

Senate Wednesday 9 November 2022

Minutes

Present: Professor Jenny Higham (Chair), Professor Rachel Allen, Dr Jane Cronin-Davis, Elgin Edison, Professor Jon Friedland, Dr Ban Haider, Julie Hendry, Dr Vanessa Ho, Dr Carwyn Hooper, Jenny Laws, Karen Lobb-Rossini, Georga Longhurst, Dr Rosie MacLachlan, Professor Jane Saffell, Dr Philip Sedgwick, Dr Carol Shiels, Dr Jennifer Stott, Professor Katalin Török, Dr Andrew Walley, Professor Guy Whitley, Dr Ferran Valderrama.

In attendance: Derek Baldwinson, Sue David, Charlotte Martin, Susan McPheat, Emma Whitaker (clerk).

Apologies: Rob Churm, Professor Charlotte Clark, Professor Iain Beith, Dr Angela Kubacki, Professor Jodi Lindsay, Professor Julian Ma, Paul Ratcliffe, Dr Dean Semmens, Georgina Sims.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were noted as listed above.

2. Minutes

Considered and approved with no changes:

- (i) The minutes of the meeting held on 14 June 2022.

Senate/2022-23/ Paper 1A

- (ii) The minutes of the joint Senate and Executive Board meeting held on 5 July 2022.

Senate/2022-23/ Paper 1B

3. Matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting not covered elsewhere on the agenda

Reported:

Action 1: Membership, powers and responsibilities of Senate:

(i) *To review the Senate membership again next spring*

(ii) *That a further paper with recommendations be brought to the December joint Exec/Senate meeting.*

Update 09/11/22: That the working group met again in October 2022 with the new Director of Governance, Legal and Assurance Services (GLAS) and a paper will be prepared for the joint Executive Board and Senate meeting on 6 December 2022.

Action 5: Counselling Service: *Senate requested feedback next term on service provision, especially with regards to the waiting lists.*

Update 09/11/22: That the Head of the Service will be including this information in the annual report 2021-22, which would be on the agenda for the 6 December 2022 meeting.

Action 8: Student Transfer Policy: *That the Office for Students (OfS) require that all institutions provide information on their transfer Policy on their website. It was agreed to put the current version (which had been approved previously) onto the SGUL website for now with a note that the Policy was currently being updated.*

Update 09/11/22: That the Clerk confirmed that the updated, final version of the Policy went to the July 2022 Senate meeting and was approved under the General Regulations update. The version published on the website was the new version. This action would now be closed.

Action 9: Postgraduate Student Satisfaction survey results: *That there would be a paper on PTES and PRES Postgraduate Student Satisfaction survey results brought to a future Senate meeting, that would include an action plan on areas for improvement.*

Update 09/11/22: That a paper on the survey results would be going to the Education Student Strategy Committee (ESSC) tomorrow (10 November) and would then be on the agenda for the joint meeting of Senate and Executive Board in December.

Action 10: *That the Senate would like an update report of the Sexual Misconduct Working Group's work in the Autumn.*

Update 09/11/22: That a paper would be on the agenda for the joint meeting of Senate and Executive Board on 6 December 2022.

Action 11: *That all papers that are updated versions of other papers, policies or reports, should make it clear on the cover sheet about where and what the changes are to the document, to enable members to more easily focus on the appropriate areas for discussion.*

Update 09/11/22: A new paper cover sheet was shared with the Senate and agreed for use going forwards, with regular reviews to ensure it stays fit for purpose. Action can be closed.

Senate/2022-23/ Paper 1C

Governance

4. **Approval of changes to membership and terms of reference for sub-committees of Senate**

Considered and approved: Changes to membership and Terms of Reference for the below sub-committees of Senate:

(i) Education Student Strategy Committee

Senate/2022-23/ Paper 1D

(ii) Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee

Senate/2022-23/ Paper 1E

The above Terms of Reference had remained the same. The membership lists had been updated to reflect new roles and the dissolution of the Joint Faculty.

(iii) Research Committee

Senate/2022-23/ Paper 1F

It was noted that Research Committee had changed its name to Research and Enterprise Committee. The Senate felt this was a welcome change. Dr Vanessa Ho's job title needed to be updated in the TOR.

Education and the Student Experience

5. **Public Engagement update**

Received and considered: An update on Public Engagement.

Reported:

That the report outlined the work that had been supported by the Public Engagement team over the whole of last year. It had already been presented to the Executive Board.

That the report highlighted the positive impact to the institution of having a full-time Public Engagement officer in post. The person in the role had left the institution but having his expertise had helped the team to increase the range and number of opportunities; e.g. Science Museum Lates, and had enabled increased training, an online training module and 1-1 support.

That the Public Engagement team had a new space in the old reception area on ground floor, Hunter Wing, which can be booked by SGUL teams to use.

That there was a new Public Engagement guide on Canvas which highlights case studies around the university.

That a lot more detail had been given in the update this year than in previous years, as this would be useful as a baseline with which to consider and develop the new Strategy. It also highlighted the importance of trying to maintain momentum in the Public Engagement work by securing appropriate funding in the longer term. It was noted that the IFS grant funding that had been used to fund the full-time officer role would run out in March 2023.

Senate/2022-23/ Paper 1G

Partnerships

6. Partnerships Update

Received and considered: A partnerships update, including the Joint Faculty dissolution.

Reported:

That this paper on partnership and educational activity goes through the Quality directorate.

That the Joint Faculty had now formally dissolved, with a number of successor arrangements and some teach-out plans in place.

That the franchise agreement with the University of Nicosia had now ended and was in teach-out mode with an exit strategy in place.

That there were a number of students who were going abroad early in the New Year as part of the Turing Scheme, which had replaced the Erasmus+ Scheme. The Turing Scheme grant needed to be used by the end of August 2023.

Discussed:

That the Senate thanked the Director of Quality and Partnerships for the hard work in preparing these updates.

Whether the Turing Scheme was working for SGUL, or whether already established relationships around Europe could be used to facilitate educational exchanges. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) suggested that reaching out to the research community would be a good idea and that they would be keen to get involved in the process. This could be discussed at the Research and Enterprise Committee. The Director of Quality and Partnerships stated that the Turing Scheme primarily worked through taught programmes but that this could be something to think about. It was also suggested that as the Turing scheme is not restricted, it could be useful for developing African Partnerships.

Senate/2022-23/ Paper 1H

Quality

7. Ofsted Action Plan

Received and considered: The latest version of the Ofsted Action Plan.

Reported:

That SGUL provided some apprenticeship courses, which Ofsted are responsible for inspecting. Consequently, SGUL had been subject to a full Ofsted inspection in April 2022. The report was published in the summer and Ofsted asked SGUL to provide an action plan. This plan was shared with the Senate. Ofsted would be coming back to SGUL at some point to undertake a follow-up inspection.

That SGUL had a very small number of apprentices (less than 30) and had no intake in the 2022-23 academic year. There may be a further intake in the 2023-24 academic year.

That one of the issues was the lack of teaching of fundamental British values to the students, which is a core requirement that Ofsted expect to be embedded within the apprenticeship curriculum, but was not often taught by universities. A way to teach the values throughout the curriculum was currently being developed.

Discussed:

That there should be two amber boxes on the action plan (issues 3 and 5), rather than yellow and amber. The other three issues were now coloured 'green' as they had been resolved.

That due to recent parliamentary changes, there had been many ministerial appointments to the role of Minister for Skills, Apprenticeships and Higher Education (HE). The current incumbent, Robert Halfon MP, was said to be very keen on skills and apprenticeships. He has been questioning people in HE about why there are not more apprenticeships in HE. It was discussed that apprenticeship regulatory mechanism had not been adjusted for a university setting.

Senate/2022-23/ Paper 11

8. Degree Outcomes Statement (2021 outcomes)

Received and considered: The Degree Outcomes Statement (2021 outcomes).

Reported:

That the OfS require HE providers in England publish a Degree Outcome statement. The template used at SGUL had been created using QAA guidance. SGUL's statement had recently been updated in line with the UUK commitment to return to pre-pandemic proportions of good degree awards over time. It would be approved by Council following Senate approval, and published on the public facing SGUL website before the end of the calendar year 2022, in line with the UUK commitment.

That the statement should provide an explanation of the pattern of degree awards for a period of time in an institution. SGUL publish a statement to cover a period of five years. This statement covered five years up to and including the academic year 2020-21.

That there was high political interest around degree awards and it was matter of regulation that SGUL confirm that its awards retain value over time.

That the statement had been ratified by QAEC earlier this month and had been created with lots of input from colleagues throughout the organisation.

That the summary table on page seven showed the proportion of good degrees awarded by SGUL within the five-year period. The proportion of good degrees in academic year 2017-18 dropped, and then there was a 5% increase during the Covid period (2019 – 21), and more Firsts had been conferred during the Covid period. There was a narrative included to explain this increase - Paramedic Science and Biomedical Sciences had contributed most to this increase; and the increase during Covid affected years may be as a result of more positive interventions from academics.

Discussed:

That the increase in the award of Firsts and 2:1s had become a national concern. Some universities were being, or had been, investigated by the OfS for historic and ongoing awards. It was discussed that Council had raised concerns about grade inflation previously and would need some further narrative around the reasons for the increase in conferring good degrees. It was noted that this had also been raised by QAEC.

That the OfS had concerns that institutions were using grade algorithms which were leading to grade inflations. The OfS also had concerns that management interference had occurred in the Board of Examiners, with the aim to inflate grades. SGUL could demonstrate that it had not done either of these things, and that degrees were conferred as a consequence of academic decisions. Senate discussed if that sentiment was strong enough in the statement.

That the sentence on page 5: "Historically, there had been an incremental growth in the proportion of good degrees we conferred" should be reworded as it did not completely reflect the data in the statement.

That the changes in processes during Covid meant that SGUL had become more in line with the sector and this had been good for students; and this should be brought out more in the narrative.

That before 2014 SGUL were an outlier, below the sector average in terms of degree awards, but then the proportion of good degrees conferred by SGUL fell in line with the sector. This would be clear in the historical OfS data.

That it was suggested that comparisons with the sector overall and with Russell Group universities may help Council to see that good awards conferred by SGUL were in line with the sector.

Whether disability, and changes made around mode of assessments e.g. reasonable adjustments, may have had a positive impact on degree awards. It was discussed that this did not explain the overall increase in good degrees conferred.

Senate/2022-23/ Paper 1J

9. Board of Examiner Memberships

Considered: The BoE membership lists confirmed for 2022/23 session.

That this item was not approved as some Ex Officio members who no longer worked for SGUL needed to be removed, and 'Principal' needed to be changed to 'Vice-Chancellor' in some of the documents. This item would come back to a future Senate for approval.

Senate/2022-23/ Paper 1K

10. External Examiner Appointments

Considered and approved: External Examiner appointments, as approved by UPCC and TPCC.

Senate/2022-23/ Paper 1L

11. Reports from the sub-committees of Senate

Received and considered: A report from the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee.

Senate/2022-23/ Paper 1M

Research

12. Reports from the sub-committees of Senate

Received and considered: A report from the Research Committee, including an update on the REF.

Reported:

That the report covers successes in both the REF and KEF, as well as involvement with specialist facilities and trying to start up the zebrafish facility on campus by later this year.

Senate/2022-23/ Paper 10

Matters for Report

13. *Actions taken by the Chair

Received and noted: Decisions taken on behalf of Senate by the Chair since the last meeting of Senate.

Senate/2022-23/ Paper 1P

14. *Validation Reports

Received and noted: Validation and Periodic Review reports.

Senate/2022-23/ Paper 1Q

15. *Student Cases

Reported:

- (i) A Student Appeal Committee was convened to consider the case of two students enrolled on the BSc Biomedical Sciences programme and determined that the penalty imposed during an Assessment Irregularity investigation be removed, and recommending to Council no remedial action.

16. *Minutes of Senate Sub-Committees

To note that minutes of the following Senate sub-committees are available on request:

- a) Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee
- b) Research Degrees Committee (unreserved)
- c) Research Committee
- d) Student Support and Welfare Committee
- e) Taught Postgraduate Courses Committee
- f) Undergraduate Programmes Committee.

17. Any Other Business

18. Dates of meetings in 2022-23

Day	Date	Year	Paper Deadline
Tuesday	6 December*	2022	25 November 2022
Wednesday	8 March	2023	24 February 2023
Wednesday	7 June	2023	26 May 2023
Wednesday	12 July*	2023	30 June 2023

*meetings are joint with the Executive Board.

EW/17 November 2022