



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

University
Secretary's
Office.

The Council, 29 April 2019

Report of the Senate

Date: 20 March 2019
Chair: The President & Vice-Chancellor (P&VC)
Secretary: Dr T Strike

For decision

1. Proposed Health Sciences School

- 1.1 In accordance with Regulation II (9.2.2), whereby Council reserves to itself the power to approve the establishment or abolition of faculties or departments and their titles, Senate recommends to Council the creation of a Health Sciences School in the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health from 2019/20.
- 1.2 The proposal would reconfigure the Department of Nursing and Midwifery, Department of Human Communication Sciences and the Academic Unit of Orthoptics (which currently sits within the Department of Oncology and Metabolism) to create a new Health Sciences School (HSS).
- 1.3 The HSS is being created to:
 - make these small departments more sustainable and better able to survive in a more competitive external environment
 - provide more opportunities to join up efforts on student recruitment and teaching
 - support expectations for minimum numbers of students on modules and programmes
 - enable greater flexibility to adapt and move quickly
 - provide opportunities for collaboration and to share good practice
 - align to the pillars in the Integrated Care System, and to respond to changing needs for the healthcare workforce
 - maintain the identity and value of individual professions and academic disciplines
 - improve collective ability to raise research income, including an ability to mobilise quickly in response to bids.
- 1.4 The risk to the University of implementing this change is considered to be low. Competitor institutions are typically organised into larger Schools. The risk to teaching and learning is also expected to be low. There will be no negative impact on students, but greater potential to support collaboration in teaching, and an opportunity to enhance student support and student opportunity. The impact on staff and risk of industrial dispute is also low. Staff are aware of the proposed changes and a large majority are supportive. Campus trade unions have been kept informed and have raised no objections.

- 1.5 In the context of the recommendation, Senate also recommends to Council the amendment of Regulation IX (2.1.7) relating to the composition of Senate, to reflect the establishment of a new Health Sciences School.

2. Composition of the Senate

- 2.1 Senate received a Report and makes proposals to Council under item 9 on Council's agenda.
- 2.2 Attention was drawn to: ex-officio membership; Senate quorum; a pragmatic approach to implementation; staggered terms of office. Discussion covered: a 'clean start' implementation; Chairs of Senate committees not otherwise in the membership of the Senate; and membership requirements of Senate Committees.

For information

3. President & Vice-Chancellor's report

- 3.1 The President & Vice-Chancellor (P&VC) presented the report, including:
- (a) Brexit: Events were moving rapidly and the University was continuing to make contingency preparations.
 - (b) Review of Post-18 Education and Funding: There was considerable speculation regarding the outcome of the Augar Review, the independent panel supporting the Review. The Universities Minister, Chris Skidmore MP, had suggested a consultation process including a Green Paper and a White Paper, but it was not known how the Government was likely to respond. The University had made preparations for the potential impact of some of the proposals that had been reported in the media.
 - (c) Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF): The University had submitted a response to the independent review of TEF led by Dame Shirley Pearce. Council approved the response, which included some criticisms of the current approach to TEF. The Independent Review was expected to report in the summer.
 - (d) New Universities Minister: The P&VC had met Chris Skidmore MP, the new Minister, several times and had a further meeting planned. The Minister's approach to working with the sector was welcomed.
 - (e) Annual Planning Round: This was underway and it was viewed to be progressing smoothly.
 - (f) Student Recruitment: Attention was drawn to the registration numbers for new, full-time students as at 1 December.
 - (g) Research awards: Against the background of flat cash for Research Councils the value of new research grant and contract awards for the previous 12 months was encouraging.
 - (h) Visits: The P&VC led a University delegation to China. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed by the University with Tsinghua University. Meetings also took place with Tongji University, Nanjing University and Beijing Language and Culture University.
 - (i) Pensions: The University was working under the outcomes of the 2017 Valuation, which resulted in future employer and employee contribution rates rising. A new valuation exercise was underway and the University had submitted a response.

4. Expectations for Postgraduate Research Students

- 4.1 Senate received a Report and approved recommendations: setting out in principle, the criteria, competencies and output required for the award of a PhD; Senate would receive a revised version of Regulation XVI: General Regulations for Higher Degrees,

Postgraduate Diplomas and Postgraduate Certificates which extended the current PhD by publication available to staff candidates to student candidates; the Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes be updated. Proposals would be brought to Senate in due course. Discussion included expectations of PGR students; assessing the communication of research findings; and the appropriate duration of a standard PhD.

5. Report of the Council

5.1 Senate received a report on the meeting of Council held on 26 November 2018.

6. Reports of committees

6.1 Committees of Senate

6.1.1 Senate approved the reports of the following committees:

- (a) Learning and Teaching Committee
(Meeting held on 12 February 2019)
 - (i) Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: Senate approved a revised Policy for Students.
 - (ii) Policy on recognition of prior learning (RPL): Senate approved revisions to clarify that the use of credits previously awarded on the same University programme was not considered RPL and that exceptions may be made in relation to apprenticeship programmes, in line with the requirements of Apprenticeship Standards.
 - (iii) International English Language Testing System (IELTS) bands: Senate approved revised band requirements to provide 5 bands for Departments to select from when deciding the desired level of English ability for incoming students.
 - (iv) New and significantly amended, suspended & discontinued Programmes: Senate approved new, significantly amended, and discontinued programmes, and title changes and new exit routes approved by Faculties between 17 October 2018 – 29 January 2019.

Attention was drawn to the University's response to the Independent Review of TEF and its content. The revision of IELTS bands was to ensure a consistent approach across the University and not to tighten the requirements of students.

- (b) Research Ethics Committee
(Meeting held on 13 February 2019)

Senate received and approved the Report, including a position statement, applicable to staff, clarifying the status of University ethics approval when research was transferred elsewhere; minor changes to the Ethics Policy Governing Research Involving Human Participants or Personal Data; minor changes to the Committee's Terms of Reference. Discussion covered ethics approval when research was transferred.
- (c) Research and Innovation Committee
(Meeting held on 13 February 2019)

Senate received and approved the Report. Attention was drawn to the Draft University of Sheffield REF 2021 Code of Practice, which must be submitted to the funding bodies by 7 June 2019.
- (d) Senate Academic Assurance Committee
(Meeting held on 19 February 2019)

Senate received and approved the Report. Attention was drawn to the Committee's initial discussion on grade inflation. It had also received information on the Annual Reflection process and requested feedback from members of Senate.

SAAC had considered the feedback received from November Council on the Annual Academic Assurance Report. Council had requested a further update on SAAC's activities later in 2018/19. The Committee's intention was to provide an update to Senate in June and to update Council through the Senate Report to Council in July.

(e) Senate Budget Committee
(Meeting held on 2019)

Senate received and approved the Report, including: the Minute of the Committee's discussion with the Provost & Deputy Vice-Chancellor; in relation to the Quarterly Financial Results to 31 January 2019, the University was currently generating a larger surplus than budgeted, which was viewed as positive in the context of future high levels of uncertainty. The Committee would report back on meetings planned with the P&VC and with the Faculty Vice-Presidents. Discussion focused on the residences, catering and conferences figures within the QFR report.

6.2 Other committees

- 6.2.1 Following the Senate Effectiveness Review, the following reports were circulated to members of Senate by email and not included on the Senate agenda: Estates Committee (meeting held on 14 January 2019); Finance Committee (meeting held on 19 November 2019).

7. Quarterly Financial Results

- 7.1 Senate received for information the Quarterly Financial Results for the quarter ending 31 January 2019.