

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER

MEETING OF SENATE

Minutes of a meeting held on
Wednesday 4 October 2023 in Council Room 1 & 2, Fielding Johnson Building

Present:	Nishan Canagarajah (Chair)	
	Phil Baker	Ljiliana Marjanovic-Halburd
	Huw Barton	Jayne Marshall
	Prachi Bhatt	Catherine Morley
	Tilly Blyth	Henrietta O'Connor
	Steven Bull	Andre Ng
	John Challiss	Gemma Parker
	David Cousins	Gabrielle Provan
	Krista Cowman	Linda Ralphs
	Stewart Fishwick	Archie Robinson
	Ian Forristal	Tom Robinson
	Simon Gay	Jacqui Shaw
	Zoe Groves	Emma Sleath
	Pranabashis Haldar	Linda Smith
	Sandeep Handa	Alison Snape
	Liz Jones	Richard Thomas
	Dan Ladley	Geerten Vuister
	Sally Kyd	Steve Williams
	Eamonn Mallon	

In attendance: Alison Benson (Assistant Secretary), Geoff Green (Registrar and Secretary), and Joe Suffield (Governance Office)

Observers: None

Apologies for absence were received from Nuala Devlin, Elizabeth Draper, Mark Purnell, Teela Sanders, Simon Vaughan, David Wright

UNRESERVED BUSINESS

23/M16 WELCOME

The Vice-Chancellor welcomed Senators, attendees and observers to the meeting.

23/M17 STANDING BUSINESS

(a) Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

(b) Minutes of the Previous Meetings

Senate **approved** the minutes of the meeting held on 14 June 2023 as an accurate record, subject to amendments to the attendance list.

Senate **approved** the minutes of the decisions made by correspondence on 10 August 2023 as an accurate record.

(c) Matters Arising

Senate **noted** the responses to the matters arising.

Senate **noted** that discussions continued to take place about how to best resource and lead the ULIIHE.

23/M18 CHAIR'S BUSINESS

Update from President and Vice-Chancellor

The Vice-Chancellor provided a report on key developments within the wider HE sector and the University.

Senate **noted** that there had been a number of successful University events since the last Senate meeting which included graduations, clearing, registration and welcome week.

Senate **noted** the recent releases of league table results from various sources. Although they provided an insight into the position of the University, the metrics used changed frequently which impacted the consistency of the results.

Senate **noted** that the President and Vice-Chancellor had contributed to an article in Times Higher Education which proposed that the University should be admitted to the Russell Group based upon its metrics and performance.

Senate **noted** an update on higher education policy developments including Conservative Party Conference messaging on the removal of low value courses, proposed reductions in student numbers and an increase in apprenticeships. The University had hosted a fringe event on space science and industry at the Party Conference, and planned to host an event on healthcare forthcoming at the Labour Party Conference.

Senate **noted** that an inaugural leadership conference had taken place with colleagues from across the University. This had subsequently fed into the Council and Executive Board strategic away day.

Senate **noted** that proposals to form a strategic partnership with Apollo Hospitals Group in India were currently being considered. An overview of necessary governance approvals was given and it was noted that the appropriate academic governance routes would be followed for approval.

Chair's Action

Senate **noted** that Chair's Action had been taken to revoke an award for one student based on the recommendation of the Senate Student Discipline Committee.

23/M19 STRATEGIC BUSINESS TO CONSIDER

(a) Strategic Theme Update: World Changing Research

Senate **considered** an update on the World Changing Research theme of the University Strategy from Phil Baker, PVC Research. There had been a number of successes, including a record year for research awards and income, which had now returned to pre-pandemic levels. However, there remained some challenges, such as overdependence on some funders, an insufficient overall research contribution, the UKRI benchmark and the need

for reconfiguration to optimise access to Horizon Europe funds. The University would aim to focus on the growth of research income, an increase to research contribution, the improvement of the PGR experience and implementation of PRES Action Plans.

It was recognised these achievements would be challenging in a time of fiscal constraint. Senate **noted** that financial challenges may require difficult choices to be made in respect of research budgets. Therefore, it would be critical to increase contribution rates to capitalise on the University's strong research performance.

Senate **noted** the continued importance of building strategic relationships with funders. There had been increased engagement with research councils over the 2022/23 academic year, and the University needed to build on this foundation. Key funder working groups would help to share research councils' best practice.

Senate **noted** the importance of supporting the research community within the University, highlighting final-year PhD students.

(b) TEF Outcome [RESERVED]

Senate **considered** an update on the University's provisional outcome in TEF 2023, on which further representation had been made to the Office for Students ahead of confirmation of a final outcome. A further update would be given to Senate in due course and the provisional outcome remained strictly embargoed at this time. It was anticipated that a final outcome would be available by December 2023. Advice was given on how to answer staff, student and prospective student queries in the meantime.

(c) National Student Survey (NSS) 2023

Senate **considered** a presentation on the NSS 2023. It was highlighted that the survey methodology had changed significantly from the previous year, which meant that precise comparisons were difficult. The overall position for the University had improved, but this had largely come from a low base. The priority areas were outlined. Benchmarking had become increasingly important, and the University benchmark was low for the sector. Members were reminded that the NSS results would feed into metrics for the next TEF in due course. The University needed to improve consistency of quality and embed best practice.

Senate **noted** that the metrics were likely to improve within the lifetime of the current University strategy.

There was a request to share relevant NSS information as promptly as possible to support colleagues during open days which fell earlier in the cycle. Senate **noted** that it was important to provide clarity over the commentary that would accompany the data, to ensure clear and consistent messaging across the whole University.

(d) Students' Union Priorities 2023-24

The Students' Union President and Education Officer presented the Students' Union objectives for the 2023-24 year. The current vacancy for an SU Wellbeing Officer had resulted in that portfolio of work being temporarily absorbed by the other Officers.

Senate **noted** that UoL Unlocked was due to be made available during this academic year, and should become embedded going forward.

Senate **noted** the importance of sustainability to the work of the Students' Union, and the role they should play in supporting the wider University community to make an impact.

23/M20 SECRETARY'S BUSINESS

Senate **considered** a summary report of business items for approval.

Senate **approved** the following items:

1. Education Committee Terms of Reference
2. Research and Enterprise Committee Terms of Reference

Senate **noted** the following items:

1. Revocation of Senate Regulation 13

Senate **noted** a verbal update on the Effectiveness Review of Senate, with fieldwork due to take place in the Spring Term and a report to Senate in June 2024. Any changes would be implemented from 2024/25.

Senate **did not approve** all proposed changes to Senate Regulation 9. This was referred back to Postgraduate Research Subcommittee to clarify registration periods for part-time students. The proposed changes were approved in principle subject to the full final version of Regulation 9 being brought back to Senate for formal approval.

23/M21 REPORTED BUSINESS

Senate **considered** the following reports from Committees

a. Education Committee

Senate **noted** reports from the meetings of the Education Committee held on 20 June 2023 and 18 September 2023.

Senate **noted** the other business set out and **approved** the reports.

b. Research and Enterprise Committee

Senate **noted** the report from the meeting of the Research and Enterprise Committee held on 21 September 2023.

Senate **noted** the other business set out and **approved** the reports.

c. Senate Student Discipline Committee

Senate **noted** the report of the meeting of the Senate Student Discipline Committee held on 27 June 2023.

Senate **noted** the other business set out and approved the report.

d. Reputation, Recruitment and Performance Board

Senate **noted** the report of the meeting of the Reputation, Recruitment and Performance Board held on 5 September 2023.

Senate **noted** the other business set out and **approved** the report.

- e. University Officer appointments
Senate **noted** the senior recruitment update summary report.
- f. Programmes Approved and Withdrawn
Senate **noted** the report of programmes approved in principle, in full and those withdrawn since its last meeting.
- g. Outcomes of Senate Discipline Panels
Senate **received** the outcomes of recent Senate Student Discipline Panels.

23/M14 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

23/M15 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Senate **noted** the meeting dates scheduled for 2023-24 as follows:

- Wednesday 14 February 2024 at 2pm
- Wednesday 12 June 2024 at 2pm

CHAIR

Duration of meeting: 97 minutes