidelines and will consult on further reporting on improvements as part of the process.
- 15.16 The Secretariat would welcome any further feedback prior to the guidelines progressing to Council in April for final approval. It would also be open to considering further opportunities to revise the election process next year, but critically wanted the guidelines approved and in place by April to enable more targeted promotion of nominations and elections to enhance diversity of candidates.

ACTION: that the Assistant Director (Governance) would engage in further consultation and discussion with Senate Council Representative to ensure feedback was incorporated into the revised policy

guidelines prior to submission to Council (18 April 2024) for approval

15.17 Senate approved all items brought forward from Part II, including

Part II - For Decision

Draft University Terms and Academic Calendar **(SEN/43/23-24)**

Digital Learning Resources Policy **(SEN/44/23-24)**

University of Exeter Procedural Guidelines for Elections **(SEN/47/23-24)**

Amendments to Ordinances, Statutes and Regulations:

Ordinance 20, 23 and 24 **(SEN/57/23-24)**

PGR Aegrotat and Posthumous Awards Ordinance **(SEN/58/23-24)**

Integrated PhD Ordinances **(SEN/59/23-24)**

16. Chair's Closing Remarks

16.1 The Chair thanked all Senate members for their input and engagement and invited input to agendas by emailing the Senate team with suggestions.

Part II - Papers to Note

Chair's Action Updates - Doctor of Forensic Psychology **(SEN/43/23-24)**

New Award, Foundation Degree Science (FdSc) **(SEN/46/23-24)**

Health and Safety Committee Minutes **(SEN/48/23-24)**

Council Minutes: 18 October 2023 **(SEN/49/23-24)**

19 October 2023 **(SEN/50/23-24)**

12 December 2023 **(SEN/51/23-24)**

Education Board Minutes: November 2023 **(SEN/52/23-24)**

February 2024 **(SEN/53/23-24)**

Postgraduate Research Board Minutes: November 2023 **(SEN/54/23-24)**

Academic Promotions Report **(SEN/55/23-24)**

Senate Appeals Report **(SEN/56/23-24)**

Awards of Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates and Conferment of Degrees in Absentia: The award lists, approved by the Vice-Chancellor on behalf of Senate, since the last meeting may be inspected by contacting Student Records.

Dates of meetings for 2023/24

22 May 2024 – Joint Meeting of Council and Senate

19 June 2024