



The  
University  
Of  
Sheffield.

University  
Secretary's  
Office.

## The Council, 16 April 2018

### Report of the Senate

**Date:** 21 March 2018  
**Chair:** The President & Vice-Chancellor  
**Secretary:** Dr T Strike

#### For information

#### 1. President & Vice-Chancellor's report

- 1.1 The President & Vice-Chancellor (P&VC) presented the report, including:
- (a) Changes to the Sector: The sector was going through a very significant change with the move to a regulated market with a regulator in the form of the Office for Students (OfS), which would most likely see the culture of the sector change. The University was working on activities associated with this change to a sector regulator, for example preparing its application to go on the Register of Providers.
  - (b) Tuition Fees: There was speculation that the Review of Post-18 Education and Funding could see the maximum tuition fee for arts and humanities subjects reduced to £6k, and an increase in the maximum the tuition fee for STEM subjects.
  - (c) International: A group of the University's students were refused entry at the border on a recent visit to India, which was thought by some to be retaliation by the Indian Government for restrictions on Indian students entering the UK. It appeared to be more challenging to undertake fieldwork abroad and for UK universities to recruit foreign nationals. The University's international students did not believe the country was securing a good position regarding Brexit.
  - (d) Industrial Dispute: The P&VC had called, along with other Vice-Chancellors, for an independent valuation of the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) and for a more transparent process. The P&VC had advised the Finance Committee of his view that there should be no preconditions on the negotiations and that the University should be willing to pay what was required to get staff back to work, whilst being sustainable for the University. In the P&VC's opinion it would be important to reach a settlement as quickly as possible. The dispute was a difficult situation which would be worked through with colleagues and the University and College Union. The P&VC thanked members of Senate for their collegiate and civilised approach to this issue. The Vice-President (Education) outlined activity to reduce the impact the industrial action could have on students. This included sharing as much information as possible with students and Heads of Departments, with a student liaison member of staff identified within each department. The University would be operating on the principle that given the impact could vary amongst student groups responses by departments at a local level, with support, would be more effective than a centralised approach.
- 1.2 Discussion focussed on the industrial dispute and included the role of the USS trustees; the wide range of the valuation; the need for transparency in the valuation process; and the need to discuss with the Pensions Regulator how to best move forward on this issue.

The P&VC would be meeting with Heads of Departments, and with the UCU and student representatives on 23 March.

## **2. Future structures to underpin postgraduate research student provision**

- 2.1 Senate received and approved the Report, including approval of proposals for future structures to underpin postgraduate research student provision. A hub and spoke model was proposed. The hub would consist of a doctoral committee chaired by the Deputy Vice-President (R&I) and the spokes would consist of the five Faculties and the International Faculty. Senate discussed the role Professional Services staff would have in the structure. Senate recognised the opportunity PGR study provided to experience a cross-fertilisation of ideas beyond a discipline or faculty boundary and the implementation of the structure would need to be cognisant of this.

## **3. Interim Report from Senate Effectiveness Review**

- 3.1 Senate endorsed the proposed direction of travel, which included: Senate needed to receive information in a way that enabled it to provide assurances to Council; exploring the value of establishing an independent committee of Senate to interrogate and scrutinise information on academic quality and standards, and to provide assurances and raise issues to Senate; and indications from a survey of members of Senate that there could be enhancements to the way Senate currently operated and there was an appetite for positive change. A final report was due to the Senate on 20 June and to the Council from Senate on 9 July.

## **4. Learning and Teaching Strategy: Teaching Excellence**

- 4.1 Senate received a presentation on the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF) and endorsed the University resubmitting to institution- level TEF in 2019. TEF was now in Year 3 and the University's Silver award from last year was valid to June 2020. Resubmission in 2019 would enable the University to extend its existing award for a further three years. The TEF Steering Group would be reconvened. Senate requested that Subject-level data be circulated to Heads of Departments to help inform preparatory actions, with caveats, including that the data was not to be used publically. During discussion clarification was provided on a number of areas, including how the subject areas were defined and that TEF applied to undergraduates only. How Senate ownership of TEF could assist in the sharing of good practice, encouraging and monitoring improvements where required and ensuring the most positive outcomes was also explored.

## **5 Preparation for Registration with the Office for Students**

- 5.1 Senate received and approved a draft Student Protection Plan, which was a new requirement from the OfS. Senate also approved delegation of authority to the Vice-President (Education) and the University Secretary to amend the Plan as required based on advice received from the OfS leading up to the registration date, subject to final approval from Senate, if required, in June 2018. It was noted that, subject to advice, a separate Student Protection Plan would be developed to cover the International Faculty.

## **6 Report of the Council**

- 6.1 Senate received a report on the meetings of Council held on 27 November 2017 and 12 February 2018.

## **7 Reports of committees**

### **7.1 Committees of Senate**

7.1.2 Senate approved the reports of the following committees:

- (a) Learning and Teaching Committee  
(Meeting held on 14 February 2018)

Senate approved new, significantly amended, suspended and discontinued programmes approved by Faculties in the period 8 November 2017 – 30 January 2018. This included a PGDip Engineering Competence proposal which had been resolved following December Senate's referral back of an initial proposal.

- (b) Research and Innovation Committee  
(Meeting held on 7 February 2018)

Senate received and approved the Report, including: a REF update; ongoing work related to setting up of University Research Institutes; and PGR scholarships principles.

- (c) Research Ethics Committee  
(Meeting held on 14 February 2018)

Senate approved amendments to the Ethics Policy Governing Research Involving Human Participants, Personal Data and Human Tissue (Ethics Policy) in line with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

- (d) Senate Budget Committee  
(Meeting held on 16 November 2017)

Senate received and approved the Report, including: the Committee's discussion with the Chief Financial Officer on the policy decisions and assumptions that sat behind the 2017/18 budget; and an update on the Review of the University's Financial Model that the Committee had received.

## **7.2 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee**

7.2.1 Senate received the report of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee and agreed to the recommendations relevant to Senate Committees.

## **7.3. Other committees**

7.3.1 Senate received for information the reports of the Estates Committee (meeting held on 12 January 2018) and Finance Committee (meeting held on 27 November 2017).

## **8 Quarterly Financial Results**

8.1 Senate received for information the Quarterly Financial Results for the three months ended 31 January 2018.

## **9 Update on President & Vice-Chancellor Appointment**

9.1 The P&VC handed the chair to the Provost & Deputy Vice-Chancellor and then left the meeting. Professor Mike Siva-Jothy provided a verbal report updating Senate on the joint Council and Senate appointment committee for the new P&VC, as one of the three Senate members on the Committee.