



MINUTES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL SENATE

WEDNESDAY 15 NOVEMBER 2023 / 2PM / BRETT BUILDING

Present:	Professor T Jones (Vice-Chancellor, Chair), Professor T Ali, Dr A Alsalloum, Dr H Arnolds, Professor K Atkinson, Professor M Baylis, Dr C Belfrage, Professor K Bennett, Dr M Berenbrink, Professor N Berry, Professor F Beveridge, Professor R Black, Professor J Bridgeman, Professor G Brown, Mr P Brown, Professor P Buse, Dr V Chauvet, Professor R Chiverrell, Professor K Coleman, Dr S Cornell, Dr L Corner, Dr C Costello, Professor M D'Onofrio, Professor G Endfield, Professor C Eyers, Dr L Gahman, Professor B Gibson, Dr N Helassa, Professor A Hollander, Professor B Konev, Dr H Little, Professor G Lynall, Professor A Lyons, Professor A Marshall, Professor P Murray, Professor K O'Halloran, Dr S Parameswaran, Professor E Patterson, Dr M Rose, Professor H Scott, Professor S Sheard, Professor R Smith, Professor J Sweeney, Professor J Surroca, Professor T Teubner, Professor M Towsey, Professor W van der Hoek, Dr V Vass, Professor F Vis, Professor S Voelkel, Professor T Walley, Professor F Watkins, Professor R Williams, Dr B Wilm, Dr J Woolf, Student Representatives: J Barber, R Bradbury, E Campbell, L Dubbins, K Manley.
Apologies:	Professor L Anderson, Professor J Balogun, Professor R Bearon, Professor I Buchan, Professor P Clegg, Professor L Crolley, Professor J Curran, Professor A Fell, Dr K Furman, Professor M Garcia Finana, Professor L Harkness-Brennan, Professor D Jeater, Professor L Kenny, Professor P Lunn, Professor D MacEwan, Professor D Mair, Professor P McCormick, Professor V Mitsilegas, Professor M O'Flaherty, Professor S Pickard, Professor I Prior, Professor S Rocha, Professor P Shirlow, Professor H Stalford, Professor M White, S Mitra, V Samuels.
In Attendance:	L King (Secretary and Governance Officer), K Ryan (University Secretary and General Counsel), E Leonard (Head of Governance and Deputy Secretary).

COMMITTEE AND MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

1. Governance Matters

1.1 Disclosures of Interest ≠ (Inc. policy)

Members were asked to disclose any interest that could give rise to conflict in relation to any item on the agenda. No such interests were disclosed.

1.2 Roles and Responsibilities Diversity and Equality

RECEIVED and NOTED:

Guidance on Diversity and Equality requirements for Committee members.

1.3 Powers, Duties, Constitution and Membership

RECEIVED and AGREED:

The Powers, Duties, Constitution and Membership should be approved.

1.4 Senate Standing Orders 2023

RECEIVED:

- i. An updated version of the Senate Standing Orders.

NOTED:

- ii. The following amendment was suggested:
 - To include information on the process for Senate suggesting amendments to papers and how this would be reflected in minutes.

AGREED:

- iii. The updated Standing Orders should be approved and adopted, with the view to referring the above amendment to the upcoming Senate external review by Advance HE, where the Standing Orders would be reviewed in conjunction with wider Senate practices. Senate members would have the opportunity to feed into this review.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

2.1 Minutes of the Meetings Held on 28 June 2023 and 19 September 2023

NOTED:

- i. The following amendments to the 28 June 2023 minutes were suggested:
 - A full list of amendments to the RISE paper would be included in the updated version of the minutes ahead of publication. The process for managing detailed amendments to papers would be included in the upcoming external review of Senate.
 - A requested amendment under point iv regarding REF scores and PDR output evaluation. It was clarified that the intention was not to use REF scores for output selection in PDRs, but it was for the scores to be used by panels in promotion processes. This process would be reviewed in two years, which would allow two full cycles of the promotions process to take place and would therefore ensure anonymity.

AGREED:

- ii. The minutes should be approved as an accurate record subject to the above changes.

2.2 Report on Action Taken by the Chair on Behalf of Senate

RECEIVED:

- i. A report setting out action taken by the Chair on behalf of the Senate.

REPORTED:

- ii. Since the last meeting, the Vice-Chancellor had taken action on behalf of the Senate in relation to the following:
 - Change to Ordinance 18 to include a new award: Master of Biology (MBiol)
 - Award of Honorary Degree: Professor Dame Janet Beer
 - Constitution of the Joint Committee on Honorary Degrees
 - Policy on Module Evaluation Updates.

NOTED:

- iii. A query was raised by a Senate member on the process of conferment of honorary degrees via Senate Chair's action. It was confirmed that the Joint Committee on Honorary Degrees (which contains representation from Senate and Council) agreed that Chair's action should be sought on behalf of Senate and Council on this occasion as the conferral of an honorary degree to the former Vice-Chancellor was in keeping with convention and would ensure timely issue of the invitation letter to enable the honorary degree to be conferred this December.

AGREED:

- iv. The action taken by the Chair on behalf of the Senate should be endorsed.

3. Vice-Chancellor's Report

RECEIVED:

- i. A report from the Vice-Chancellor on University, sector wide and political news.

NOTED:

- ii. Senate requested more information on process and associated criteria for the University of Liverpool Research Fellowships, where over 600 applications had been received. It was confirmed that applicants had been asked for an anonymised motivational statement, a CV in narrative form and a research plan, with each component being weighted 25%, 37% and 37% respectively. The longlisting was being undertaken by faculties, with interviews including a centralised team and experts as required. The process required some tweaks and would be reviewed for next year.

STRATEGIC MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION

4. REF2028

4.1 Code of Practice for the Evaluation and Selection of Research Outputs for REF 2028

RECEIVED:

- i. An update on the Code of Practice for the Evaluation and Selection of Research Outputs for REF 2028.

REPORTED:

- ii. Evaluation of outputs was a fundamental process to manage progress towards submission for REF2028. Senate reviewed the Code of Practice, which set out the following:

- how processes of evaluation would be undertaken;
- how they would be communicated to staff; and
- how the information would be used within the institution.

- iii. The following key points were noted:

Changes from REF 2021: This new code implemented key commitments from RISE, where all reading of outputs was now specifically for REF purposes, with use of data allowable only for promotions and confirmation processes.

Minimising burden: By focusing on reading outputs for REF submission only, the emphasis was on reading those of the highest quality, with the aim of reducing the time burden for researchers and reviewers.

Governance: The Research and Impact Strategic Committee (RISC) would implement the Code and would assess its effectiveness as part of the REF preparation timetable. Given national REF consultations were ongoing, flexibility could be required with the Code in order to respond to any emerging decisions.

Timescales: The Code subject to approval was expected to be operational in early 2024.

NOTED:

- iv. During the discussion on the evaluation of Research Outputs, it was confirmed these evaluations would be used for REF, promotions and Confirmation in Appointment. In response to an enquiry about cases of early career colleagues not being confirmed in post because of not having sufficient papers at 3*/4* (and the risks arising from such criteria not being mentioned in job advertisements), members of Senate were reassured that early career academics are always evaluated in the round and that a failure to confirm in appointment would never be solely on the basis of REF output evaluation scores.

- iv. Senate members raised the following comments:

- The focus on reading only the highest quality outputs would reduce workload for researchers and reviewers, but this put the onus on individuals to decide whether to submit their work for review. Training

would be needed at a local level to ensure the 'self-selection' element of the process was clear and staff were proactively supported.

- More clarity was sought on the process for calibration, and it was agreed additional communication on this would be helpful.
- Whilst the policy was clear and coherent, it highlighted the challenges with the homogenous nature of REF and the difficulty in developing a uniform process to be applied across all disciplines.

AGREED:

- v. The Code of Practice for the Evaluation and Selection of Research Outputs for REF 2028 should be endorsed.

4.2 Protocols for REF 2028 Planning, Preparation and Governance

RECEIVED:

- i. Protocols to be put in place by the University to cover planning, preparations and decision making, both strategic and operational, with regard to the submission to REF 2028.

REPORTED:

- ii. The Vice-Chancellor, guided by expert advice from RISC based on peer review and judgement, as well as from the Provost and from SLT, would be responsible for final decisions regarding the University submission and the inclusion of research to the REF. However, it was expected that RISC would be responsible for the overall management of the strategy for the University's submission to the REF.
- iii. The RISC would report to SLT and seek endorsement from RIC on key issues as well as ensuring the provision of regular progress reports.

NOTED:

- iv. A query regarding the involvement of Senate members in the governance processes around REF and their representation on the groups involved. Members were reassured that Senate itself would be kept fully informed with REF updates, and the APVCs were all research active and provided academic input into key committees such as SLT and RIC.

AGREED:

- v. The Protocols for REF 2028 Planning, Preparation and Governance should be endorsed.

5. Institutional Survey Results 2023 NSS Overview

RECEIVED:

- i. A presentation on the University's performance in the National Student Survey 2023.

REPORTED:

- ii. The UK wide survey was commissioned by the OfS and targeted final year undergraduates.
- iii. The University had a final response rate of 68%, 4076 respondents.
- iv. There had been some changes to questions, the main one being the removal of the 'overall satisfaction' item.
- v. The University had performed well with the majority of responses reaching 70 – 80% positivity. The most positive responses were recorded on course organisation and support from teaching staff. The lowest scores were received under assessment and feedback.

BUSINESS FROM FACULTIES

No business received from faculties

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

6. Education Committee

RECEIVED and AGREED:

- i. A report on the meeting of the Education Committee held on 19 October 2023, covering:

For Recommending for Approval

- Education Committee: Updated Terms of Reference, Constitution and Membership
- Student Complaints Policy & Procedure
- Fitness to Practise Policy & Procedure

For Endorsing

- Annual Quality Report

For Noting

- Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) 2023 Outcomes
- Institutional Survey Results 2023 [NSS, PGT Student Experience Proposals]
- Graduate Outcomes Survey: Development of Specialist Offers
- Student Success Framework Update

- Education for Sustainable Development Working Group Report
- Joint Meeting Between the Education and Research and Impact Committees.

NOTED:

- v. That elected Senate member representation on the Education Committee would be considered as part of the Senate Review.

7. PGR Committee

RECEIVED and AGREED:

- i. A report on the meeting of the PGR Committee held on 9 October 2023, covering:

For Noting

- PGR Enhancement Project and Re-imagining the PhD
- Proposed PGR Flagship Scheme – Update from Working Group
- UKRI: Improved Support for Research Students Through New Deal
- PGR Student Evaluation / Feedback.

8. Research and Impact Committee

RECEIVED and AGREED:

- i. A report on the meeting of the Research and Impact Committee held on 19 October 2023, covering:

For Approval

- Research and Impact Committee - Updated Terms of Reference, Constitution and Membership

For Noting

- Joint Meeting with Education Committee
- Protocols for REF 2028 Planning, Preparation and Governance
- Research Income Planning and Performance.

9. Collaborative Provision Committee

RECEIVED and NOTED:

- i. A report on the meeting of the Collaborative Provision Committee held on 3 October 2023.

10. Research Integrity and Governance Committee Annual Report

RECEIVED and NOTED:

- i. An annual report on the activity of the Research Integrity and Governance Committee for the 2022 - 2023 academic year. The report covered the work of the Committee in upholding and developing the University's research integrity framework.

11. Committee on Research Ethics Annual Report

RECEIVED and NOTED:

- i. An annual report on the activity of the Committee on Research Ethics. The report covered the 2022 - 2023 academic year and detailed the work of the Committee to implement and develop the University's research ethics framework.

12. Annual Summary Report from the University Approval Panel

RECEIVED and NOTED:

- i. A summary of the decisions of the University Approval Panel regarding proposals for new programmes and programme revalidations.

13. Joint Committee on Honorary Degrees

RECEIVED and ENDORSED:

- i. An oral update from the Vice-Chancellor following the Joint Committee on Honorary Degrees meeting held on 2 November 2023 and the recommendations for honorary degrees to be conferred in 2024.

OTHER ITEMS

14. Policy Updates

14.1 Fitness to Practise Policy and Procedures

RECEIVED:

- i. A copy of the updated Fitness to Practise Policy and Procedures.

REPORTED:

- ii. The University's Fitness to Practise Policy and Procedures (FtP) underwent significant change and became operational in December 2019. Following the initial implementation period, "lessons learned" regarding good practice (particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic), further benchmarking against other Russell Group and local Institutions, as well as ensuring compliance with the OIA's Good Practice Framework, had meant that some required changes had been identified.

- iii. Changes included a reduction in size of panels from six to four, changes to determining outcomes if there was a tied vote, grounds for appeal and the role of Investigating Officers.

NOTED:

- iv. There would be an impact on members of staff acting as Investigating Officers where the role was expanding in remit but numbers were reduced. This was acknowledged and Senate was assured that the need to appropriately remunerate staff affected would be considered as part of the planning cycle.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND:

- v. The updated Fitness to Practise Policy and Procedures should be approved.

14.2 Student Complaints Policy and Procedure

RECEIVED:

- i. A copy of the updated Student Complaints Policy and Procedure.

REPORTED:

- ii. The current Student Complaints Policy and Procedure over complicated the early stages of a complaint, whereby it stated a full investigation needed to be completed into any concerns raised. This was not always practical or necessary. The amended policy introduced early resolution, whereby colleagues can manage and address student concerns at a very early stage.
- iii. The amended Policy also allowed for more serious complaints to be escalated to an investigation under the Formal stage straight away, without the need to attempt to resolve things informally first. Experience had shown that complaints requiring a full investigation were very rarely resolved at the informal stage, therefore these changes prevented the need to have duplicate investigations which would decrease the workload for staff and also increase the speed at which a student could gain a resolution to their complaint.
- iv. Finally, the policy outlined that the Review stage would be just that, a Review of the investigation that had been carried out and assessing the reasonableness of the outcome, rather than a reinvestigation. This would be supported by any necessary changes to training and guidance.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND:

- v. The updated Student Complaints Policy and Procedure should be approved.

15. Admissions, Appeals and Complaints

RECEIVED and NOTED:

- i. A report summarising the formal appeals and complaints that had been submitted to the Associate Director, Admissions, Enquiries and Fulfilment using the formal Admissions Appeals and Complaints Form. The report indicated the

actions taken and whether or not the appeals/complaints were upheld and on what grounds the decision was made. At the time of the report, there had been a total of 16 formal appeals and three formal complaints from 19 individuals for 2023 entry. The appeals and complaints covered undergraduate, postgraduate taught, online postgraduate and postgraduate research programmes. This was an increase for appeals and complaints compared to 2022 entry, where there were 10 appeals and one complaint. The number of appeals and complaints needed to be reviewed within the context of the overall number of applications processed per cycle (c45,000 undergraduate applications and c40,000 taught postgraduate applications).

16. Annual Quality Report

RECEIVED and NOTED:

- i. The Annual Quality Report, with a summary of activity in relation to quality assurance that had taken place during the academic year 2022/23.

17. OfS Annual Compliance Report

RECEIVED:

- i. The OfS Annual Compliance Report.

REPORTED:

- ii. The report was produced annually to provide assurance on how the University was currently complying with the ongoing conditions of the OfS regulatory framework and to highlight areas of potential risk or where further work was progressing.

18. Date of Next Meeting

NOTED:

- i. The next meeting would be held at 2pm on Wednesday 24 January 2024.