

The Senate, 25 June 2025

President & Vice-Chancellor's Report

Main 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. Where appropriate, reference is made to other papers that appear separately on the Senate agenda. The report now comprises two parts, the main report and a supplementary report with additional information and updates, available in the Reading Room.

1 EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

1.1 Government Spending Review prioritises economy, security and health; opportunities for the University to make the case for our contribution and a sustainable funding settlement framed around these themes. Higher education funding expected to be aligned with government priorities going forward.

- The government's [Spending Review](#) set day-to-day spending budgets up to 2028/29 and investment budgets up to 2029/30 for departments, prioritising investment in health, security and the economy. There are opportunities for the University in areas where our research, innovation and education strengths align with government priorities, including defence, clean energy, digital and tech, engineering and health disciplines, as well as using these objectives to make arguments for investment in areas/activity that contributes to them.
- The detail is being examined and priorities within departmental budgets will emerge over the months and years ahead, but core university funding is expected to be reduced. It is anticipated non-school budgets in the Department for Education will face cuts (i.e. higher education via the Strategic Priorities Grant). Although spending on R&D will be flat in real terms, core research budgets (i.e. the Research Councils) are expected to be reduced, with more funding directed towards government priorities, namely Industrial Strategy sectors (advanced manufacturing, clean energy, life sciences, defence, digital and technologies, creative industries, financial services and professional and business services).
- A tuition fee increase (or freeze) from 2026 onwards may accompany the post-16 skills/HE reform announcements expected later in the summer, alongside expectations of the sector in the five [priority areas set out by the Education Secretary](#) (economic growth, civic contribution, access and outcomes for disadvantaged students, teaching quality and

efficiency and reform). The reform measures are expected to include greater alignment between higher education funding and economic growth, in particular meeting the skills needs of Industrial Strategy sectors. This has already been seen, for example, with the cut to the [Strategic Priorities Grant \(SPG\) for 2025/26](#), within which there will be focus on high-cost subjects in strategically important subjects - nursing, midwifery and allied health and very high-cost STEM subjects, and plans to reform the SPG from 2026/27 onwards so that high-cost funding is better aligned with the Industrial Strategy.

- The University's approach to engagement with policy makers around funding and other policy announcements will focus on our contribution to the government's missions, particularly economic growth, and the policy decisions needed to achieve this.

1.2 Plans in the government's Immigration White Paper will not negatively impact higher education as much as feared; we are working to make the case for how international student fees are invested in government priorities.

- The government's [Immigration White Paper](#) will have implications for the recruitment of both international students and international staff but the impact will not be as severe as some in the sector had feared. This should be recognised and welcomed, following activity by the University with [businesses](#), MPs and sector lobbying. We are working to further influence the development of the proposals contained within the White Paper. Specifically, new measures on international student compliance were proposed. These would not adversely affect the University as we are already compliant with the proposed new requirements. However, we will undertake work to explore whether all the measures that the government has committed to, to root out abuse within the student immigration system will achieve this aim. If not, we anticipate that further measures will be introduced in the future.
- The duration of the [Graduate visa](#) route, which allows international students to remain in the UK after completing their studies, will be reduced from 2 years to 18 months. PhD students will continue to be able to stay in the UK for 3 years. We are assessing how the UK's offer compares to our competitors, particularly in light of measures our competitors are introducing to reduce their own levels of migration.
- The White Paper also proposed a level on international student tuition fees which, if realised, is likely to have financial consequences for the University. We will use the levy proposal as an opportunity to demonstrate how the cross-subsidy from international student tuition fees is already used to contribute to the government objectives, notably economic growth, but also its missions on the NHS and widening opportunities for domestic students. This will help to demonstrate how migration benefits the UK and pave the way for the possibility of more positive, or at least less harmful, interventions going forward.

1.3 Professor Edward Peck, the outgoing Nottingham Trent Vice-Chancellor will become Chair of the Office for Students on 7 July; changes expected to the regulator and the sector more broadly, but no additional funding.

- Although the Office for Students (OfS) has recently published [a strategy for consultation for 2025-30](#), changes to that strategy and the focus of the regulator are expected. As noted above, the Education Secretary has said she will set out plans for reform of the higher education sector this summer and [incoming OfS Chair, Professor Peck](#), has [expressed his intention](#) to further his 'knowledge of the legal framework within which regulation of higher education takes place'. [OfS Board papers](#) show that the regulator is

working on legislation with the Department for Education and the Secretary of State has confirmed [regulation of franchised providers will be strengthened in legislation](#), in light of a [Times investigation into student loan fraud](#). The government is looking to make its investment in higher education deliver more on access and economic growth in particular, as well as wanting the regulator and universities to focus on financial sustainability.

1.4 Office for Students fines University of Sussex over free speech; the University is preparing for implementation of the Free Speech Act on 1 August.

- The OfS has [fined](#) the University of Sussex for breaches of the existing free speech regulatory regime and decision-making that breached good governance principles ([the OfS decision](#) states that bodies without the delegated authority at the university took decisions on policies).
- The University's Free Speech Group, chaired by Professor Mary Vincent, is overseeing a review of internal policies in light of the OfS' decision, as well as finalising preparations for the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act that will begin to come into force on 1 August. Last year the government [paused](#) implementation of the Act. The Education Secretary subsequently [announced](#) that parts of the Act will come into force, with others either amended or removed. The right to sue universities and regulate students' unions will be removed from the Act, although the legislative timetable for making these changes has not been confirmed.

1.5 UK-EU deal; Erasmus+ commitment could further squeeze education budgets but will not be imminent; there could be opportunities for the University from both access to EU defence programmes and the UK's Strategic Defence Review.

- A [deal was announced at last month's UK-EU Summit](#) with implications for a range of areas including defence, youth mobility and trade but with details to either be confirmed or negotiated.
- The UK and EU [committed](#) to 'work towards a balanced youth experience scheme' that would be open to young people from the UK and EU to participate in a range of activities including work and study for a time limited period, with the total number of participants subject to mutual agreement. A commitment was also made to work towards the UK's association to the Erasmus+ programme, something UUK called for last year in its [Blueprint for Change](#). That said, both mobility issues are understood to be driven by demand from the EU side. Although there had been [media speculation](#) that EU students may be eligible for home student tuition fees, no reference was made to this in the deal.
- The potential for UK association to Erasmus+ raises questions about how this will be funded. Given it may be prioritised by the government, as a tool to unlock agreement in other areas of benefit to the economy, it will likely see Education (and other) budgets squeezed further (as referenced in the Spending Review story above), despite the commitment to only associate "[on significantly improved financial terms.](#)"
- A new Security and Defence Partnership was also agreed, which the UK government has [said](#) would 'pave the way' for the UK's defence industry to participate in the EU's proposed £150 bn Security Action for Europe (SAFE) defence fund (loan programme), and could therefore provide opportunities for University R&D activity. Progress on this is expected to be quicker than other areas, given the desire to get the loan programme up and running. [South Yorkshire Mayor Oliver Coppard has written to the Defence and Business Secretaries,](#)

citing the University's strengths in this regard, asking the Ministers to meet with him to discuss.

- The [UK's Strategic Defence Review](#) (SDR), separate from the UK-EU deal, also provides potential opportunities for University R&D activity. This includes an announcement of a Defence Research and Evaluation Organisation, a new UK Defence Innovation Organisation and emphasis on R&D voices 'at the top table' in the Ministry of Defence, and close work with a small number of trusted universities.'

1.6 Government scheme to register foreign influence to come into force on 1 July.

- The government has published [guidance for academia and the research sector](#) on requirements coming into force on 1 July around registering certain activities 'directed by a foreign power'. For countries under the 'enhanced tier' (Russia and Iran so far), these activities include hosting conferences, undertaking research projects and sending information.
- The University is working through the implications, including with sector colleagues. The government is under pressure from the Conservative Party to place China in the 'enhanced tier' but has so far resisted doing so.

2 EDUCATION

2.1 DELIVERY OF THE PORTFOLIO

2.1.1 Admissions

- Early pre-Clearing forecast intake models suggest that we will be under target for undergraduate overseas, postgraduate home / overseas and likely to meet, or slightly exceed, our undergraduate home target with careful management of decision making during confirmation and clearing.
- The current forecast intake position for undergraduate home reflects the continued recovery of market share with an overall increase in applications, offers and accepts compared to this point last year. UCAS in-cycle data further illustrates this shift with the University seeing an increase in UK applications against sector and competitor group declines.
- The international forecast intake at both undergraduate and postgraduate illustrates the emergence of multiple sector wide challenges in market behaviour and international student mobility this year.
- Scenario planning is taking place with key stakeholders from Faculty, Marketing, Recruitment, Admissions & Communications (MARC), Global Engagement and Strategic Planning & Change to model expected intake against a set of confirmation principles designed to maximise intake from our current offer pool and carefully manage where we may need to recruit through Clearing.
- The overarching approach to confirmation and clearing this year will be to maximise acceptance from our current applicant/offer pool, aligned with University student population objectives and focused on maintaining overall student attainment levels upon entry in order to protect University reputation, market position and overall student experience, progression and outcomes.

2.1.3 Recruitment, Events & Marketing

Undergraduate

- National Careers Week was a huge focus in March and the team delivered 46 events or visits, collecting 1347 leads.
- Our online UG subject tasters ran from March to May. These sessions were aimed at prospective students considering their UG subject choices. For the first time, a number of subject tasters were repeated where relevant to appeal to audiences overseas in different time zones.
- Combined attendance for the first 3 Offer Holder Day events for 2025 entry stands at 3676 students, which is 96 (3%) up on last year. The final in person event was in April and the online offer holder spotlight event opened for overseas offer holders on April 7.
- Following UEB's approval in May, we are implementing a late cycle awareness campaign to increase late-cycle international undergraduate (UGO) applications and maximise the conversion of existing offer holders to registered students. This will include direct emails to prospective students registered with UCAS, advertising to retarget overseas audiences who have already visited our UG online prospectus. It also includes broader marketing activity using our owned channels and networks.
- The Facebook offer holder community group brings together all offer holders into one community for the first time. We have 2.6k members approved and 300+ posts shared across Home and International offer holders.

2026 entry

- Bookings for pre-application UGH open days for the 2026 entry are already substantially ahead of last year (the third year on year increase). June and July bookings are up by 1,400+ prospective students so far, as of 6th June, compared to the same last year.
- We continue to see strong performance from the undergraduate acquisition campaign. So far, it has generated 43m impressions and 136k clicks. We are seeing CTRs of well over benchmark for both Performance Max (22.21%) and Search (36.61%). The campaign has generated 1,023 of the open day bookings to date adding to those taken via leads captured through schools, UCAS Fairs and other activities.
- Preparation is well underway for the 2025 Teachers and Advisors Conference in collaboration with Sheffield Hallam University, taking place at The Wave on Friday 27th June. There are currently 84 sign-ups representing all regions of England, with 2-weeks to go until bookings close.

Postgraduate

- Our campaign raising awareness of our PGT offer continues with 1 million prospective PGT students reached. Our pilot UG - PGT progression event, "Explore Studying a Masters", targeted at current students saw 107 students attend. Overall, we are aiming to improve PGT progression from 8% to 15%.
- PGR recruitment was supported with a paid advertising campaign to support the Doctoral Landscape Award (DLA) grant from Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) resulting in 1 million impressions and 898 applications submitted whilst the campaign was live.

- Our PGT progression online event opened on Friday 23 May 2025. This event will take place w/c 14 July; the week following the publication of exam results and the week before Graduation.

2.1.4 School medium-term strategic planning

- The majority of Schools (all Phase 1 and some Phase 2) have drafted new medium-term plans, targets and risk registers. These plans outline the vision for each School over the next three years and will be used to prioritise activity and workload during the period. UEB consider and approved the draft plans over the course of April and May. The remaining Phase 2 School plans will be agreed by the end of the calendar year.

2.1.5 Student Centred Timetabling

- Improvements to institutional timetabling will be made in time for the 2025/26 timetabling cycle. A number of student-centric changes will be made that will, in many cases, better balance teaching across the week, reduce clashes and provide students earlier sight of the timetable than in previous years. Staff responsible for timetabling will be better supported, as consistent structures and job descriptions are implemented as part of the wider PS restructure, going live on 1st September. Transition planning is underway to support staff as they move into these roles.

2.1.6 Apprenticeships

- Achievement Rates

The Department for Education has released the [apprenticeship achievement rates for 2023/24](#). The University has achieved significantly higher attainment grades against the national benchmark and is joint 3rd amongst the Russell Group (with the University of Exeter).

- Office for Students End-Point Assessment Quality Assurance Visit

The Office for Students (OfS) carried out an Apprenticeship end-point assessment external quality assurance monitoring check on 15th May 2025. The OfS spoke to current and graduated apprentices, employers and the teaching teams. A draft report has been shared with the Vice Chancellor's office and is currently being reviewed before it will be finalised and released.

2.1.7 New online hubs for BAME students and Muslim students

- Two new online hubs have been developed through extensive research into the needs and challenges of [BAME](#) and [Muslim](#) students in higher education and co-created with students. They provide information, advice, and guidance for BAME and Muslim students—both within the University and across the city. This initiative is a significant step forward, aligning with 4 out of 5 objectives in the Access and Participation Plan as well as meeting the TEF, race equality and religion and belief action plans.

2.2 DIGITAL EXPERIENCE

2.2.1 The Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)

- Implementation has made significant progress with all Blackboard Ultra courses for 2024/25 now live. Currently, 22% of modules have been transitioned to the new system with rollout for 2025/26 continuing as planned. Student feedback has been

overwhelmingly positive, particularly regarding quizzes, progress tracking features, and overall ease of use.

2.2.2 SRMA Digital Enablement

- This has delivered a new enquiry management solution (launched January 2025) replacing an outdated and soon to be unsupported system. This upgrade enables better tracking of enquiries and responses with improved data collection supporting comprehensive dashboard reporting. All remaining functions are targeted to transition to the Salesforce platform before June 2025.

3 RESEARCH

3.1 RESEARCH EXCELLENCE

3.1.1 Research Development

- Department for Science Innovation and Technology R&D budget

Department for Science Innovation and Technology (DSIT) has announced its R&D budget for 2025/26; its overall budget at £20.4bn is as announced in the autumn budget. UKRI, the biggest funder of research at Sheffield (and many other HEIs) has seen a very small decrease, with individual councils seeing either small increases or decreases. We are likely to see less funding for Overseas Development Aid research. DSIT are engaging with HEIs (via Vice President Research & Innovation and their equivalent) over additional funding opportunities for R&D.

Fusion Engineering CDT

- The University has secured a £9.5 million award - in conjunction with the Universities of Manchester, Liverpool and Birmingham - to set up a Fusion Engineering Centre for Doctoral Training (CDT). The University will receive £2.1m income from the UK Atomic Energy Authority plus industrial match investment, with around £6.5m of industrial match (approx. 50% cash) having already been secured across the consortium. The CDT will equip the next generation of graduates with the skills to design, build, operate, maintain and decommission fusion energy power plants such as the next generation (STEP) reactor prototype that is being constructed in West Burton, for which we are the closest Russell Group university. This award helps us to cement our position as a leader in fusion engineering.

3.1.2 IT

- For High-Performance Computing, the Research IT team has negotiated additional hosting capacity at no extra cost, representing future savings exceeding £400,000 per year. Additionally, 20 new high-end GPUs for AI and machine learning research have been procured to complement the existing 88 GPUs, becoming available to researchers at no point-of-use cost once additional hosting space is ready before June 2025.

3.1.3 Communications

- Research led by Dr Nicholas Farr, from the School of Chemical, Materials and Biological Engineering, which revealed the failings of the material at the centre of the vaginal mesh scandal, received widespread coverage including in [The Independent](#), [The Daily Mail](#) and [The Irish News](#).

- Runway Park, a development designed to attract investment, create high-quality jobs, and accelerate economic growth, was covered extensively in the media including [Business Desk](#), [Insider Media](#), [Ground News](#), [Yorkshire Post](#) and [Sheffield Star](#).
- The [Wall Street Journal](#) covered research into how electrical fields could prevent cancer cells from repairing.
- Dr Susan Oman, from the School of Information, Journalism and Communication, did an in-depth interview on the [BBC's Science Cafe](#) to discuss the impact of AI on society and her research into public attitudes towards the technology.
- Dr Jennifer MacRitchie, from the School of Languages, Arts and Societies, was featured on [BBC News](#) for her research into how music can help people with dementia, including a new film she has helped to produce with AgeUK to tackle dementia stereotypes.
- The University's role in the world's first mission to map the globe's forests in 3D from space, in order to inform climate change policies and protect future generations was featured in [The Telegraph](#), [The Times](#), [Washington Post](#), [ITV News](#) and [BBC World Service](#), amongst others.
- Professor Katie Field, from the School of Biosciences, was featured in [The Daily Mirror](#) and on [BBC Radio 4's Science Roundup](#) in relation to her research on the complexities of fungi. The Radio 4 programme has a high academic listenership, supporting strategic work to boost peer-to-peer academic recognition for league table rankings.
- Following sustained media coverage of the University's research into sustainable aviation fuels (SAF), the Taiwan Institute of Economic Research (TIER) have invited SAF experts from the University to take part in an international expert event that will help inform TIER's approach to SAF research and development.
- Professor Zoe Marshman from the University's School of Clinical Dentistry was invited to speak at an All-Party Parliamentary Committee regarding children's oral health as a direct result of the team's extensive media coverage regarding her work.
- Research between academics in the School of Computer Science and AstraZeneca, which has developed [AI to accelerate medicine development](#), is one of the most cited research papers in the journal *Nature Machine Intelligence* for 2023, following widespread media coverage generated by the Media and PR Team.

4 INNOVATION

4.1 GLOBAL AND REGIONAL ENGAGEMENT

4.1.1 Knowledge Exchange and Partnerships

- [The University's Economic and Social Impact](#)

We published the findings from work commissioned from London Economics on the University's [Economic and Social Impact](#) on 27 March. We have worked hard to finalise the report, ensuring the key messages we wanted to see are clear and impactful, including the production of additional visuals and material to make the technical report more relatable to our partners.

The headline numbers speak for themselves – the University's economic impact (£4.8bn) is more than Sheffield's manufacturing, health, and information and communications sectors combined, and the University supports 23,000 jobs in the UK. In addition, the report includes some powerful case studies and also shines a light on the University's impressive social impact. This speaks very strongly to the work around the University's reputation.

4.1.2 Global Engagement

- Inbound Visit: IIT Bombay

Global Engagement and the Faculty of Engineering hosted visitors from IIT Bombay on Tuesday 18 February. This provided a useful opportunity to follow-up on the in-person workshop (attended by CMBE and EEE) in India on 30 - 31 January. The visit enabled colleagues to discuss next steps for the partnership, including which areas of collaboration will be branched into next. The visit resulted in successful exploration with colleagues in Computer Science, including the areas of Health, AI, and Data Science. This is being followed-up by an in-person visit to IIT Bombay by the Head of School of Computer Science, Professor Heidi Christensen. In the interim, CMBE have hosted several visiting researchers from IIT Bombay, and are working with GE to organise several workshops in Battery Modelling, Hydrogen and Steel with counterparts at IIT Bombay.

4.2 ADVANCED MANUFACTURING GROUP

4.2.1 Training Centre

- The University has been shortlisted in the SY Apprenticeship Awards for Provider of the Year - 4 apprentices have also been shortlisted for ENG/Man Apprentice of the Year.
- A positive meeting with senior E.ON staff last week who are now taking on 2 degree and 3 level 3 apprentices in September. This is 3 more than originally planned. They see us as very much part of their collaboration in the region.
- The Children's Hospital Charity has asked our welding apprentices to design new snowflakes for their Attercliffe site. They will be working alongside Finally Agency and MTA.

5. ONE UNIVERSITY

5.1 NEW CHANCELLOR

- The new Chancellor Andy Haldane takes over on 26th November. The formal installation of our new Chancellor is being planned to take place in January as part of the winter graduation ceremonies.

6. FINANCE

6.1 WORKFORCE

6.1.1 Industrial Action (Local)

- Following a productive meeting with the Sheffield branch of the University and College Union (UCU), we were notified that planned industrial action had been called off with immediate effect. HR colleagues and the Vice-Chancellor met with the union in May to discuss the ongoing industrial action, which began on 30 April. The University offered to commit to making no compulsory redundancies as a result of organisational restructures this calendar year, as well as a number of other commitments. The UCU consulted with their members at a branch meeting on Thursday (8 May) and held a vote on whether to accept the University's offer. Following that vote, the University was informed that the planned industrial action had been called off and no further action will be taken during the existing ballot mandate, which ends on 30 September 2025. Members have also agreed to the University's proposal not to deduct pay for the action taken to date, provided staff replaced any teaching or education lost to strike action and, where

possible, made up any other work missed or disrupted. Details regarding the industrial action, including the full offer made to UCU, can be found on our [industrial action web pages](#). We remain firmly committed to avoiding compulsory redundancies where possible in future and to continuing open and constructive talks with our campus trade unions to build a positive and sustainable future.

6.1.2 Professional Services Framework Review Launch

- On 19 March 2025 the University started a formal consultation process on proposed school structures for Professional Services and core funded technical teams across all of our 21 schools, as well as on proposals for the formation of faculty level structures across a number of PS functions. In line with our agreed procedures for restructuring, the consultation period ran for 90 days, ending on 17 June 2025. 779 staff are in scope for one of the five restructures and have been issued with a change pack containing information on the proposals and details of the impact on them individually. All staff in scope have been offered an individual consultation meeting with a manager and member of HR. Weekly collective consultation meetings are being held with the Campus Trade Unions to discuss the proposals and how these will be implemented.
- As part of our ongoing commitment to avoiding compulsory redundancies, it has been agreed that the University will offer voluntary severance to specific groups of staff in scope of the consultations. The scheme terms remain unchanged from those of the voluntary severance scheme which closed at the beginning of the year, with staff eligible to receive a payment equivalent to one month's pay for each completed year of service, up to a maximum of 9 months pay.

6.2 RESEARCH AWARDS

- The total value of new awards for the last 12 months to the end of February 2025 is now £177m, a rise of £2m compared to £175m in February 2024.
- There has been a decrease in the total number of awards - for the 12 months to the end of February 2025, the number of new awards opened is 853 compared to 871 as at February 2024. There has been a fall in the number of RCUK awards by 46 to 160 in the last 12 months whilst the number of Charity awards has decreased by 18 in the 12 months to February 2025 compared with February 2024. The Number of UK Government awards has increased by 45 primarily because of new Catapult Projects.
- The value of new awards for the 12 months to February 2025 is showing the biggest rise in UK Government awards which has increased by £6m to £60m. The value of Industry and Overseas & Other awards have both risen by £4m to £9m and £16m respectively. However, the value of RCUK awards has fallen by £6m to £56m.
- Excluding Capital Projects, as of February 2025 in addition to the above figures, £72m awards have had notification of being successful, as compared to £65m in February 2024.
- In the 2 months since the last report, there have been 6 new awards for over £1m, the largest of these was for £3m awarded by EPSRC to the Faculty of Engineering
- The value of the Research Net Contribution is £46m for the 12 months to February 2025 compared to £44m for the 12 months to February 2024 an increase of £2m (5%).
- As of February 2025, research grants work in progress (research order book) which excludes capital projects, stands at £350m which is an increase of £13m on the work in progress figure of £337m recorded in February 2024.

7. LEGAL AND REGULATORY MATTERS

7.1 REPORTABLE EVENTS

- Since the previous report to Senate was circulated there have been no reportable events notified to the OfS.

The Senate, 25 June 2025

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Supplementary Report

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1. EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

- No Supplementary content.

2. EDUCATION

2.1 DELIVERY OF THE PORTFOLIO

2.1.1 Student Mental Health, Counselling and Therapies Service

- Following the retirement of Louise Knowles (Head of Counselling), Bryan Coleman (Head of Disability & Dyslexia Support Service - DDSS) will take on the combined leadership of both DDSS and the Student Mental Health Counselling, Therapies and Wellbeing Service from 1 May 2025.

2.1.2 Projects and strategic change

- International Working

From 1 May 2025 the new University-wide approvals process, forms and guidance will come into effect to replace all existing local processes. The university recognises that International working exposes individuals and the University to risks and obligations that are not present when working in the UK - there are a number of risks including risks around tax, employment law, health and safety, security etc and therefore it is essential we achieve compliance around the International Working policy which was published in January 2025.

New standardised processes have been developed to be used across faculties to maximise compliance with the new policy.

3. RESEARCH

- No Supplementary content.

4. INNOVATION

4.1 GLOBAL AND REGIONAL ENGAGEMENT

4.1.1 Regional Engagement

- As part of our public and regional engagement agenda we ran another successful May Fayre in Western Park engaging over 10,000 members of our local community. The University of Sheffield Innovation District, Runway Park, was launched at UKREiiF in Leeds in May - the project has been branded to give maximum exposure for the University.

4.1.2 Global Engagement

- Worldwide Universities Network

Global Engagement recently completed the annual Worldwide Universities Network Member Engagement Report. The report is a valuable opportunity to monitor, continually improve, and articulate our engagement in WUN. University of Sheffield researchers are currently active in 25 project teams, 6 as principal investigator. In 2024, the total amount of funding catalysed by WUN collaboration by Sheffield researchers was over £441,798.

- Partnership Development Fund

Global Engagement's Partnership Development Fund is supporting collaborative projects between the University of Sheffield and strategic international partners. Funding supports collaborative projects between the University of Sheffield and counterparts from eligible university-level strategic international partner institutions in the categories of research, mobility and educational funding. Another 14 projects were funded in the second round of the programme, with a total of 33 projects supported this academic year.

5. ONE UNIVERSITY

5.1 COLLABORATE AND SUPPORTIVE CULTURE

5.1.1 Senior Recruitment

- **Interim VP and Head of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities**

Following an internal selection process, Professor Graham Gee has been appointed as successor to Professor Susan Fitzmaurice on an interim basis. Professor Gee will formally start the role after Professor Fitzmaurice steps down on 31 August 2025 and will be working with colleagues in the Faculty to ensure a smooth transition during the remainder of the current academic year. Professor Gee is currently Faculty Director of Education, Social Sciences and Chair in Public Law within the School of Law.

- **Leverhulme International Professor (Mathematical & Physical Sciences)**

Professor Albrecht Klemm was appointed on 1 March 2025. Professor Klemm will be contracted on a fixed term, funded basis to 28 February 2030, when it is expected he will

transition to an open-ended role. Professor Klemm previously worked as a Professor at the University of Bonn, Germany, in their Physics Institute.

5.1.2 Digital

- Information Management efforts have yielded tangible cost savings, including a reduction in Google data storage by 250TB (saving £34,000 annually) and temporary quota reductions for 250 users. Skills improvement workshops have been delivered to 40 colleagues in Medicine and Population Health, with enhanced guidance developed for all staff.
- A critical SAP Enterprise Resource Planning review has been initiated, as the current version will be unsupported by 2027, potentially putting core Finance and HR operations at risk. Findings from commissioned third-party expertise will be presented to the IT Sub Group in April 2025, with UEB presentation to follow.
- The eRecruitment implementation (SAP SuccessFactors) has delivered 416 hours of time savings across 9.4 FTE positions. The system's improved usability has streamlined recruitment processes, while DocuSign integration (digital signature solution) has accelerated contract signing. Applicant queries have decreased by approximately 50%, allowing the team to focus on other priority areas.

5.2 PHILANTHROPY

5.2.1 Milestones and Significant Developments

- International alumni engagement: Two successful alumni events were held in Beijing and Shanghai at the end of March with ~200 alumni attending each event. The Vice-Chancellor hosted both events alongside Andrew Harris and the alumni group leads. Dinners were held with each of the China alumni group leads to understand more about how we can support our Chinese alumni and recruitment activities.
- International recruitment support. Around 100 international alumni, including those based in priority countries such as the US, India and Indonesia, expressed interest in supporting the Sheffield Live Alumni Panels this year. 20 of these were selected to support the 4 offer holder panel events in April and May. Up to date employment details collected from alumni respondents will also support employability activity. Alumni have continued to support in-country offer-holder events in key target markets.
- Campaign launch: 'In Conversation....' style events were held with Alumnus and Nobel Prize winner Sir Richard Roberts (New York) and British Council / Study UK Global Award winner Dr Emily Rickman (San Francisco) in early May to launch the 'Forged in Sheffield' campaign to alumni and friends in the US. Both events were hosted by Professor Tony Ryan, with engagement from the University of Sheffield in America Foundation Board.
- Reputation and rankings: Dr Emily Rickman repeated her 'In Conversation...' event in Sheffield in mid-May where 150 alumni and friends of the University attended, Emily was interviewed by her former lecturer Prof. Simon Goodwin, Professor of Theoretical Astrophysics. Whilst in Sheffield, she also took part in a number of activities supporting employability and recruitment work as well as reputation work to promote the value for alumni to enter the Study UK awards.

- **Widening Access:** The University's Ambition Programme received a special commendation from the National Education Opportunities Network (NEON) at its annual awards ceremony in June, hosted at Westminster by Dr Adam Thompson MP. The Programme is wholly funded by a generous donation from the Law Family Charitable Foundation.
- **One University:** Over 400 staff and alumni have signed-up to participate or volunteer in The Big Walk 2025 on 27th June 2025.
- **One University:** This month sees the launch of the brand new Alumni Story Bank, a central hub for inspiring alumni case studies. For the first time, staff can easily access up-to-date stories, complete with images and consent. This new resource will significantly boost student recruitment and employability efforts across the university.

5.2.2 Alumni Engagement and Volunteering

	Volunteer hours (target)		Total hours to date	Campaign Forecast
Financial Year	2023/2024	2024/2025		
Volunteer hours**	14,971 (15,000)	5,892 (13,000)	87,171	109,279
Volunteer hours (students)***	42,027 (20,000)	16,032 (20,000)	185,080	209,048
	56,998 (35,000)	21,924 (33,000)	272,251	318,327

** Figures have been updated to include hours contributed by Alumni and friends. 'Friends' are defined as non-alumni who are not TUoS staff.

*** Data on student volunteer hours covers the period 01.08.18 – 15.04.25. Further data on student volunteer hours will be included in subsequent reports as it becomes available.

- **Graduate employability:** On 12 March, **London City Connections** celebrated its 10th anniversary, empowering 800+ students with career insights from 600 alumni over the last decade. This year, 60 ambitious Arts and Humanities and Social Science students from widening participation backgrounds gained exclusive access to businesses hosted by industry leaders Lorna Wilson (EssenceMedia), Wayne Garvie (Sony Pictures Television), and Jerome Frost (Arup), and enjoyed a networking event with 100+ alumni, students and staff.
- **Graduate employability:** Mirroring the same successful model, **Northern City Connections** engaged another 60 students on 26 March, showcasing Northern businesses and careers. They visited Manchester Science and Industry Museum, the City Council, and DLA Piper, networking with successful alumni.
- **Graduate employability:** **Coach Café** delivered two impactful virtual sessions in the spring semester, connecting 113 current students with 45 UK based and global alumni. Spotlighting the public and non profit sectors, as well as careers in engineering and science, this Law Family Ambition Programme funded initiative provides crucial career insights to students across all faculties.

- We also hosted a **Coach Café** for recent graduates on 15 May, with the support of 57 alumni coaches. The event was a huge success, with experienced alumni offering invaluable guidance, encouragement, and inspiration to help new graduates build their confidence and expand their networks.
- *Alumni Engagement.* Over 120 alumni attended a reception and private viewing at the new Anatomy exhibition at the Western Bank Library on 27 March. This was the first in a new initiative to bring more alumni onto campus. The invitation proved so popular that the event had to be split into two viewings.
- *Alumni Engagement:* Hosted by Lord Blunkett, 160 alumni gathered in the Cholmondeley Room of the **House of Lords** on 14 May to network with each other and to hear about University plans and progress. This year's focus was Student Success, one of the three Forged in Sheffield campaign themes. The annual paid event was again a sell-out with over 1,000 alumni entering the ballot for tickets.
- *Alumni engagement:* On 2 May over 100 supporters gathered on campus for our annual **supporter celebration event** to recognise the incredible contributions of our volunteers, donors and legacy pledgers. It was a wonderful evening filled with inspiring stories from students whose lives have been transformed by alumni support. We announced the Volunteer of the Year Award, and shared exciting updates on our Forged in Sheffield, Shaping the Future campaign.
- *Alumni engagement:* 74 alumni and friends attended our first ever **Bright Minds Live** event in London on 5 June. The panel event chaired by Professor Tony Ryan, gave guests the opportunity to hear from three early careers researchers and generated a lively discussion into research that's set to make advancements in health, sustainability and artificial intelligence.

5.2.3 NAMRC

- The Nuclear Manufacturing Group (formerly Nuclear AMRC) are now integrated into the wider AMRC processes, work is ongoing to replace all visible branding within the facility. All stakeholders have been updated on the latest progress regarding the transition process. The building is currently going through the University process for being renamed and this should conclude in the coming weeks. The AMRC marketing team are in the process of releasing a number of external pieces relating to Nuclear manufacturing R&D capabilities across the AMRC.

5.2.4 AMRC

- The governance review recommendations are being implemented and the AMRC Governance Board has met for the last two months with some good progress. Dedicated procurement teams are in place, with contracts soon to follow. Progress is being made with EFM regarding service level agreements and major milestones.
- The AMRC has appointed Andy Silcox as Interim CTO. Andy has been with the AMRC for 6 years as Research Director in AMRC Cymru.

- Following the fire in the AMRC Press facility a team has been created consisting of AMRC staff, EFM, H+S and external insurance colleagues to facilitate the repair and recovery of the facility. Progress is good and equipment is being inspected shortly.
- The CR+D landscape is looking more difficult in the coming year as the public purse tightens, but commercial work across various sectors is looking more positive.
- The AMRC is now leading the nuclear sector approach work on behalf of the High Value Manufacturing Catapult and actively developing a sector plan with key objectives. Relations with Innovate UK in this area are strengthening.
- The AMRC continues to strengthen its ties with Rolls-Royce Small Modular Reactor with over £3m of commercial work live or recently completed. More interim work packages to come before a government decision in the summer from Great British Nuclear (GBN).
- Ben Morgan, Interim CEO, was asked to give evidence to a government select committee on Industrial Strategy at the end of April.

6. FINANCE

6.1.1 National Pay negotiations 2024/25

- The 2024/25 award remains in dispute with both UCU and UNISON. UNISON balloted at 76 institutions - not including Sheffield - and obtained a mandate for action at only 4 institutions and so have effectively dropped their dispute. UCU are yet to confirm details of further plans for a national ballot.

As a result, UCEA have confirmed that they will not take forward the planned joint work with the trade unions which included a review of the national pay spine, and joint work on contract types, workload and pay gaps.

Therefore, there is currently no national industrial action taking place across the sector.

6.1.2 National Pay negotiations 2025/26

- The University has continued to take part in national pay negotiations operated between UCEA, representing the collective HE employers, and the national trade union officers from UCU, UNISON, Unite and GMB (and EIS in Scotland).
- The 2025/26 pay negotiations have commenced and the national trade unions have submitted their full claim. This seeks an increase on all pay points of at least RPI (as at August 2025) + 3.5% (RPI is currently c3.4%), or a flat rate increase on each spine point of at least £2,500 (whichever is greater), a new minimum pay rate of £15 per hour, for all institutions to become VLW accredited employers and for all pay points below the VLW to be deleted and a commitment to an urgent and comprehensive reform of the New JNCHES pay spine and restore the other non-pay related joint work.
- Following negotiating meetings held between UCEA and the national trade unions in March, April and May, UCEA wrote to the trade unions with a final offer on 20 May 2025 of an uplift on each point on the New JNCHES pay spine of 1.4% from 1 August 2025. Full details of this offer can be found on the [UCEA webpages](#). The pay award will be effective from 1 August 2025.

7. LEGAL AND REGULATORY MATTERS

- No Supplementary content.