



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

University
Secretary's
Office.

The Council, 8 February 2021

Report of the Senate

Date: 16 December 2020
Chair: The President & Vice-Chancellor (P&VC)
Secretary: Dr T Strike

FOR DECISION

1. City College

- 1.1 The decision was made in 2019 to withdraw from the validation relationship with City College (the International Faculty) by the end of 2023/24. Senate noted the controls in place (and planned) to ensure the quality of teach-out for University of Sheffield students at City College until the end of the contract in 2023/24.
- 1.2 Senate also considered and approved proposals to recommend to Council:
 - (a) Council should amend Regulation X from 1 July 2021 to remove mention of City College, Thessaloniki, as an International Faculty of the University
 - (b) Council should revoke the associated delegated powers from 1 July 2021, as set out in Regulation X, paragraphs 3.1.5 to 3.1.8, as they are now governed by a contractual validation arrangement through the period University of Sheffield students are taught out.
- 1.3 Appendix 1 contains further details.

2. Reconfiguration of Departments in the Faculty of Science to create a new School of Bioscience

- 2.1 Senate received a presentation on the outcome of the Biologies Review and considered a proposal to reconfigure the three departments of Animal and Plant Sciences, Biomedical Science, and Molecular Biology and Biotechnology to create a single new School of Bioscience from September 2021. The review had included input from external members.
- 2.2 Senate approved proposals to recommend to Council:
 - (a) The creation of the School of Bioscience.
 - (b) The amendment of Regulation IX (2.1.6.) relating to the composition of Senate, to reflect the merger and the establishment of a new School of Bioscience.
- 2.3 Discussion covered the number of programmes in the proposed new School and the impact on students, the organisation of teaching and research, student consultation, and one of the potential benefits would be a reduction in the teaching of similar material in

different departments. It was noted that the Vice-Presidents for Research and for Education supported the proposals.

2.4 Appendix 2 contains further details.

3. Semester Dates: Proposed facilitation of flexibility in response to COVID

3.1 Senate took an out-of-cycle decision concerning a possible need to flex Semester dates in some Faculty or Departments. Following the third national lockdown and Government issued guidance which restricted the number of students returning from 4 January. With the disruption already experienced, and the possibility of further delays to students' return to campus, and without mitigation, these latest restrictions have the potential to impact on the ability of Departments to deliver all the learning outcomes associated with some (especially some practical) programmes.

3.2 Senate approved proposals so that once Departments have assessed what they consider to be any necessary mitigations to ensure learning outcomes can be achieved, the Faculty Vice-Presidents through UEB can then advise the President and Vice-Chancellor on what, if any, options are needed including regarding changing the Semester dates.

3.3 Senate recommends to the Council:

To delegate to the President and Vice-Chancellor the facility to change the 2020-21 semester dates for students, by Faculty or by Department, if required, within the parameters set out below, informed by the requirements of Departments.

3.4 Appendix 3 provides further detail.

FOR INFORMATION

4. President & Vice-Chancellor's report

4.1 The President & Vice-Chancellor (P&VC) presented the report, including:

- (a) Mass testing and Christmas: The University had worked swiftly to set up a mass testing facility in order to facilitate student testing before the beginning of the student travel window on 3-9 December. The Octagon Centre had been successfully converted into the testing centre, with tests starting on 30 November. This was a collective effort from a range of services, including Estates & Facilities Management and Health & Safety. 6,258 tests had been undertaken to date.

In response to a written question regarding the procedure for students returning after Christmas, the P&VC outlined that the University would be following government guidance and there was planned to be a staggered return of students over five weeks. In response to a written question regarding whether students would be required to be tested, the P&VC noted that the University could not insist an individual student took a test, but the government guidance was clear and the University recommended each student take two tests upon their return to Sheffield.

- (b) Future blended learning: Research suggested that many institutions had gained experience and expertise regarding blended learning. It was likely that elements of the model would be retained into the future and Senate's view on which elements to retain would be sought at the appropriate time.
- (c) Admissions: Senate was updated on the admissions position for home and overseas admissions for UG, PGT and PGR.

- (d) REF: Preparatory work for the REF continued. The delayed submission deadline was March 2021 and work continued to be overseen by a REF Steering Group, reporting to UEB.

- 4.2 During discussion, it was clarified that following a positive lateral flow test a student would then be asked to take a PCR test.

5. Adaptation and Renewal

5.1 Curriculum Development

Senate received and noted a presentation on planning for the next semester and reflections for the future.

5.2 Mental Health and Wellbeing

Senate received and noted a presentation. The University's current Student Mental Health Strategy 2017-20 was being revised and the intention was for the Strategy to cover both students and staff.

5.3 Student Perspectives

Senate received and noted a presentation based on student feedback from the President of the Students' Union. The discussion focused on the lack of fast broadband for students.

6. Financial Results 2019-20

- 6.1 Senate received and noted a presentation on the 2019/20 financial results and was also updated on the latest financial position.

7. Standing Orders

- 7.1 Senate considered and approved Standing Orders for the Senate.

8. Report of the Council

- 8.1 Senate received a report on the meeting of Council held on held on 19 October 2020.

9. Reports of committees

9.1 Committees of Senate

- 9.1.1 Senate approved the reports of the following committees:

(a) Report of the Research Ethics Committee

(Meeting held on 11 November 2020)

Senate received and approved the Report, including proposed updates to the 'Research Ethics Approval Procedure' section of the Ethics Policy, Governing Research Involving Human Participants, Personal Data and Human Tissue. Discussion at Senate focused on the proportion of ethics cases involving PGT students and the mechanism for each Faculty to maintain oversight of its ethics cases. The Committee will consider whether the appropriate procedures were in place for students to appeal decisions.

(b) Report of the Senate Academic Assurance Committee

(Meeting held on 17 November 2020)

Senate received and approved the Report, including the Committee's considerations of the 2020/21 Approach to COVID-19, National Student Survey 2020 results, and the Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Award Gap.

- (c) Report of the Senate Learning and Teaching Committee
(Meeting held on 8 October 2020)

Senate received the Report and approved the following:

- (a) Withdrawal of unrestricted module choice permanently from 2021-22 and replacement by guided module choice from a selection of optional modules determined by the department
- (b) A revised Recognition of Prior Learning Policy
- (c) A new Student Sports Participation Policy
- (d) A revised Safeguarding Policy
- (e) New, Significantly Amended, Discontinued and Suspended Programmes approved by Faculties
- (f) New, Discontinued and Suspended Programmes recommended to Senate under Chair's action

Discussion focused on how guided module choice would work in practice and the approach to sports participation on Wednesday afternoons.

- (d) Report of the Senate Research and Innovation Committee
(Meeting held on 5 November 2020)

Senate received and approved the Report, including

- (a) Proposed Amendment to the General Regulations for Higher Degrees by Research
 - (b) Adoption of Charters for Early Career Research staff and for the Development of Research Staff by their Line Manager and the University
 - (c) A statement that the University will not act as research governance sponsor for devices which come under the requirements of the Medical Devices Regulations
- (e) Annual Report of the Military Education Committee

Senate received and noted the Annual Report.

10. Returning Officer's Report

- 10.1 A report on the outcome of the election for a Senate member on Council and of the outcome of the call for nominations for two members of the Senate to serve on the Senate Academic Assurance Committee was received from the University Secretary as the Returning Officer.



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Senate, 16 December 2020

A proposal to amend Regulation X: the Faculties – International Faculty

Sponsor: President and Vice-Chancellor

Author: University Secretary

1. Action

Senate is asked to consider proposals, set out below, that it should report to the Council recommending that on its advice:

- a) Council should amend Regulation X from 1 July 2021 to remove mention of City College, Thessaloniki, as an International Faculty of the University,
- b) Council should revoke the associated delegated powers from 1 July 2021, as set out in Regulation X, paragraphs 3.1.5 to 3.1.8, as they are now governed by a contractual validation arrangement through the period University of Sheffield students are taught out.

2. Purpose

To consult Senate prior to taking proposals to the Council to amend Regulation X: The Faculties (see Annex One).

3. Background and Context

The arrangement between the University and City College started in 1992. It became an affiliated College in 1997 and became the International Faculty in 2009.

Regulation X: The Faculties, lists City College, Thessaloniki, as an International Faculty of the University. Further, the Regulation states that the University may designate another institution as an International Faculty. Given this is set out in the Regulations it has a constitutional effect, conferring various delegated powers on City College similar to a Faculty of the University. These are as described in the delegation of the powers of the Faculties; specifically in Regulation X: 3.1.5 to 3.1.8.

The University reported to the Office for Students in July 2019 that it intended to end the validation arrangement with City College. Now that City College and the University of York have publically announced a new validation arrangement for future intakes at City College it is necessary to amend the Regulations of the University of Sheffield.

4. The Regulatory Context

As the University is the awarding body, is based in England and is awarding its own Degrees to students based outside England, the Office for Students has said it will regulate such overseas activity

on the basis that the obligations of the registered provider extend to students for whom it is the awarding body wherever and however they study. The Office for Students required the University to list associated educational providers either as a sub-contract or as a validation arrangement. The University retains ultimate responsibility to the students for ensuring that they are able to complete the Programmes upon which they are enrolled. The University as the validating provider remains responsible for the academic standards of the awards granted in its name.

5. The Transition

Future intakes of students admitted to City College will be registered by the University of York, under a separate validation arrangement. The University of Sheffield students being taught out at City College will be able to continue to a University of Sheffield award or may be offered the option to transfer to the University of York. It is proposed it would be more appropriate, therefore, to manage the provision at City College through a direct contractual relationship with that private provider, where the University as the validating provider remains responsible for the academic standards of the awards granted in its name, rather than treating City College as a Faculty and delegating the associated powers. The relationship with City College, and the teach out of University of Sheffield students, will be managed through a contractual arrangement as a validated partner rather than directly through the University Regulations as if City College is part of the University.

This proposal to amend the Regulations is set out in Annex One.

Out with the regulatory context addressed here, this proposal if enacted would not prevent City College with the agreement of the University having continued use of the name "International Faculty" for marketing or branding purposes while it remains responsible for teaching out University of Sheffield students, but without this term having any constitutional meaning.

6. Timescale

Under the contract with City College, the University has given City College the required contractual 12 months' notice of a change to their faculty status, taking effect from 1 July 2021, subject to a University decision.

If Senate agree on its advice to Council at its December meeting, then subject to consultation with City College, proposals will be brought to Council's February 2021 meeting, to give effect to the notice of the University's decision to amend its Regulations, effective from 1 July 2021.

Dr Tony Strike
University Secretary
November 2020

Annex One

REGULATION X: The Faculties

1. Faculties of the University

- 1.1 The Faculties of the University shall be those of Arts and Humanities; Science; Medicine, Dentistry and Health; Engineering; ~~and Social Sciences;~~ ~~and City College, Thessaloniki.~~
- ~~1.2 City College, Thessaloniki, is an International Faculty of the University.~~
- ~~1.3 The University may designate another institution as an International Faculty.~~

2. Powers of the Faculties

- 2.1 Subject to review by the Senate and to the Statutes and Regulations of the University each Faculty shall:
- 2.1.1 make recommendations to the Senate regarding the award of Degrees, Fellowships, Prizes and other distinctions and examination results;
 - 2.1.2 in accordance with Regulations made by the Senate review the progress or fitness to practise of students registered in the Faculty and shall have the power in accordance with those Regulations to suspend or exclude any such student from further attendance at lectures, classes and examinations in the Faculty or take such other action as may be prescribed by those Regulations;
 - 2.1.3 in accordance with Regulations made by the Senate consider academic appeals submitted by students registered in the Faculty;
 - 2.1.4 be responsible for programmes of study or research falling within the province of the Faculty and for the academic quality and standards of the teaching, supervision and assessment of students registered in the Faculty; *and*
 - 2.1.5 report to the Senate on Regulations as to programmes of study or research, examinations or other requirements for Degrees, Diplomas, Certificates and other distinctions and as to the award and tenure of Fellowships, Scholarships and Prizes.
- 2.2 Such other matters as shall be committed to any Faculty by the Senate shall be transacted by that Faculty.

3. Delegation of the Powers of the Faculties

- 3.1 Subject to Regulation II: (4), powers of the Faculties shall be delegated as follows:

	<i>Power delegated</i>	<i>Body whose power is delegated</i>	<i>Officer or committee to whom the power shall be delegated</i>
3.1.1	The power to recommend to the Senate upon the award of first Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates, undergraduate Prizes and other distinctions and examination results within the Faculty, without the need to report on action taken or seek the confirmation of the Faculty.	The Faculty	The Vice-President & Head of Faculty, Faculty Director of Learning and Teaching or designate authorised by the Faculty

3.1.2	The power to recommend to the Senate upon the award of higher Degrees, Diplomas, Certificates and Prizes within the Faculty, without the need to report on action taken or seek the confirmation of the Faculty.	The Faculty	The Vice-President & Head of Faculty, Faculty Director of Learning and Teaching, Faculty Director of Research and Innovation or designate authorised by the Faculty
3.1.3	The power to recommend to the Senate upon Regulations relating to programmes of study or research, examinations or other requirements for Degrees, Diplomas, Certificates and other distinctions and upon Regulations relating to Fellowships, Scholarships and Prizes within the Faculty, without the need to report on action taken or seek the confirmation of the Faculty.	The Faculty	The Vice-President & Head of Faculty, Faculty Director of Learning and Teaching, Faculty Director of Research and Innovation or designate authorised by the Faculty
3.1.4	The power, in accordance with Regulations made by the Senate, to review the progress of students registered in the Faculty and to suspend or exclude any such student from further attendance at lectures, classes and examinations in the Faculty or to take such other action as may be prescribed by those Regulations, without the need to report on action taken or seek the confirmation of the Faculty.	The Faculty	The Student Review Committee of the Faculty in which the student concerned is registered
3.1.5	The power to recommend to the Senate upon the award of first Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates, undergraduate Prizes and other distinctions and examination results within the Faculty, without the need to report on action taken or seek the confirmation of the Faculty.	The International Faculty	The Principal, any Vice-Principal or designate authorised by City College
3.1.6	The power to recommend to the Senate upon the award of higher Degrees, Diplomas, Certificates and Prizes within the Faculty, without the need to report on action taken or seek the confirmation of the Faculty.	The International Faculty	The Principal, any Vice-Principal or designate authorised by City College

3.1.7	The power to recommend to the Senate upon Regulations relating to programmes of study, examinations or other requirements for Degrees, Diplomas, Certificates and other distinctions and upon Regulations relating to Fellowships, Scholarships and Prizes within the Faculty, without the need to report on action taken or seek the confirmation of the Faculty.	The International Faculty	The Principal, any Vice-Principal or designate authorised by City College
3.1.8	The power, in accordance with Regulations made by the Senate, to review the progress of students registered in the Faculty and to suspend or exclude any such student from further attendance at lectures, classes and examinations in the Faculty or to take such other action as may be prescribed by those Regulations, without the need to report on action taken or seek the confirmation of the Faculty.	The International Faculty	The Student Review Committee of City College

Senate paper: Reconfiguration of Departments in the Faculty of Science to create a new School of Bioscience.

1. Executive Summary

This paper presents the case for reconfiguring departments in the Faculty of Science to create a new School of Bioscience (SoB). The departments we propose to merge into a single school are:

- Animal and Plant Sciences (APS)
- Biomedical Science (BMS)
- Molecular Biology and Biotechnology (MBB)

We believe that creation of such a school is timely and will bring significant benefits to the staff and students in the three departments. Specifically, combining the three departments into a single school will allow:

1. An enhanced Learning and Teaching offering: giving students opportunities to experience a greater breadth of Bioscience teaching outside their main programme, reduce duplication of effort and facilitate more effective sharing of teaching.
2. Enhanced leadership and coordination of research in order to better promote excellence and successful exploitation of opportunities
3. A coordinated approach to admissions and recruitment, building on the current work in this area.
4. A more coherent and resilient approach to providing professional services support that will free up academic time
5. A simplified organisational and leadership structure that can maximise collaboration across the sub-disciplines in a coherent way
6. Better and clearer presentation of our areas of excellence, both internally in the University and externally to the wider community.
7. Creation of an inclusive and diverse staff and student community.

In undertaking this review we have sought opinions from staff within the three departments as well as taking external advice. The HoDs of the three departments are unanimous that the creation of the school provides a timely opportunity to cement many of the good collaborations that are taking place and build further substantial opportunities.

Following consideration of this paper, Senate is invited under its powers set out in Regulation IX (para 1.1.8.) to recommend to the Council the creation of a School of Bioscience from the 2020/21 academic year. In accordance with University Statutes, a final decision on this proposal will then be made by University Council.

2. Background

Over the last 18 months a major focus of work across the Biologies has been to improve the visibility of the breadth of our Biologies through our combined recruitment work, and combined teaching offering (in the form of our Biologies Teaching Partnership). The idea of closer integration across the three biology departments had been around for a number of years, but little specific progress had been made. Having undertaken this joint work recently, we believe that the time is ripe to further integrate the Biologies in order to position ourselves for the future.

We believe that creation of a single School of Bioscience is a unique opportunity to bring together our biologists under one roof. By working together in a more structured way we believe that there is a real opportunity to function as more than the sum of the individual parts and exploit some exciting synergies between us. A key strength of our Biologies is overarching breadth and depth of excellence in multiple areas. With ~120 academics in subjects as diverse as biochemistry, molecular biology, biomedical science, plant science, evolutionary biology and ecology, we are a larger and more comprehensive grouping than many of our competitors.

However, this breadth and depth is not always evident to the outside world, limiting the impact of Sheffield's Bioscience. Critically, these are not visible to undergraduate applicants, which restricts our ability to attract students in a very competitive market. Put succinctly we lose too many well-qualified applicants in head-to-heads against our Russell group competitors.

There are a number of potential gains in doing this which go beyond the progress we need to make on recruitment. For example, closer integration of the Biologies will generate efficiencies in terms of academic time and leadership roles. Our departmental executive roles are currently triplicated and it has proved difficult to collaborate properly at times across the Departmental boundaries.

The Biologies Teaching Partnership has already led to increased sharing of best practice and facilitated the alignment of practical teaching. The development of clear vertical themes running through programmes, planned to start in 2021-22 academic year, will increase opportunities for our students to access a greater breadth of content in Bioscience, and will generate ways to reduce duplicated efforts and current workloads of academic staff.

To promote further integration, we envisage that research in the school will be grouped into clusters that will allow us to focus around excellence and critical mass. Our numerous research facilities, many internationally excellent, will benefit from a coherent structure of management and development.

The table below shows the number of students and staff (FTE) within each of the existing departments. The total student body across the School is expected to be 1,907.5 supported by an academic and professional services staff body of 430 staff (355.59 FTE)

FTE	All UG	All PGT	All PGR	Academic staff (T/T&R)
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APS	415.8	74.5	83	28.25
BMS	703.4	51.3	70	41.10
MBB	375.9	62.2	71.4	28.38
Total	1495.1	188	224.4	97.73

Based on current provision, the School would offer:

- 17 UG programmes (plus integrated Masters, year abroad and year in industry variants)
- 15 PGT programmes
- A foundation year.

3. Academic Rationale

The academic rationale for the development of the School of Bioscience is as follows.

Learning and Teaching

Since 2017 there has been a working group aiming to develop closer links across teaching in Bioscience with two underlying principles:

1. To allow students opportunities to experience a greater breadth of Bioscience teaching outside their host department.
2. To identify areas of duplication where, by aligning more closely, we can share teaching more effectively and reduce workload.

More recently the Biosciences Teaching Partnership (BTP) was formed to implement a number of specific plans to facilitate closer working and in particular, to identify areas of core skills or content where teaching can be shared and to support development of more aligned programmes. These plans then give rise to increased opportunities and flexibility for students alongside delivery of core content to define and identify specific programmes.

The creation of a single School will allow these plans to be implemented in an integrated and coherent manner. By sharing best practice, the School will be in a stronger position to respond positively to Subject-Level TEF and PLA. The three departments have relative strengths and weaknesses in teaching quality and approaches to assessment. Best practice in one area can be shared to improve general practice in another.

Research

The three Biology Departments have a long history of research excellence. In the last REF they came 1st in UoA3 and 5th in UoA5. The three Departments are housed in contiguous space, share facilities and PGR opportunities via various DTPs etc. Research excellence can be identified at the level of individuals through to collectives,

across the three Departments and beyond. Larger groupings of interdisciplinary excellence are largely recognised within structures such as the many Institutes, Centres, FoS Research Priorities and the University Flagships.

We currently have an established Research Cluster model whereby research groups, led by an academic, sit within a wider ensemble of groups termed a cluster. Cluster members are linked by working within a broad research field, often with common technological approaches and facilities. Currently research is organised in clusters within Departmental boundaries. This set up is not recognised by our 2021 REF submissions or the Biology Space Review process.

We propose that research is structured as a number of clusters or research groups that are likely to span the current departmental boundaries. Once the overarching themes for the clusters are established then their exact titles and contents will be developed by their members.

Our ongoing research strategy is to capitalize on our increase in excellence and to concentrate our aspirations and investment around our two of our key Faculty-wide themes of '*The Process of Life*' and '*A Sustainable World*', to evolve our research clusters to reflect these and to focus on key intellectual and global challenges.

It is proposed that our research is framed around 6-8 clusters that work across scales from molecules, cells, tissues and organisms to ecosystems. We operate "research without boundaries", so researchers can be part of more than one cluster and affiliate members can be drawn from across the University. This breadth of approaches allows our research to be underpinned by cross cutting facilities and expertise traversing the biosciences.

Recruitment

Recruitment trends across the 3 departments have been patchy: BMS have seen recent increasing recruitment of Home UG students, while in APS and MBB there have been declines in both applications and numbers of students recruited. These declines are considerable, of the order of 40% or more.

Historically, we have marketed the three departments separately, reflecting their differences in focus and course offerings. However, at the same time our major competitors have consolidated their courses and integrated their marketing. Data shows clearly that we are losing students to many competitors, most notably large northern universities such as Leeds. These competitors have seen an increase in numbers at the same time as ours have declined.

In beginning to address this, we have worked on the supposition that the integrated programmes offered by competitors are more attractive to prospective applicants than our fragmented one. The work undertaken by the Biologies Teaching Partnership is fundamental in integrating the teaching across the departments.

We have undertaken an extensive piece of work to improve our undergraduate recruitment, and have integrated the outward-facing websites. Looking forward the creation of a single school would allow us to (i) fully integrate the marketing across the

programmes; (ii) gain efficiency by having a single recruitment team rather than three; (iii) continue to streamline our offer by taking advantage of the integration of programmes in the Biologies Teaching Partnership.

Much of this work is underway now, however the removal of departmental and administrative barriers through the formation of a school will make it considerably more straightforward to complete.

4. Engagement and support for staff

Engagement with staff on this proposal has taken place digitally (email updates etc) and (virtual) face-to-face (staff meetings, discussions with groups and individuals). The majority of feedback has been positive, with staff commenting that they are looking forward to this new way of working.

A single School structure provides more flexibility and opportunity to share workload, manage busy times and will give people more opportunities to learn new skills and progress into a wider variety of roles.

There is no aim to reduce overall staff numbers in the School for academic or professional services staff. As new ways of working become embedded and posts become vacant, opportunities for greater efficiency will be considered and staffing cases closely scrutinised.

Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) impacts will be evaluated throughout the transition period and then periodically once the School has been formed. These will be captured in a live equality impact assessment (EIA) document held by the School's Director of EDI and actions taken where appropriate.

Appointment of the School's leadership positions will be fair, transparent and equitable. ATJs will be created for all key roles with calls for expressions of interest across the three Biology departments. There will be a focus on creating diverse leadership teams across the School to engender an inclusive community for staff and students.

Trade union colleagues were notified of these outline proposals and no objections were raised. Regular updates have since been provided via TULR(C)A on the 29 July, 29 September, 28 October and 25 November; trade union colleagues will be updated on the outcome of this decision making process, and implementation plans.

5. Student impact

It is not envisaged that the proposal will lead to any immediate changes for current students. Through curricula enhancement and developments in response to NSS outcomes and subject-level TEF and our own BTP programme, the proposed change

is expected to enhance the School's overall performance and the student experience. In addition, a single School will create larger student communities and enable administrative teams to become grouped together into larger teams, thus enhancing the support for students and academic staff. For PGR students, the research environment would be enhanced by providing larger communities of researchers in areas of excellence and real critical mass.

As part of the BTP process of curriculum redesign (which fits with the University-led approach to PLA) students have been consulted about the potential changes coming through with the implementation of BTP, including presentations at the Student Staff Committees of each of the departments. The objective was to listen to concerns about the changes, as well as to get relevant feedback from students on what could be improved.

6. Operations and Governance Considerations

The new school will be a single planning unit. It will be led by a Head of the School together with Deputy Heads of School (initially taken from the constituent departments), supported by an Executive. The Executive will comprise: the Head of School (HoS), the deputy Heads of School (dHoS), a Director of Learning and Teaching (DLT), a Director of Research and Innovation (DRI), a Director of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (DEDI), a Director of Recruitment (DoR), supported by professional and technical staff.

The DLT will be supported by a Teaching Committee, the DRI will be supported by a Research Committee and so forth in the usual manner.

In the learning and teaching space, a new organisational structure will implement BTP and will bring several roles across the Biosciences together to reduce duplications of effort and to facilitate more sharing of best practice and consistency. It will also integrate activities of some of the admin teams to increase resilience across programmes, bring student support activities together and allow shared use of learning technologists.

At this stage all undergraduate programmes remain identifiably aligned with current department structures and by far the majority of staff will continue to teach within the same programme(s). A single PGT director will oversee the breadth of PGT activities and work with the head of school to devise appropriate strategies for PGT provision going forward.

We suggest three main role-types within a School level committee operating under a School Director of Studies, aligned with ongoing development of the BTP:

1. those focussing on academic content and identity of programmes
2. those focussing on coherence, consistency and quality of teaching across the programmes
3. those focusing on academic and student support.

This group, made up of individuals drawn from across the current departments, will be the key body for all aspects of School L&T decision making.

In research, a research cluster formation could be supported by an organisational structure that brings together the cluster leads with professional service support in the areas of grant support; PGR and ECR; facilities and KE support.

The three Departments are located in contiguous space and share a range of facilities. These facilities are available for use across the University and beyond.

7. Financial rationale

The driver for creating a single School is not about cost saving, but the departments and Faculty recognise that the SoB must maintain a financially sustainable position. Becoming a single School provides an opportunity to combine teaching, research, and professional services support to better manage costs, and increase income overtime by increasing student numbers (at quality) and increasing research and contract income. The School of Bioscience budget, annual plan and Risk Register would be set and managed at School level with financial accountability held by the Head of School.

8. Timescales and Next Steps

The Biologies Review Group will oversee the development of this proposal and will continue to oversee effective implementation until the School Executive is in place. Subject to the decision of the Senate and University Council, the School will be launched in September 2021. However, this timescale recognises that changes to leadership and ways of working would then be implemented over time. It is proposed that the changes would be implemented over three phases:

- Preparation: (Jan 2021 - February 2021):
 - Following approval from University Council, an expression of interest process is then launched to appoint the Head of School and Deputy Heads of School.
 - Updates are made to internal finance, HR and IT systems to reflect that the School will be a single department from September 2021.
 - The Office for Students, professional bodies and key external partners are notified.
- Development Phase (March 2021 onwards)
 - Joint organisational structures will be developed, including a new Executive Committee.
 - Other senior academic roles appointed to form the Executive
 - New Executive Committee takes charge of an Implementation Plan working towards full operation of the school by September 2021.

9. Action required of Senate

In accordance with Regulation II (para 6.2.2.), whereby Council reserves to itself the power to approve the establishment or abolition of faculties or departments and their titles, Senate is requested to recommend to Council the merger outlined above including the title of the new School. In the context of this recommendation, Senate is also asked to approve the amendment of Regulation IX (para 2.1.6.) relating to the composition of Senate, to reflect the merger and the establishment of a School of Bioscience.

November 2020

Professor John Derrick (Head of the Faculty of Science)

Professor Kathryn Ayscough (Head of Biomedical Science)

Professor Simon Foster (Faculty Director of Research and Innovation)

Professor Rob Freckleton (Head of Animal and Plant Sciences)

Penny Jackson (Faculty Director of Operations)

Professor Katherine Linehan (Faculty Director of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion)

Professor Mike Williamson (Head of Molecular Biology and Biotechnology)



Senate Semester Dates:

Proposed facilitation of flexibility in response to COVID

1. Purpose

1.1 To give the facility if required to the President and Vice-Chancellor to flex the 2020-21 second semester dates for students by Faculty or by Department by request in response to the on-going situation in relation to coronavirus (COVID-19).

1.2 The delegated authority to decide semester dates is being sought now and alongside departments' scenario planning so responses to need can be timely, with the least amount of bureaucracy.

2. Recommendation

2.1 Senate is asked to:

- (a) Waive the provision in Regulation XIV: 18 that a semester must comprise a period of fifteen weeks (in view of the extraordinary circumstances brought about by COVID19).
- (b) Agree to recommend to Council to delegate to the President and Vice-Chancellor the facility to change the 2020-21 semester dates for students, by Faculty or by Department, if required, within the parameters set out below, informed by the requirements of Departments.

3. Background

3.1 On 4 January 2020 the University was informed of a third national lock-down. On the same day, the Government updated its requirements, including in relation to Universities.

This Guidance restricted the number of practical students returning from 4 January to those reading subjects in the following subject areas:

- Medicine & dentistry,
- Subjects allied to medicine/health,
- Veterinary science,
- Education (initial teacher training),
- Social work,
- Courses which require Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) assessments and or mandatory activity which is scheduled for January and which cannot be rescheduled.

3.2 The Government required that all remaining courses, including those with a practical element, should be offered online from the beginning of term. Students who are not on the exempted courses should

remain where they are wherever possible, and start their term online, until at least mid-February. This includes students on practical programmes not on the list above.

3.3 The Government decision meant that outside of the defined list provided by them there will be no face-to-face lectures, seminars, tutorials or practical sessions and learning will be delivered on-line. With the disruption already experienced, and the possibility of further delays to students' return to campus, and without mitigation, these latest restrictions have the potential to impact on the ability of Departments to deliver all the learning outcomes associated with some (especially some practical) programmes.

3.4 In view of Government requirements, and the need for Departments to be able to consider how they can best now deliver the learning outcomes associated with each programme, this paper puts forward possible options, if required, to mitigate lost face-to-face learning activities which includes but is not limited to amending the semester dates for students and to waiving the provision that a semester must comprise a period of fifteen weeks.

4. Timing

4.1. Senate next meets on 17 March, ahead of Council on 26 April 2021. This schedule is too late to provide options to Departments for their consideration, or to give sufficient notice to students regarding semester dates based on the outcomes of Departments scenario planning.

4.2 It is, therefore, proposed that Senate consider out of cycle and then recommend to Council the provision of delegated authority to the President and Vice-Chancellor to flex the 2020-21 second semester dates for students by Faculty or by Department on request.

4.3 This will facilitate Departments scenario planning, and permit changes to be made and announced in January or February if required, in response to Departments requirements and with sufficient notice to students.

5. Regulation

5.1 Regulation XIV, General University Regulations, states:

'SEMESTERS

18. There will be two semesters in each academic year, to be known as the Autumn and Spring semesters. A semester will comprise a period of fifteen weeks.

19. The dates of semesters will be fixed by the Council on the recommendation of the Senate.'

5.2 The current 2020-21 Spring Semester dates are set out in the Calendar as follows:

08 February 2021 to 26 March 2021 (Easter is on 4 April),

19 April 2021 to 11 June 2021.

6. Options

6.1 Departments will need to plan their learning and teaching activities across the second Semester to ensure learning outcomes can be delivered. It is possible that learning outcomes can be delivered:

- within the existing learning day and semester dates, through rescheduling, or,
- by extending the learning day, or,
- by temporarily utilising Wednesday afternoons, only for so long as the COVID restrictions prevent the opening of sports venues, or,
- by starting teaching back after Easter one week earlier than 19 April, or,
- by extending teaching into the summer.

Once Departments have assessed what they consider to be any necessary mitigations to ensure learning outcomes can be achieved, the Faculty Vice-Presidents through UEB can then advise the President and Vice-Chancellor on what, if any, options are needed including regarding changing the Semester dates.

6.2 The proposed possible changes to Semester dates could be as follows:

- To return to teaching one week earlier after Easter i.e. from returning on 19 April 2020 to returning on 12 April,
- To extend the end of the Semester by a period of weeks up to a maximum of four weeks i.e. to no later than 9 July.

6.3 The changes, if made, would result in the semester lasting from 15 weeks, up to a maximum of 20 weeks. Semesters exist to define the period of the academic year within which teaching will take place, for the benefit of students, and do not affect staffs annual leave entitlements.

6.4 This proposal is being put forward in light of the extraordinary situation in relation to COVID-19 and in view of the University needing to prioritise the health and safety of students and staff while maintaining the quality, quantity and accessibility of provision and delivering learning outcomes.

Tony Strike
University Secretary
January 2021