



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

Office
Of The
President &
Vice-Chancellor.

The Senate, 22 June 2022

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 the University Vision's four Pillars and their respective Priorities, after a section about the external environment. Where information relates to more than one Pillar or Priority it is included under the most relevant theme.

1. EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

1.1 The government's legislative programme announced

- The government set out its plans for the coming months in the Queen's Speech, delivered on 10 May. Whilst the confidence vote in the Prime Minister on 6 June and ongoing threat to his leadership may affect government focus, it is expected most of the Bills announced will become law, as they are designed to honour manifesto commitments. Below is a summary of announced legislation that has an impact on the University. There is likely to be a particular focus on the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill, the Higher Education Bill underpinning the government's flagship lifelong loan entitlement and the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, which the government sees as key to retaining the electoral gains made at the last General Election in former 'red wall' towns. The Policy Team will work with colleagues to influence the development of these laws.
- Bills announced are as follows:
 - (a) The Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill - a Bill already under consideration in Parliament to extend and strengthen existing legislation upholding freedom of speech and academic freedom at registered higher education providers and students' unions.
 - (b) A Bill of Rights - changes to the Human Rights Act aimed at rebalancing power between the courts and the legislature, which could also have an impact on free speech on campus.
 - (c) A Higher Education Bill - legislation to underpin government plans to bring in a lifelong loan entitlement for post-18 education and take measures to address poor quality in higher education, including introducing Student Number Controls and Minimum Eligibility Requirements, subject to the recent Department for Education consultations on these issues.
 - (d) A Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill to place a duty on the government to set Levelling Up missions, which could include targets around research and development spend outside the Greater South East, and to provide an annual report on their delivery.

- (e) A Protect Duty Bill to require owners of public venues to consider terrorist threats and take mitigation measures, in light of the 2017 Manchester Arena bombing.
 - (f) A Boycotts, Divestment and Sanctions Bill to prevent public bodies, including universities, making boycott and other investment decisions that ‘undermine community cohesion’.
 - (g) A Data Reform Bill to reform data protection laws, including ‘simplifying the rules around research to cement the UK’s position as a science and technology superpower’.
 - (h) An Energy Security Bill to deliver the commitments in the British Energy Security Strategy, which could provide opportunities for research in this area.
- The government’s widely-reported plans to legislate to breach its treaty obligations under the Northern Ireland Protocol agreed with the European Union, whilst not contained in the Queen’s Speech Bills, represent a significant development that could have repercussions for the University as a result of any consequent dispute.

1.2 University responds to the government’s higher education proposals

- The University’s Policy Team has submitted a response on behalf of the University to the Department for Education’s consultation on Higher Education reform. Key points include:
 - (a) Government should wait to understand the impact of new regulatory measures to ensure quality higher education provision, before using student number controls and Minimum Eligibility Requirements (MER) to achieve the same result.
 - (b) MER including Grade 4 Maths GCSE could harm access to higher education, hitting underrepresented groups hardest.
 - (c) Foundation Year fees should not be reduced.
 - (d) Any new National Scholarship Scheme should be a supplement to the substantial current university activity.

To request a copy of the response please contact Amy Williams, Head of Policy (amy.williams@sheffield.ac.uk). The University of Sheffield is cited in the Russell Group’s response to the consultation.

1.3 Local election results

- Labour’s [Oliver Coppard](#) was elected on 5 May to be the new Mayor of South Yorkshire, replacing Dan Jarvis MP who stepped down. Elections to Sheffield City Council took place on the same day and the results mean there continues to be no overall control for any political party. Labour’s Cllr Terry Fox has been re-elected as Leader of the Council. The City Council has a committee system with each committee responsible for specific council business and the Chairs and membership of the committee politically proportionate to the election results. The University remains committed to working with local political stakeholders for the betterment of the city and the South Yorkshire region.

1.4 Research Excellence Framework 2021

- The results of the UK-wide assessment of university research, the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021, have been published. Across the sector, 41 per cent of submissions were judged to be 4* (world-leading) and 43 per cent were 3* (internationally excellent). Headlines from the University of Sheffield’s

REF 2021 [results](#) show that 92 per cent of our research is rated either 4* or 3*. The REF results demonstrate our research and impact excellence across a broad range of disciplines and confirm that our research is having a significant positive impact on lives across the world.

Access and Participation

- The Office for Students' (OfS) newly-appointed Director for Fair Access and Participation, John Blake has outlined his approach towards improving university access and participation. His three 'key aspirations' are: evaluating the impact and effectiveness of widening participation initiatives, aligning access and participation with the OfS' efforts on quality and standards so that more students get good outcomes from their degrees, and building 'more impactful' university and school partnerships.
- Universities UK (UUK) has published a code of practice for universities designed to improve transparency and fairness in the admissions system while upholding high academic standards, putting applicants' interests above all else, to which the University of Sheffield has signed up.

University response to the Ukraine crisis

- The University of Sheffield has [pledged](#) over £1 million to support students, scholars and other staff who are seeking sanctuary in the UK or affected by war in their home countries, now including Ukraine. The £1 million package of support includes hardship funding for current students, scholarships for new or transferring students, accommodation support, English language training and job opportunities for at-risk academics.
- The University of Sheffield now has a twin university in Ukraine – Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute (KPI). KPI is one of Ukraine's leading universities and has a specialism in engineering and nuclear research. The University also has a new partnership with Ivan Franko National University of Lviv (LNU). This partnership has been developed by Neil Bermel in the School of Languages and Cultures (SLC). SLC and the Modern Languages Teaching Centre will seek to host academic colleagues from LNU both for research collaboration as visiting scholars, and to teach Ukrainian language and culture to students at Sheffield and to those who are hosting people from Ukraine as part of the Homes for Ukraine programme. Initial discussions with LNU are also identifying other areas for research collaboration.

2. EDUCATION

2.1. DELIVERY OF THE PORTFOLIO

2.1.1 Undergraduate Admissions

- As of 15 March, the UG Home position shows that overall applications are marginally up in comparison to the same point last year.
- UG Overseas applications continue to trend above 2021 levels, driven by growth from mainland China and supported by increases from India and Malaysia.
- The focus for UG has turned to conversion - the deadline for students to make their firm/insurance decisions is on 9 June and we do not expect a significant shift in acceptances until late May/early June.
- On 7 March, UUK published a new Fair Admissions Code of Practice.

2.1.2 Postgraduate Taught Admissions

- PGT Home applications remain much lower than at this point last year although with variance between faculties. Home applicants typically apply late in the

admissions cycle, so recruitment efforts are focused towards this latter part of the year with a new PGT guide and Open Evening planned in May.

- PGT Overseas applications, offers and acceptances are looking similar to this point last year. Although we have received fewer applications from China for 2022 entry, we are continuing to see increased interest from other markets such as India, Nigeria and Ghana, although conversion from these growth markets is typically lower so we are keeping a careful watch on acceptance rates and tuition fee deposit payments.
- [A Postgraduate Survey](#) is being piloted by the Office for Students (OfS) to help improve the experience of taught postgraduate students across England. The University is one of fewer than 50 universities taking part in the pilot. As with the NSS, the fieldwork is being carried out by Ipsos Mori who will contact students independently of the University. The data will not be published externally and will not feed into league table rankings, it will only be used to help us improve the experience of PGT students.

2.1.3 Postgraduate Research Admissions

- PGR Home applications and offers are lower than at this point last year, in line with the drop in PGTH applications. PGR Overseas applications are up in comparison to this point last year. It is still relatively early in the cycle for research applications and we expect these to continue to come through alongside any additional funding opportunities that are available

2.1.4 Student recruitment and marketing

- A new campaign measurement dashboard is now live, allowing dynamic evaluation and monitoring of digital marketing activity across the University.
- A joint advertising campaign with Hallam and Marketing Sheffield to promote Sheffield as a University City is being created and will launch in June. This will target high quality students in the M1 corridor and the South East, with support from stakeholders and their own networks.
- The indications are that many pre-Covid behaviours are returning. Face-to-face UCAS events saw 900 visitors to our stand across the first 4 days and the University will be represented at over 40 UCAS/UK Uni Search events this semester.
- We have delivered 5 on campus applicant days and 3 online events since December with attendance rates at on campus events around 80%, in line with pre-Covid applicant day events.
- We continue to work hard to improve the content for our online recruitment and marketing offer, which is particularly important to overseas applicants and those UK applicants in hard to reach geographical areas. At the February PGT online open day there was a significant increase in the percentage of those who said they were going to choose Sheffield after the event (79.2% vs 60% Nov 21).

2.1.5 Student Support Services

- The Student Welfare and Wellbeing Team provided support to our Ukrainian, Russian, and other students from the surrounding region in response to the crisis in Ukraine.
- An Industrial Action Enquiry Centre was set up by the Student Services Information Desk to respond to questions from students throughout the Industrial Action periods. Students were able to ask questions via a web form or live chat.

- As part of the review of the Student Support Strategy, a consultation survey was sent out to staff and student groups to seek opinions and perceptions of the existing Student Support Mission and Vision statements. A good level of response was received and further consultation with stakeholders is now underway, ahead of launching the new strategy later in the year.

2.1.6 Global Engagement

- In February 2022, Professor Jim Litster, Interim Vice-President & Head of the Faculty of Engineering, led a University delegation to the University of Washington (USA) to explore research opportunities in Engineering and wider opportunities for research collaboration and student and staff exchanges.
- In March 2022 Her Excellency Gaitri Issar Kumar, the High Commissioner of India visited the University on her tour of the UK. Alongside talks about their ongoing partnerships with India, the High Commissioner toured the University AMRC, the Diamond and met our colleagues and students.

3. RESEARCH

3.1 RESEARCH EXCELLENCE

3.1.1 Research Awards

- See section 6, Finance, below.

3.1.2 Research Development

- As part of the commitments set out in the Strategy Delivery Plan for Research, the REF Steering Group has undertaken phase one of a Lessons Learned exercise to seek input and determine recommendations around our processes and support structures, to support preparations for future REFs. With input from UEB, a detailed action and implementation plan will be developed. Phase two will be an in-depth analysis of the REF results (published 12 May) and discussions with academic departments about future plans, linked to their five-year plans.
- The HE sector, supported by JISC, has secured a new 3-year deal with Elsevier, one of the major academic publishers. Universities had two core objectives: to reduce costs to levels they can sustain and to provide full and immediate open access to UK research. The deal achieves a 15% cost reduction to access paywall content and includes unlimited open access publishing in almost all subscription journals. The deal also secured 15% discounts on article processing charges (APCs) for fully gold journals and constraints on price increases. This is the world's largest Open Access agreement with Elsevier, unique in the level of savings and the access delivered. Alongside other open access agreements, 80% of UK research can now be open access at no cost to authors. The strength of the sector working together, including the N8 and Russell Group, resulted in this significant achievement. The University continues to play a significant role in negotiations, which will now turn to other publishers, including Nature group.

4. INNOVATION

4.1 INNOVATION IMPACT

4.1.1 Success and Achievement

- Following the invasion of Ukraine we have worked with specialist academics to create an [expert guide](#) on Ukraine to supplement wider media work, commentary and analysis on the war. A number of our academics have also featured in the media.

- University academics continue to feature in coverage relating to Covid-19, around both societal and medical issues.

4.1.2 Partnerships and KE

- The University has submitted its annual HE-BCI survey (2020/21), which measures the volume of interactions between UK HE providers, and business and the wider community in the specified academic year.
- The University has completed and approved a high level design for the proposed new knowledge exchange support service - a key action in the Innovation Pillar of the University Vision. Work will now commence to design the specific organisational structures for implementation later in 2022.
- Three University graduates have been recognised as winners within the cohort of the Innovate UK Young Innovators Awards 2021/22. The alumni have been recognised as young people with creative and ground-breaking business ideas and will receive a grant and business coaching from the programme.

4.2 SOUTH YORKSHIRE

4.2.1 Cultural Impact

- To support the Made Together objectives for Cultural Vibrancy and Building Stronger Communities, we are developing Storying Barnsley, a co-produced, strategically embedded project that will inform the future direction of the cultural strategy for the Principal Towns in Barnsley.
- The Partnerships & Regional Engagement Team have been working with the [Festival of Debate](#) to put together 11 public facing events featuring 14 of our academics talking about their research.
- The [Story of the News](#) event took place on 17 March at the city library, celebrating 500 years of the news, as part of the British Libraries/Living Knowledge national *Breaking the News* exhibition. 89 people booked and over 100 people watched online.

4.2.2 Regional Engagement

- The South Yorkshire Sustainability Centre was officially announced by the then South Yorkshire Mayor, Dan Jarvis in March. The Centre is a collaboration led by the University with South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA) and Sheffield Hallam University along with the four South Yorkshire local authorities and a range of private and voluntary sector partners. The Centre will connect University research with regional partners to co-develop and implement solutions to regional, national and global sustainability challenges, helping to decarbonise the region and provide jobs, skills and economic opportunities for South Yorkshire. This is supported with a £5 million grant from the Research England RED Fund with matched funding from the MCA and our partners.
- The Ultimate Battery Company has partnered with the AMRC to announce the development of a new R&D and manufacturing facility in South Yorkshire to explore a new generation of greener vehicle battery technologies. The company will anchor its manufacturing base in South Yorkshire and continue to forge research connections with the AMRC and Faculty of Engineering students.
- The AMRC North-West was officially opened by the Industry Minister, Lee Rowley. The applied research centre sits at the heart of the Samlesbury Enterprise Zone in Preston and extends our footprint across the north. It has been built using a £20m grant from the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Growth Deal and builds on the established track record of engagement with

Lancashire manufacturers by AMRC North West engineers, who have operated from an interim facility since 2018.

5. ONE UNIVERSITY

5.1 SENIOR STAFF RECRUITMENT AND KEY APPOINTMENTS

- Professor Simon Jones has been appointed as Faculty of One University Strategy Delivery (Science). Professor Jones was previously Interim Head of Chemistry.
- Deborah Lodge has been appointed as Professional Services Director of One University. Mrs Lodge is currently the Director of Research Services.
- Professor Karen Niven has been appointed as a Chair in Work Psychology in the Management School. Professor Niven was previously a Professor of Organisational Psychology at the University of Manchester.
- Professor Dave Petley has resigned to take up the post of Vice-Chancellor at the University of Hull from August 2022. We wish Dave well in his new role and thank him for his contribution as a member of UEB over the past six years.
- Daryl Ormerod has been appointed as Chief Executive of the Students' Union with effect from 22 August. Mr Ormerod is currently the Chief Executive of the University of Nottingham Students' Union.

5.2 STAFF WELLBEING

5.2.1 Welsh Language Policy

- Following recent correspondence with Welsh Government, UEB has recently approved a Welsh Language Policy for AMRC Cymru in order to comply with legal requirements pertaining to operations in Wales and to comply with the conditions of recent, significant funding awards by Welsh Government. The Policy sets out how the University, in its Welsh operations through AMRC Cymru, will promote the Welsh language and comply with the relevant statutory duties, the extent to which it applies, and sets out a series of high-level principles explaining how the University will meet the specific elements of the statutory duties. Adopting the policy avoids the risk of potential sanctions as well as reputational risk.

5.3 PHILANTHROPY

5.3.1 Alumni Engagement and Volunteering

- The Q3 communications review showed substantive above-sector alumni engagement levels for emails and e-news relating to PGT recruitment, PGR scholarships (MDH), REF results, Graduate Outcomes survey and a welcome to new postgraduate alumni.
- The programme of large scale in-person engagement activities has now recommenced. The flagship House of Lords event, hosted by Lord Blunkett, was attended by 160 alumni and guests, including several prospective major donors.

Financial year	Planning phase			Volunteering hours in planning phase	Planning phase forecast
	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021		
Volunteering hours (alumni and friends)*	12,500	9,000	12,000 (10,000)	33,500	29,500

Volunteering hours (students)**	8,700	27,700	20,500 (10,000)	56,900	46,500
	21,200	36,700	32,500 (20,000)	90,400	76,000

Financial year	Private phase		Volunteering hours in private phase	Private phase forecast	Total hours to date	Campaign target
	2021/22	2022/23				
Volunteering hours (alumni and friends)*	7,400 (12,000)	(15,000)	7,400	27,000	40,900	80,000
Volunteering hours (students)**	16,700 (20,000)	(20,000)	16,700	40,000	73,600	120,000
	24,100 (32,000)	(35,000)	24,100	67,000	114,500	200,000

* 'Friends' are defined as non-alumni who are not TUoS staff.

** Data on student volunteer hours covers the period 01.08.18 – 31.03.22. Further data on student volunteer hours will be included in subsequent reports as it becomes available.

- The Firm, a new alumni-supported initiative that helps Law students learn more about legal careers was launched in March. This is part of The Susan Crosbie Leaders in Law Programme, made possible thanks to a gift in memory from an alumnus.
- The final [Coach Cafe](#) online networking event for 2021/22 was held at the end of April for the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health. In total, 6 events were run throughout the year, with 360 students connecting with 130 alumni volunteers from all over the world. Coach Café is part of the [Law Family Ambition Programme](#).
- The flagship London City Connections and [Northern City Connections](#) projects were both delivered in person, together with the Faculties of Social Science and Arts & Humanities. 75 students from widening participation backgrounds took part in the visits and activities, and met alumni from a range of professions.
- The University-wide e-Mentoring spring 2022 scheme matched 223 students to alumni mentors, for email, phone and online mentoring sessions between March and May. A total of 451 students benefited from alumni guidance throughout the entire academic year.

6. FINANCE

6.1 RESEARCH

6.1.1 Research Awards

- The total value of new awards for the last 12 months to the end of February 2022 now stand at £177.3m. This is a decrease of £1m (0.6%) on February 2021.
- There has been a fall in the total number of awards opened. For the last 12 months to the end of February 2022, the number of new awards opened stood at 913 compared to 959 as at February 2021. There have been increases in the number of Overseas (Non EU Framework) (50) and Industry awards (22) but the number of RCUK awards has fallen by 76. The reason for this is that there

were 50 additional RCUK awards providing further funding and extensions to projects affected by COVID within the February 21 figures which are not included in the February 22 numbers. The number of EU Framework awards is also lower by 31. The transition from the old Horizon 2020 to the new Horizon Europe framework scheme is delaying new awards.

- The value of new awards for the 12 months to February 22 has seen the biggest increases in the value of UK Government and Overseas awards which increased by £10.2m and £6.4m respectively. There are 2 awards for over £6m in the UK Government awards in the 12 month to February 22 figures. The value of EU Framework awards has however fallen by £14.7m. There have been 8 new awards for over £1m in the 2 months since the last report, the largest of these was £1.8m. Two of these awards are from the Wellcome Trust and two from EPSRC.
- The value of the Research Net Contribution is £42.6m for the 12 months to February 2022 compared to £44.4m for the 12 months to February 2021 a decrease of £2m (4.1%).
- As of February 2022, research grants work in progress (research order book) which excludes capital projects, stands at £341.9m which is an increase of £9.3m on the work in progress figure of £332.6m recorded in February 2021.

7. LEGAL AND REGULATORY MATTERS

7.1 REPORTABLE EVENTS

- There have been no reportable events notified to the OfS in the period since the previous report to Senate.