



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

Office
Of The
President &
Vice-Chancellor.

The Senate, 14 October 2020

President & Vice-Chancellor's Report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Report provides summary information on current and forthcoming developments, both internal and external, for the information of Senate members. The President & Vice-Chancellor will introduce the Report at the meeting and members will have the opportunity to raise questions. This report is structured around each of the themes in the University Strategic Plan, after a section about the external environment. Where information relates to more than one strategic theme it is included under the most relevant theme.

1. EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

1.1 COVID-19

- Restructuring Regime

The Department for Education (DfE) published, in July, details of a [higher education restructuring regime](#) in response to COVID-19. The Restructuring Regime aims to support providers in England who are "at risk of market exit", i.e. in financial difficulties, due to the challenges of COVID-19. Providers would approach DfE for support and would be considered on a case-by-case basis, with loans to support restructuring coming from public funds as a last resort. The support would come with conditions and attempts to ensure that those providers seeking support focus on government priorities. Government will also require assurance that a provider is fully complying with their legal duties to secure freedom of speech.

- **TUoS interest:** Although it is unlikely that the University will need to apply, the impact of the Restructuring Regime on the autonomy of the sector could be very significant.

- Return to campus

The Department for Education (DfE) published updated [guidance](#) on 10 September regarding the reopening of higher education buildings and campuses. It reiterates the need for providers to "ensure that continuing and prospective students receive the clear, accurate and timely information needed to make informed decisions". Institutions are given responsibility for having "the right plans" to control and manage local outbreaks of coronavirus as well as communicating Covid measures and guidance to staff and students. Testing of all staff and students is not required. Four 'tiers of restriction' in relation to teaching provision are outlined in response to increased infection rates.

- **TUoS interest:** The University established a Covid-19 Management Group, led by members of UEB, and staff have been working hard throughout to prepare contingency plans and manage any precautions. The University continues to follow the latest advice and guidance issued by the UK government, Public Health England and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The University will

continue to take all appropriate and necessary steps, as required by the official advice, to keep our community safe.

- Student perception on the impact of lockdown

The Office for Students (OfS) has published [survey data](#) of a poll of over 1,400 students on their ability to participate in higher education from home and on their general perceptions of how successfully their courses were delivered during the pandemic.

- **TUoS interest:** The University has provided support for students in (i) purchasing a device if required; (ii) accessing broadband; and (iii) accessing specialist software and packages for certain courses.

- OfS review of digital teaching and learning

Following the release of the survey data outlined above, the OfS announced details of its [review](#) of digital teaching and learning. The review will consider the relationship between digital poverty and students' academic experience; how digital technology has been used to deliver remote education since the pandemic started; how high-quality digital teaching and learning can be delivered at scale in the future; and medium and long term opportunities for digital education.

- **TUoS interest:** The University plans to respond to the Review's call for evidence.

1.2 Student recruitment

- The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) published [analysis](#) of the number of students accepted onto full-time undergraduate courses as of 10 September – 28 days after A level and BTEC results day. Headlines include an increase in overall demand for higher education during the coronavirus pandemic, with a record 515,650 students having a confirmed place (up 4% on last year). The proportion of 18-year-olds from the most disadvantaged backgrounds accepted into university has risen by 8% on last year.
- Despite earlier concerns about a significant increase in deferrals, the proportion of students with a confirmed deferred place is similar to last year (5.7% in 2020, 5.4% in 2019). The number of students accepted from outside the EU has risen by 9% to 44,300, while EU acceptances have decreased by 2%, to 29,630.
- **TUoS interest:** The student recruitment position for the University, following a number of national policy changes in August, is covered below in section 2.2.

1.3 Reducing the regulatory burden

- In a speech to Universities UK (UUK) members, the Universities Minister declared the Government's intention to "reduce the bureaucratic burden across higher education." Alongside the speech, DfE and BEIS published a joint [policy paper](#) with further details. It refers to a large scale reduction in enhanced monitoring across most of the OfS conditions; reforms to the way student level data is collected and used in higher education; and the OfS' intention to suspend random sampling of registered providers. UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) is implementing changes on how it interacts with applicants and the National Institute for Health Research will review its systems and processes in the autumn.
- NSS review

In response to the DfE policy paper the OfS announced a "root and branch" review of the National Student Survey (NSS). NSS forms an important part of

the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF), with NSS-based metrics used to measure the quality of institutions and courses.

- **TUoS interest:** Whilst any reduction in the burden of regulation would be welcome, and the direction of travel is positive, these are small initial steps.

1.4 Widening Participation

- DfE published [annual statistics](#) of young people's participation in higher education. The figures relate to participation in the 2018/19 academic year. Headlines include:
 - The gap in progression between Free School Meal and non-Free School Meal pupils by age 19 increased by 0.2 percentage points compared with the same point in the previous year to 18.8% and represents the highest gap since 2006/07.
 - As with the previous year, pupils in the most advantaged POLAR quintile were more than twice as likely to progress to higher education as those from the most disadvantaged POLAR quintile. This gap widened when considering progression to high tariff institutions.

Progression varied significantly by ethnic group, with Chinese pupils most likely to progress to higher education by age 19 and White pupils least likely to progress. Black pupils had the greatest increase in the proportion entering higher education from 44% in 2009/10 to 59% in 2018/19.

- In July, the Universities Minister [outlined](#) a new approach to social mobility, arguing that social mobility is not about more people entering higher education. Rather, "true social mobility" is when the needs and career ambitions of students are put first, whether that be in higher education, further education or apprenticeships. These comments on the parity of esteem between the higher and further education sectors echo the core message of the Augar Review.
- **TUoS interest:** The University has an Access and Participation Plan for 2020/21 to 2024/25 in place and continues to deliver the actions.

1.5 Brexit

- Having left the EU, the UK is now in a transition period during which it remains subject to EU rules. When the Transition Period ends on 31 December 2020 the UK will leave the EU Single Market and Customs Union. With no new partnership in place, UK-EU trade arrangements will revert to World Trade Organization (WTO) rules and co-operation arrangements in other sectors will end.
- The details of the UK's future relationship with the EU are the subject of negotiations which began in March. The EU has said an agreement needs to be reached by the end of October to allow time for ratification by the end of the year. The UK Prime Minister has set a deadline of 15 October and has said that if a trade deal is not reached by then, both sides should "move on", which would still be a "good outcome".
- **TUoS interest:** The University's Brexit Coordination Group maintains oversight of, and coordinates the University's planning and activity with regard to the UK's future relationship with the EU. It takes a risk based approach and at its September meeting reviewed the risks and assessed the adequacy of current and planned actions, with further actions agreed as necessary.

1.6 Government's autumn budget cancelled

- The Treasury has confirmed that there will be no autumn Budget this year. A four-year Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR), which sets departmental budgets, was due to accompany the Budget after the last CSR was set in 2015

and given a one-year extension last year. There is speculation that the CSR will be given another one-year extension.

- The Government has previously said it would respond to the Augar Review, the independent panel supporting the Government review of post-18 education and funding, which reported in June 2019, alongside the CSR.
- **TUoS interest:** The University submitted its own response to the CSR, in addition to contributing to a three universities submission with the University of Manchester and University of Strathclyde, to a Sheffield City Region Anchor Institutions submission, and supported a proposal from the N8 Research Partnership.

1.7 Immigration

- The Home Office published a policy statement, on 13 July, providing further details on the UK's new points-based immigration system, which will apply from 1 January 2021 for both EU and non-EU citizens. The system includes "tradeable" characteristics, putting an emphasis on shortage occupations and applicants with PhDs (particularly STEM) relating to those roles. The new system removes the cap on the number of skilled workers and the resident labour market test to speed up the recruitment process. The definition of new entrants has also been expanded to include those moving directly into postdoctoral positions.
- Existing Tier 2 sponsors, like the University, will automatically be granted a new Skilled Worker Licence. Most migrants will now be able to apply to switch from one immigration route to another without having to leave the UK, which is a welcome development.
- The Student route will also be points-based but will remain largely similar to the current Tier 4 visa. The Graduate immigration route will be available from summer 2021 for students to seek employment or work in the UK at any skill level for up to two years (PhD students will be able to stay for three years). Details of a new Global Talent visa were published on 20 February. There will be no low-skilled worker route. The Home Office intends for applications to be open from autumn 2020 and has stated that it will continue to "refine" the system.
- **TUoS interest:** The University broadly welcomes the revised student immigration route noting that, operationally, the system should be given time to bed in with any further changes developed in conjunction with practitioners in the sector. We continue to call for visa related costs to be in line with other research-intensive nations. If any further concessions to the regime are introduced as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, these should apply to as many students as possible.

1.8 Tuition fees

- The Universities Minister confirmed in a [written statement](#) that the maximum tuition fees for Home students for the 2021/22 academic year in England will be maintained at £9,250.
- The UK government has confirmed that EU students starting at the University from 1 August 2021 will normally be classified as Overseas students for fee purposes. EU students starting up to and including 31 July 2021 will normally be classified as Home students, and will retain this classification for the duration of their registration on the course.
- **TUoS interest:**
The University has an EU Tuition Fee Changes Sub-Group (a sub-group of the Strategic Advisory Group on Student Numbers and Fees) looking at the

implication of this change. Work is taking place to update all relevant web pages by the end of September, and implement the required systems and communications changes.

2. EDUCATION AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE

2.1 Undergraduate Admissions

- The University expected to be working to a maximum allowed intake for home undergraduates due to the imposition of a government Student Number Cap. The University agreed an approach to maximise both home and international intake from our firm offer-holder pool to help meet the number cap and balance expected reductions in international intake against previously set targets. However, the policy on use of Centre-assessed grades for A-levels was changed and the student number cap removed, which resulted in a significant number of applicants subsequently meeting the required grades for their course and being accepted. Potential numbers for registration are now above target for both home and international students, however early registration figures are currently showing around a 10% home and 40% overseas reduction in actual registrations. Whilst this is likely to improve over the next few weeks this is roughly in line with earlier forecasts. Given the exceptional challenges this year securing this number of prospective students this year is an excellent achievement. The approach taken to manage admissions at institutional level, with faculty oversight of the individual faculty and departmental position continues to be successful in delivering a coordinated and positive institution-wide outcome.

2.2 Postgraduate Taught Admissions

- The increase in Home applications seen this year as a likely result of a less buoyant employment market has not translated into a similar increase in accepted offers, however current forecasts suggest we are likely to meet our Home admissions target for this year. Conversely, whilst international applications and accepted offers are well ahead of last year, the uncertainty around a range of measures in relation to Covid-19 continues to affect the expected registrations from this group. Whilst positive steps, for example organised international flights and a change of start dates are helping boost expected numbers, we still continue to forecast registrations well below target numbers this year. Given the challenges we are still in a relatively good position this year. Early understanding of the potential reduced Postgraduate Taught international position has helped ensure decisions regarding other cohorts have been made to balance the recruitment intake position this year as effectively as possible in an uncertain environment.

2.3 Postgraduate Research Admissions

- The Postgraduate Research position remains under expected levels this year, with applications and accepted offers for both home and international below those of last year and early registrations also down. However, the flexibility in start date for many research degrees is expected to lead to a gradual increase in registrations over the coming months.

2.4 Student Registration

- Student Registration has been conducted in a safe, socially-distanced way with a majority of tasks being completed online and short, in-person appointments for collection of U-cards and identification checks. As part of our health and safety and support measures, we have instituted a reporting form for students to

inform the University if they are self-isolating or have tested positive for Covid-19. This informs Health and Safety (who liaise with local Public Health), informs their academic department and generates regular welfare support so that we can check on wellbeing and offer other welfare support as needed. We are also collecting data on where students are studying and if they have any medical conditions that may exempt them from wearing a face covering or attending teaching in person.

2.5 Annual Planning Cycle

- Preparatory work and consultation has been completed on the new Planning Cycle, covering 2020-25, that will align with the new University Vision and Strategy. The first year of the cycle focuses on strategic planning for the following four years with faculties and academic departments setting objectives and targets that contribute to the delivery of the Vision and Strategy. Progress will be monitored in a more focussed and condensed annual cycle following this first year. The new cycle begins with DVC led meetings with Faculties and Professional Services Directorates in late October/early November to enable the dissemination of expectations using the new Strategic Framework, the timeline for the next 12 months and a review of the last 12 months.

2.6 National University Performance Metrics / Tables

- Guardian University League Table 2021
The University is 31st in the UK in this table up from 45th last year. This is the Universities highest rank in this league table over the last 10 years. This moves us above competitors such as Nottingham (38th) and keeps us above local university Sheffield Hallam (47th). This league table does not consider research activity. The improvement in performance this year is underpinned by comparatively better performances in NSS linked measures, expenditure, student staff ratio and value added.
- Times Higher Education (THE) World Ranking 2021
The University is ranked 121st in the world in this table, slightly down from last year where it ranked 117th. This is ahead of York (133rd), Nottingham (158th) and Leeds (160th). This year's rank makes TUOS the 14th highest UK University in the table. This league table uses a mix between metrics and results from an Academic Reputation survey they undertake. Slight improvements in scores relating to Research and Industry income were counted by small drops in scores for Education and Citations.
- Shanghai Jiao Tong Academic Ranking of World Universities 2020
The University remains within the top 101-150 universities in the world in this table. This puts us in the top 9-15 institutions in the UK for 2020. This league table only ranks institutions in bands past the 100th position. The overall position of the University has been consistent over the last 8 years. This league table focuses on number of Nobel Prize winners in the staffing cohort and Alumni alongside measures on citations to produce this table.

2.7 Student Feedback

- The University has made good progress on the implementation of Tell-US – a new module evaluation system for students to give feedback on their modules and programmes. The next stage of the project is to define the reporting that the system will produce to make best use of the student feedback.

2.8 Return to Campus and Blended Learning & Teaching

- In response to the increase in Covid-19 cases in the city and within our University community, the number of our students self-isolating, and the likelihood of more stringent local measures being implemented shortly, UEB took the decision to temporarily suspend face-to-face teaching (with the exception of clinical teaching) between Friday 9 October and Sunday 18 October, with face-to-face teaching resuming from Monday 19 October. Our campus, services and facilities, such as student support, the libraries and cafes, remain open and research activity will continue as planned.
- Currently, on-campus teaching volume is at around 20 percent of what would normally be provided, with the rest being delivered digitally, in order to reduce footfall and infection risk on campus. There is no evidence that face-to-face teaching is driving transmission, but the increasing numbers of students self-isolating is impacting on-campus teaching. The University is of course continually appraising its teaching delivery.
- The transition period is being used to put in place additional risk mitigation measures that will allow for the resumption of face-to-face teaching on Monday 19 October. These additional measures mean that when face-to-face teaching resumes on Monday 19 October we will be at Tier 2, as set out in the Department for Education guidance.
- The 301 Academic Skills Centre has adapted and developed their existing range of study skills resources to support students who are now experiencing blended learning. There is also a new series of '[Level Up Your Skills](#)' resources to specifically support students in their transition to and through university study.
- Through [Elevate](#), which provides advice and guidance for teaching staff to enhance their academic practice, new resources have been created to support the blended teaching approach, for example how to teach in a socially distant classroom.

2.9 Teaching awards

- Dr Pete Mylon from Multidisciplinary Engineering Education and Dr Rachel van Duyvenbode from the School of English have been awarded prestigious National Teaching Fellowships by Advance HE.
- The Student Employability Development team in Biomedical Science (BMS) was awarded a Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence (CATE) for their multifaceted approach to embedding employability in the curriculum – the first time the University has received a CATE.
- The University of Sheffield has placed 9 courses within the top 100 of Class Central's annual list of 'The Best MOOCs of All Time' (up from the 7 in the 2019 list). No other establishment in the list has 9 courses represented.

2.10 University Library

- The Information Commons and Western Bank Libraries reopened on 28th September. There are now 280 bookable learning spaces available in morning and afternoon slots, Monday to Friday. 80% of the booking capacity had been used by students so far.
- Capacity will be increased in a phased manner as demand increases, and if it is safe to do so, to around 25% of our normal learning spaces (900 of our normal 3600 learning spaces), and opening hours extended in consultation with students to ensure priority needs are met.
- Support for access to print collections (currently for researchers and research students only) will be extended to taught course students, with particular emphasis on the Arts and Humanities.

- The extensive digital library continues to be available 24/7, the Virtual Advisory Help Service 7 days a week, and regular virtual commons online study experiences, building on the successful PGT [summer programme](#)
- Challenges remain around restrictive and prohibitively expensive e-textbook packages. The Copyright Licensing Agency (CLA) [relaxation](#) is of little actual value, due to the clause regarding commercial availability.

2.11 Student Support Services

- Student Support Services continue to be fully available online, with the University Health Service open on campus. Mental Health and Disability Services are offering online appointments in a safe, secure way. Students are responding well to this offer and accessing these services in growing numbers.
- From w/c 28 Sept, a new Student Support Hub is accessible in person via pre-booked appointments. The Hub includes:
 - Student Services Information Desk (for UCard collection);
 - Student Support and Guidance (for welfare support and immigration advice);
 - Student Administration Service (for registration, fees, exams, or student record-related queries).
- To make sure students are supported in the best way possible, Student Support is contacting all students who are self-isolating to check on their welfare and offer practical and emotional support. For students staying in University accommodation support is being offered, including:
 - a daily check-in on students who are symptomatic, have tested positive or who have registered with the Residence Life team for a daily welfare call to find out how they are feeling and what their specific needs may be,
 - support in accessing medication, shopping, and food deliveries - including access to guaranteed delivery of an 'essentials' food, toiletries, and laundry product package while self-isolating,
 - details for local collect and deliver laundry services,
 - making sure that all students know what to do if they or their flatmates become symptomatic, or very unwell,
 - a range of online Residence Life activities to support engagement and community building,
 - daily peer to peer support drop-in sessions for students who are not self-isolating and may need assistance or signposting to support services.

2.12 Strategic Projects

- [Student Lifecycle Project](#). The programme is in the midst of large-scale design and build activities with six projects currently live.
- [Enabling Programme Level Approach \(PLA\)](#). This project has supported a key development for learning and teaching and is now drawing to the end
- [Data Warehouse Project](#). This project is redeveloping and improving management information and reporting services whilst also implementing a new data warehouse to support this provision.

3. RESEARCH AND ITS IMPACT

3.1 Research Awards

- See section 6.1, below.

3.2 UKRI Covid Allocation

- UKRI has provided us with an additional £3.6M to offer additional funding to grants finishing between April 2020 and September 2021. The aim is to enable the delivery of the envisaged outcomes and outputs which have been disrupted by the pandemic and to protect our research base by enabling contract extensions for staff funded from UKRI grants. A small committee chaired by the Vice-President (Research) is overseeing the allocations and ensuring that due regard is paid to disruption arising from issues related to staff with protected characteristics.

3.3 Regional engagement

- The University, Sheffield Hallam and Sheffield Teaching Hospital NHS Trust have produced an anchor institution submission for the forthcoming CSR. This submission - entitled Recovery and renewal for the Sheffield City Region. A new model for economic and social transformation - details a transformation programme across three areas: building an advanced economy, delivering advanced manufacturing and sustainable energy technologies, and transforming health outcomes. This is a collaborative approach to the renewal of the Sheffield City Region bringing together the assets and capabilities of the three anchor institutions. This submission has also been replicated in Sheffield City Region LEP's submission to the Comprehensive Spending Review.

3.4 Knowledge Exchange

- Jointly-funded by Research England and the Office for Students, and working in close collaboration with arts partners from across the Sheffield City Region and the UK, the University has been awarded over £530,000 for its 'Student Engagement in Knowledge Exchange (KE)' bid. The project will create 140 paid work placement opportunities for students across the Faculties of Arts and Humanities & Social Science. The placements aim to engage students from widening participation backgrounds to enhance equality, diversity and inclusion across a variety of sectors in the planning, design and reinvention of the public spaces at the heart of every community.

3.5 Cultural response

- Funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) through the UKRI Covid-19 Rapid Response Fund, the University is commencing a new research project that will play a key role in helping the cultural sector recover from the impact of Covid-19. In partnership with key cultural organisations in Sheffield, the one-year project will collect crucial data on audiences, venues and freelancers that can be fed directly into policies and economic recovery plans for the cultural industry in the Sheffield City Region and across the UK.

4. STRATEGIC PARTNERS

4.1 Alumni Volunteering

	2019/20 Total	2019/20 Target	2018/19	2017/8
Alumni volunteers	863*	1,000	999	979
Volunteer hours	8,985	8,000**	10,752	10,277
Volunteer instances	1,022	1,200	1,194	1,195
Philanthropic prospects engaged in volunteering	127 (15%)	10%	144 (14%)	141
Student beneficiaries	4,500+***	5,000	5,307	4,667

*As of 25.09.20

*Since the pandemic, CAR has prioritised engaging and retaining the existing pool of volunteers, rather than reaching out to new volunteers.

**The original target of 11,500 hours was revised down in April due to the predicted impact of Covid-19 on planned activity and cancelled events in March - July.

***This records student attendance at events and programmes but does not include students benefiting from accessing alumni case studies and other online content e.g. recorded webinars.

- In 2019-20, 863 alumni gave ~9,000 hours of their time to help the University. More than 5,000 students benefited from their support. Activities included e-mentoring, business visits, speed networking and careers talks.

5. PUBLIC RESPONSIBILITY

5.1 Success and Achievement

- The University of Sheffield ranked 23rd in the UK in The Times Good University Guide 2021, rising three places from last year.
- The University of Sheffield was named one of the top 10 universities in the UK to study journalism, engineering, architecture, dentistry and urban studies and planning by The Guardian University Guide 2021.
- The University was ranked top in Yorkshire and the Humber for Graduate prospects according to statistics from the Higher Education Statistics Agency.
- The University of Sheffield's Students' Union was awarded the Whatuni Student Choice Award for Best Students' Union for the fourth consecutive year.
- The University ranked number one nationally for satisfaction levels in several subjects, with overall satisfaction at 85 per cent according to the latest National Student Survey (NSS).
- Engineering at the University of Sheffield ranked number one for student satisfaction in the Russell Group in the National Student Survey (NSS).
- Advance HE has awarded National Teaching Fellowships two inspirational academics from the University of Sheffield for their outstanding impact on teaching and learning.

- The University of Sheffield Nuclear Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre's (Nuclear AMRC) proposal to establish a new advanced manufacturing research centre in Derby secured government funding.
- The University celebrated the Class of 2020 with a virtual graduation ceremony.
- Festival of the Mind, the University's unique collaborative festival showcasing local creative talent and academic research, launched with both live and digital events.
- Off the Shelf, one of the largest literary festivals in the UK organised by the University of Sheffield, launched for its 29th year.
- Scientists from the University of Sheffield joined a major UK study into the long-term health impacts of Covid-19.
- Academics from the University of Sheffield are collaborating with refugees in Syria to develop sustainable PPE to combat Covid-19.
- A team of engineers, scientists and clinicians from the University of Sheffield have joined a major study to develop a way of mass manufacturing Covid-19 proteins for antibody tests.

6. CHALLENGE OF RESOURCE

6.1 Research

- New awards for the last 12 months to the end of August 2020 now stand at £159.3m (£137.6m excluding AMRC). This is a decrease of £9.2m (5.46%) from August 2019.
- There has been a fall in the total number of awards opened. For the last 12 months to the end of August 2020, the number of new awards opened stood at 761 compared to 907 as at August 2019. There have been falls in all funder categories, with the biggest drops of 53 and 35 seen in the number of UK Government and RCUK awards. The fall in UK Government awards is purely because of the same fall in the number of AMRC Catapult awards. To the end of August there were 7 COVID-19 related awards along with a further 14 where we had been notified of being successful.
- The value of new awards for the 12 months to August 2020 has seen a small rise in the value of RCUK awards of £0.7m and a larger rise of £5.6m in UK Government awards. The value of Industry has however fallen by £4.9m (43.3%) whilst Overseas awards (all overseas apart from European Framework) has dropped by £15.8m (67.2%). Total RCUK and UK Government awards over the last 12 months represents £115.7m of the £171.5m total awarded (65.7%).
- There have been 7 new awards for over £1m since the last report. The largest new award is £5.4m awarded by the EPSRC to the Faculty of Science.
- As at August 2020, research grants work in progress (research order book) which excludes capital projects, stands at £315.3m (£296.8m excluding AMRC) which is an increase of £23.8m from August 2019 and the second highest recorded work in progress to date. This increase can be explained by a number of higher value new awards recently, less expenditure over the summer months due to COVID19 and reduction of c£1.4m of staff research salaries due to furloughing.

7. POWER OF PEOPLE

7.1 Returning to campus

- Over the summer colleagues from across the University have worked to prepare for different staff/roles to return to working on campus in the lead up to the new academic year, including preparations for reduced levels of face to face teaching in small managed groups.
- HR and Health & Safety colleagues have supported the development of a suite of risk assessments to be deployed locally to support activity returning to campus. A series of health and safety reviews and walkarounds were organised for key buildings/areas of the estate. Trade Union colleagues were invited to take part, particularly to assess our readiness for the resumption of on campus student and teaching activity and reported that they were assured by this.

7.2 Staff Wellbeing: Institutional Equality & Wellbeing Risk Assessment

- At the start of the pandemic, a risk assessment approach was taken to consider staff wellbeing, and to identify and mitigate key areas of risk. The risk assessments have been shared with Trade Union colleagues and communicated to staff and managers. Early on, we developed an Institutional Wellbeing Risk Assessment. This highlighted key risks to staff examples, including potential challenges for disabled or neurodiverse staff; safety of the home environment; balancing working and caring commitments; feelings of isolation, loneliness, anxiety and stress. As circumstances have changed, with the requirement to continue to work from home for a large number of staff, we have developed an additional risk assessment, [Equality and Wellbeing Risk Assessment Continuing to Work from Home](#). New risks highlighted include the risk of stress and fatigue, and childcare responsibilities related to the reopening of schools.

7.3 Staff Survey

- In June, we launched a period of staff engagement and have delivered three phases of surveys to:
 - a) assess how effective our immediate response had been to staff in supporting their transition to remote working at short notice; b) understand how staff felt on an ongoing basis around wellbeing, practical support, connection and management and identify how well we had sustained or improved on our initial response. We asked for feedback once per week over four weeks; c) understand how staff feel regarding their return to campus, including Health and Safety, communication of information and the future of work.
- An overall responsiveness score of 75% indicates that the majority of respondents felt positively about the University's response to the pandemic. Key findings included:
 - Our immediate response to the pandemic was positive, particularly support for home working.
 - Staff were keen for more information about plans for returning to campus and specific teaching arrangements for the autumn. A perceived lack of information was causing staff anxiety.
 - Overall, managers had been considerate and supportive of wellbeing, although they had not always had the information to answer questions. Some staff said that this uncertainty had been detrimental to their wellbeing.

- Staff are experiencing fatigue and have concerns about workload, especially when colleagues are on annual leave, and were finding it difficult to take their own annual leave due to their work commitments.
- Positive comments about remote working, but also concerns that there may not be opportunities to do this in future.
- Conversely, there are many staff who are concerned about continuing to work from home and the negative impact on their wellbeing, e.g. low motivation, morale, feelings of isolation and loneliness.
- Concerns about safety on campus; there is ongoing value in practical and supportive guidance for returning to work on campus.
- Staff found University updates helpful, but would like more of a dialogue with senior colleagues.
- As a result we have:
 - Included regular information about plans in our staff updates. Dedicated return to campus [web pages](#) were also developed to share the latest guidance.
 - Continually reviewed and expanded the resources and support that is available in response to changing circumstances and challenges.
 - Allowed staff to carry over 10 days of annual leave to use in the leave year starting from October (increased from 5).
 - Amended the additional annual leave purchase scheme to enable staff to take leave in quieter times next year.
 - Reinstated aspects of our reward processes, including our annual reward and recognition schemes (subject to positive international student recruitment figures).
 - Agreed to establish University-wide principles around workload and undertake further work to ensure that our workload allocation processes better align with other processes such as the Staff Review and Development Scheme (SRDS) and the Academic Career Pathway.
 - Developed awareness information and guidance on the Staff Wellbeing pages about how to recognise signs of burnout, how to support colleagues and as changes staff can make to avoid the risk of burnout.
 - Reassured staff that we want to take a different approach to how we balance on-campus working and remote working in the future.
 - Provided bookable desk space for people to use in cases where working from home is having a negative impact on their wellbeing.
 - Carried out comprehensive risk assessments and implemented strict hygiene and social distancing measures in place. These have been shared openly, along with videos and images of measures in place across campus to reduce risks of Covid infection.
 - Created a process for staff via the [safety hazards Google form](#) to escalate any concerns directly to colleagues in Health and Safety so that these can be addressed.
 - Written and communicated a comprehensive series of Managers Guidance on the Return to Campus.
 - Asked departments to undertake an Equality Impact Assessment on plans for recommencing teaching on campus and to give particular consideration to the impact on staff with caring responsibilities, disabilities or existing health conditions.
 - Provided regular updates on the evolving financial position, student recruitment and the safe return to campus, and the s188 consultation whilst it was ongoing.
 - Invited Heads of Department to a series of virtual briefing meetings to disseminate information and provide a two way dialogue to respond to questions.

7.4 New Key Appointments

- Andrew Harris has been appointed as Director Campaigns from 5 October 2020, joining from Aston University where he was Executive Director of Campaigns.
- Dr Li Su, Professorial Fellow in Neuroscience, from 13 July 2020. Dr Su was previously a Research Fellow at the University of Cambridge.
- Dr Daniel Cogswell, UKRI Future Leaders Fellow in Materials Science & Engineering, from 1 August 2020. Dr Cogswell was previously a Technologist of Materials at Rolls Royce.
- Professor Rebecca Lawthom, Chair in Community Psychology in the School of Education, from 17 August 2020. Professor Lawthom was previously a Professor of Community Psychology and Head of International at Manchester Metropolitan University.
- Mr Simon Townley, Assistant Director of Service Delivery in IT Services, from 1 September 2020. Mr Townley was previously an Associate Director at Salford University

8. LEGAL AND REGULATORY MATTERS

8.1 Reportable Events

- In its role as principal regulator of HEIs, the OfS requires that serious incidents have been appropriately notified under registration condition F3 (i). The OfS defines a reportable event as ‘any event or circumstance that, in the judgement of the OfS, materially affects or could materially affect the provider’s legal form or business model, and/or its willingness or ability to comply with its conditions of registration’.
- In the period since the previous report to Senate, the University has notified the OfS of the following reportable events:
 - Following Senate’s approval in June 2020 to the discontinuation of the Legal Practice Course and the Graduate Diploma in Law and the on-going student consultation, it was reported to the OfS as required, including the proposed teach-out arrangements which would see the students continue registration at the University of Sheffield, and be taught the University’s curriculum, delivered by the University of Law, which would lead to a University of Sheffield award. The OfS requested some follow up information and the University has replied with further information.
 - The OfS was notified on 8 July that University was suspending three dental programmes, because the clinical practice required is provided in the facilities of the Charles Clifford Dental Services. This cannot be provided because of COVID-19 restrictions. It is anticipated that they will re-commence in the academic year 2021-2022.