

SENATE

Minutes of the meeting held on 31 January 2024

Members:	Professor Shirley Congdon (Chair)	Nasreen Akhtar	Professor Udy Archibong
	Professor Prathivadi Anand	Professor Harris Beider	Professor Marina Bloj
	Dr Emma Brown	Professor Felician Campean	Professor Sherif El-Khamisy
	Professor Maryann Hardy	Alison Hartley	Zak Hughes
	Faiz Ilyas	Mozalfa Ilyas	Professor Zahir Irani
	Professor Robert James	Dr Ben Jennings	Yakubu John
	Samina Karim	Dr Rhys Kelly	Hamza Khan
	Dr Jing Li	Bryan Lightowler	Fiona Macaulay
	Jonathan Marsden	Dr William Martin	Dr Anne Miller
	Professor Iqbal Mujtaba	Colin Pickles	Professor Martin Priest
	Amit Rana	Professor Amir Sharif	Iqra Tabassum
	Dr Pete Twigg	Paul Watson	Elaine Wilkinson
	Professor Andrew Wilson	Professor Alastair Wood	

In attendance:	Claire Brown	Senior Reward Specialist (Item 15 only)
	Steve Gilley	Director of Infrastructure
	Dave Harris	Director of People, Culture and Wellbeing
	Matthew Stephenson	Acting Associate Director Governance, Legal & Risk
	Katherine Wass	Governance and Projects Officer

Apologies:	Dr Craig Jonhson	Andy Lang	Louise Wem
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36.23-24 **Welcome and Apologies (oral report)**

36.1 The Chair welcomed all to the meeting noting the apologies that had been received.

37.23-24 **Vice-Chancellor update report (Document SEN035/23-24)**

37.1 The Vice-Chancellor presented their report highlighting changes to the sector and associated media reporting.

37.2 The Senate was advised that the changes in operating environment was a challenging one for all in the sector and the university was not immune from this increased competition for both home and international students.

37.3 The Senate was advised that the university had not met its student recruitment targets for the year, and this would have a financial impact. Communications, including a video message from the Vice-Chancellor, about this had been sent to all colleagues and an open forum held

the previous week. This approach was one that would be continuing, and more open forums were being planned to follow the completion of the 6+6 financial forecast.

37.4

[REDACTED]

Note: The above minute has been redacted as it is considered to be exempt information as defined by section 43 (2) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 which covers commercial interests.

37.5 The Vice-Chancellor advised the focus on delivering the university strategy remained and the pace of delivery was changing but there was still a need to grow to be sustainable in the longer term. It was essential that there was a clear focus on following the strategies and being efficient and effective in all areas.

37.6 The Senate was reminded of its role as the ultimate academic decision-making body for the university and that it was important members understood why action was needed and to support implementation in accordance with the university values. It would be a challenging balancing act and colleagues would be empowered to make decisions.

37.7 Significant highlights in the report included:

- A reduction in USS contribution rates that had already been communicated to affected colleagues.
- Significant research grant success that demonstrated good progress and would contribute to REF2029.

37.8 The Senate discussed the report noting the role of the unions in the changes needed and communications to colleagues. It was clarified by the Vice-Chancellor that the reference to reduction in headcount in paragraph 7.4 of the report was not a reference to any current plan for redundancies. Rather the approach was to not replace vacant posts in those areas that were impacted by a reduction in student numbers and to appoint to posts that were business critical.

37.9 The Director of People, Culture and Wellbeing confirmed that discussions had taken place with representatives of the unions on campus, and this would be reviewed to ensure that it was at the appropriate level. It had been his understanding that the unions were supportive of the approach being taken however if this was not in fact the case communications would be updated to reflect this. It was confirmed by Zak Hughes that the UCU was not supportive of the approaches outlined in the Vice-Chancellor's update (paragraph 8.5). The approach to engagement and communication would be discussed at the next meeting of the TUUG (Trade Union Universities Group) and the Director of People, Wellbeing and Culture and the Vice-Chancellor were happy to meet the unions outside of TUUG as and when appropriate.

37.10 ACTION: Review understanding of unions position on the changes programme. Director People, Culture and Wellbeing

37.11 The Senate had a robust discussion in relation to the cost saving measures that had been outlined and was advised of the following.

- The 6+6 financial forecast would be available in February and followed by a staff forum and communications.
- Staff recruitment decisions would be made on a business-critical basis and a process had been set up to ensure this was robust.
- Programme reviews were taking place as part of the quality and standards process with a review to improving student experience. This was an existing piece of work rather than a new initiative.
- There was a focus on capital expenditure to improve the student experience and maximise impact. The refurbishment of space in the library was one example.
- The university had also signed up to the mental health charter with a project linked to this starting in the coming days.

37.12 The Vice-Chancellor advised that the approach being taken was about making careful and informed choices that would put the university in the best position for the future. The Sabbatical officers had already been asked to advise Executive Board on the best approach to take in relation to student communications.

38.23-24 KPI report (Document SEN036/23-24)

38.1 The Vice-Chancellor provided an overview of the report to the Senate.

38.2 It was noted that the report indicated a downward trend in relation to Research and Innovation spend in quarter one. The PVC Research, Innovation and Engagement advised that this was being investigated and updated data would be available for the next meeting.

38.3 ACTION: Provide update on the trend in relation to research spend to the next meeting. PVC RI&E

39.23-24 Access and Participation Plan (APP) (Document SEN037/23-24)

39.1 The PVC Equality, Diversity and Inclusion provided an overview of the report to the Senate.

39.2 The Senate was advised that the Director of Access and Participation from the Office for Students (OfS) had visited the university and complemented the work that had been undertaken, commenting that access and participation was a part of the essence of the university.

39.3 The Senate was advised that the current APP period officially ended in a years' time however the OfS had set out a staggered approach to applications with the first wave of 30 universities having already submitted. The university was in the second wave with submission due in June 2024.

39.4 The new plan called for the inclusion of new areas and the approach being taken as set out in the report covered these as well as ensuring alignment with updated KPIs and targets so that it supported the delivery of strategies with a clear set of outcomes that would be evaluated on an ongoing basis. Student involvement in the development of the plan had been considered essential and the Students' Union was a key partner in this work.

39.5 The Senate discussed the report noting the level of insight and detail it provided. It was noted that the timeline for approval of the submission would become tight if things slipped for any reason and a plan B would need to be agreed if that happened. The PVC Equality, Diversity and Inclusion advised that they were confident everything would be in place on time.

39.6 The Senate **approved** the approach and timeline as set out in the report.

40.23-24 **Assurance Report on OfS B Conditions of Registration (Document SEN038/23-24)**

40.1 The PVC Learning Teaching and Student Experience provided an overview of the report noting the OfS had shifted to a risk-based approach to regulation over the last two years and had developed a standard approach to support this with a set of measures it used to select providers to visit and review in each cycle.

40.2 The Senate was advised that the report set out the controls that were in place, taking a risk-based approach, to ensure compliance with the ongoing conditions of registration. The report included information on activities being undertaken to improve and the priorities that had been identified.

40.3 The Senate was asked to take assurance from the report that processes were in place to monitor and manage compliance.

40.4 The Senate was advised that based on the data set the OfS used the university had a small number of programmes that were under the 60% threshold score for continuation, completion, and progression. It was not yet known if the university would be selected for inspection however action had been identified to address the areas that had been highlighted.

40.5 The Senate discussed the report noting the fundamental importance of staying within the conditions of registration and confirmed it was content with the assurance provided.

41.23-24 **Strategy Updates on Faculty Priorities**

41.1 The Deans presented updates on Faculty priorities, highlighting key risks and developments within their faculties on the four areas of Learning Teaching & Student Experience (LTSE), Research and Innovation (R&I), Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and Business, Community Engagement (BCE):

Faculty of Engineering and Digital Technologies (FoEDT) (Document SEN039/23-24)

- 41.2 The Dean (FoEDT) provided an overview of the report highlighting.
- The development of an employability award.
 - The appointment of a Business Development Manager to help diversify opportunities.
 - New set of KPIs for EDI activity had led to increased activity and collaboration with an aim to become business as usual.
 - Research bids continued with around £12m applied for and several outcomes were awaited.
 - Keightly institution awarded funding which paved the way for work in automation.
 - New programme monitoring group established and was progressing well.
 - Challenges in timetabling linked to both numbers and room availability, in part due to closure of labs due to RAAC in part of the Chesham Building.
- 41.3 The Dean advised Senate that the faculty had fully engaged with the enhanced student attendance monitoring procedure and all elements were being used as required.

Faculty of Health Studies (FoHS) (Document SEN040/23-24)

- 41.4 The Interim Dean (FoHS) provided an overview of the report highlighting.
- Centre of Digital Interventions in Health had received an award of £4.9m that would help build capability and performance.
 - Review of CPD delivery was being undertaken to ensure it met the needs of attendees.
 - Each School to have an EDI facilitator to help progress increased effectiveness in this area.
 - A good pipeline of new programmes was under development to include pre-registration masters.
 - Good progress had been made to address NSS feedback received.
- 41.5 The Interim Dean advised Senate that the faculty had fully engaged with the enhanced student attendance monitoring procedure and all elements were being used as required.

Faculty of Life Sciences (FoLS) (Document SEN041/23-24)

- 41.6 The Dean (FoLS) provided an overview of the report highlighting.
- Archaeology had received an award of £7m.
 - Good progress was being made on the review of the portfolio.
 - Activity was taking place to recruit more apprenticeship students.
 - Planning was being undertaken for the Athena Swan silver application for Chemistry and Biosciences to get all schools to this level.
- 41.7 The Dean advised Senate that the faculty had fully engaged with the enhanced student attendance monitoring procedure and all elements were being used as required.

Faculty of Management, Law, and Social Sciences (FoMLSS) (Document SEN042/23-24)

- 41.8 The Dean (FoLS) provided an overview of the report highlighting.
- A picture of knowledge transfer activity was being developed in relation to workloads and improvements in this area were expected.
 - Successful launch of the Bradford Renduchintala Enterprise Ecosystem (BREE) had taken place.
 - An Associate Dean for Global Business Community Engagement, Rachel Sammut, had been appointed to oversee BCE and internationalisation activity.
 - Athena Swan action plans were being implemented and linked to business as usual activity.
 - There had been an increase in success levels for research grants including being shortlisted to the final two in a competitive bidding process with MIHR that, if successful would translate to £11m in funding.
 - Steady progress being made in relation to the programme review process with new programmes under development.
- 41.9 The Dean advised Senate that the faculty had fully engaged with the enhanced student attendance monitoring procedure and all elements were being used as required.
- 41.10 The Senate discussed the faculty strategy updates noting the significant support for the research strategy as well as the student attendance monitoring process.
- 41.11 The Senate agreed that it was important in research to ensure that at the pre award stage all costings had been included.
- 41.12 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor commented that attendance monitoring had presented challenges for some time, and it was reassuring to know that the faculties were engaging with the revised process. Senate was advised that UKVI benchmarks were being achieved and the significant activity within faculties was part of ensuring UKVI audit readiness as when this took place.
- 41.13 The Vice-Chancellor advised that the role of Dean for the Faculty of Engineering and Design Technologies had been advertised and that the recruitment of a new Dean for the Faculty of Health Studies would commence shortly.
- 41.14 The PVC Learning Teaching and Student Experience advised that it was important to not let current turbulence impact adversely on the student experience. The cycle for the NSS was now open and response rates were being monitored on a weekly basis and targeted actions would be taken where needed. The aim was to encourage participation but also to remind students it was about their whole experience not just a single point in time.
- 41.15 The Senate discussed concerns that activity around attendance monitoring may be considered a proxy for student engagement, and it was important to realise these were not the same thing. UKVI reporting and what was needed for these requirements was one

aspect, the other being an aim to make home students aware of the importance of attendance to their success.

41.16 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor advised Senate that a project was well under way to specifically review the difference sources of data available to better understand how students engaged in their studies and enable proactive support where it was needed. It was anticipated that at least some elements of this activity would, in future, become part of the regulatory compliance framework.

41.17 The Interim Academic Registrar advised that the Attendance and Engagement Review Panel was reviewing outcomes of the overall process and that a small number of students on visas had been reported due to lack of attendance and having no UK address. The letters for attendance monitoring had alerted students to the expectation of attendance and the process would be kept under ongoing review for improvements.

42.23-24 **Student Recruitment update (Document SEN043/23-24)**

42.1 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor provided an overview of the report noting that a letter had been received from the Minister of State at the Department for Education asking universities to ensure that T-Level students were equitably treated and a review to ensure this had commenced. In addition to this a review of franchised provision had been commissioned by the Department for Education, and it was confirmed that all teach out had been completed and the university had no franchised programmes. Agents had been reviewed and no exposure identified however a review of contractual arrangements was taking place.

42.2 The Senate was advised that while international student enrolment for January had not yet completed, over 500 CAS letters had been issued. Visa issues for around 150 students had been identified and contingency arrangements for late enrolment were being discussed with the Deans.

42.3 Overall international recruitment had been lower than the targeted intake in part due to a 50% reduction in applications from Nigeria. A list of actions to be taken had been developed and was being implemented.

42.4 The Senate discussed the matter of late enrolment and agreed that whilst an extension for the 150 students with visa issues may be financially prudent this should not be at the expense of student experience and should be kept as short as possible for the benefit of staff and students.

43.23-24 **Undergraduate Acceptors Decliners 2023 Update (Document SEN044/23-24)**

43.1 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor provided an overview of the report noting that there had been 793 responses to the survey from potential home students who had declined their offers.

- 43.2 The Senate was advised that while the university was well rated the main reason for declining offers had been a desire to be close to home. The other main reason had been the offer not being an area they wanted to study in when their application had been cascaded.
- 43.3 The Senate was advised that the findings were being used to review nominated routes from foundation programmes as well as what other spaces could be created in relation to cascades.
- 43.4 The Senate discussed the report noting it provided useful data and underlined the importance of the first-choice course to this group of students.

44.23-24 **University of Bradford International College (UBIC) recruitment update (Document SEN045/23-24)**

- 44.1 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor provided an overview of the report noting that while CAS letters had been issued and students were currently enrolling there was a need to diversify markets. This was being reviewed with OIEG. The review of the agent management framework was also being discussed with them to ensure consistency of approach.
- 44.2 The Senate was informed that OIEG had advised the recruitment to premasters programmes was not likely to hit the agreed target. Activity to support a calling campaign was being undertaken.
- 44.3 It was noted there had been no formal assessments since the last report.

45.23-24 **Institutional Growth and Sustainability Plan (Document SEN046/23-24)**

- 45.1 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor provided an overview of the report advising that it set out a proposal to reduce the number of workstreams as activity moved to business as usual and linked to KPIs.
- 45.2 The Senate was advised that as part of wave one 47 ideas had been reviewed with 27 being approved based on market insight data. For wave two there had been 59 ideas twelve of which had been presented to the Strategic Oversight Group and nine were being processed to gateway two for financial evaluation. Other ideas had been directed to gateway six as part of the modification to existing programmes.
- 45.3 The Senate discussed the approach being taken noting that it supported planning for the development of the university estate and was assured that new programmes that had been identified for progression would continue to be reviewed for any duplication or conflict with existing programmes.

46.23-24 **UCAS Tariff and Entry Requirement Review (Document SEN047/23-24)**

- 46.1 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor provided an overview of the report noting it built on a review undertaken in 2019 as well as reflecting changes in the operating environment.

46.2 The Senate was advised of the purpose of the different tariffs and that the proposed changes related to the published tariff. These had been benchmarked to other universities and would still allow for flexibility where appropriate.

46.3 The Senate discussed and **approved** all the tariff changes as set out in the report. It was noted that the data patterns related to these changes would need to be monitored for their impact in relation to progression and completion as well as application rates.

47.23-24 **Annual report on Student Casework 2022-23 (Document SEN048/23-24)**

47.1 The Interim Academic Registrar provided an overview of the report noting it contained details of the different types of student casework and the Senate would receive a separate report on Fitness to Practice and Disciplinary cases at its next meeting.

47.2 The Senate was advised that a process review and improvement activity was being undertaken that was expected to provide outcomes that would have significant positive impact on the extenuating circumstances process.

47.3 The Systems and Data Team were compiling data flows to improve presentation of casework data for the future.

47.4 The Senate discussed the report and its recommendations noting.

- There had been administrative issues in relation to appeals which were to be followed up.
- There had been a significant impact on workload due to casework matters and appropriate process and resource to support this were important.
- The resource that was recommended in the report had already been approved.
- The process review would aim to take account of the use of AI however it was expected additional activity would still be needed in this area.

47.5 The Senate **approved** the recommendations as set out in the report.

48.23-24 **NSS 2024 - update (oral report)**

48.1 See minute **M41.14**.

49.23-24 **UBU (University of Bradford Union) Update Report (Document SEN049/23-24)**

49.1 The UBU Sabbatical Officers provided an overview of the report noting that the new CEO of the UBU had been appointed and that UBU elections were taking place.

49.2 The Senate was advised that 1160 students were active members of a range of societies and there had been an average of 35 events per week for students to engage with. One example highlighted was the Room 101 country takeovers to share different cultures and talk about City of Culture 2024.

- 49.3 The Senate was advised that the advice centre was supporting as many cases as possible some of which were proving to be very complex.
- 49.4 It was noted that this had been a good year for student representation recruitment however more support from staff to help recruit would be beneficial. Having programme lead information more easily accessible would be of value to this process.
- 49.5 In terms of current activity there was a focus on collating data for TEF and APP, and this included looking at the barriers to engagement and cost of living concerns.
- 49.6 The Sabbatical Officers had a robust Council and were appreciative of the support of the members of Executive Board who continued to attend a range of events the UBU had organised.
- 49.7 The Senate discussed the report and noted the very positive engagement levels with the different societies and range of representation. Senate would be interested in understanding what else was being done to build on this success whilst ensuring the quality of both areas noting this was being looked at with the support of the new CEO of the UBU.
- 49.8 **ACTION: Provide update on approach to enhance student engagement in societies and student representation. UBU Sabbatical Officers**

50.23-24 **Bradford academic pathway review (Document SEN050/23-24)**

- 50.1 The Director of People Culture and Wellbeing provided an overview of the report and thanked the Senior Reward Specialist, in attendance for this item, for their work on this initiative.
- 50.2 The Senate was advised that there was a focus group in place as part of the continuous review and improvement of the processes that had been put in place.
- 50.3 The Senate discussed the report noting.
- It was important to continue to support people in their careers and ensure there were no adverse unintended consequences of the approaches used.
 - The initiative had provided clear benefits and further clarity and linking to succession planning would provide added value.
 - Additional focus through the EDI lens was being done by the focus group.
- 50.4 The focus group was discussed, and it was noted that it would benefit from staff representation and union engagement. The Director of People Culture and Wellbeing confirmed they would explore with the unions what that representation could look like to ensure the further enhancement of the membership. The Senior Reward Specialist advised that membership of the focus group had been made open to all staff who wanted to participate and had already identified this could be enhanced.

50.5 **ACTION: Review staff representation and union engagement in the focus group with TUUG. Director of People Culture and Wellbeing**

51.23-24 **Corporate Risks – Quality, Research and Student Experience (Document SEN051/23-24)**

51.1 The Acting Associate Director Governance, Legal & Risk provided an overview of the report noting its content was drawn from the corporate risk register.

51.2 The Senate discussed the report and agreed that it would be an appropriate topic for an informal briefing to allow for a more detailed discussion of the risks identified to supplement the regular discussions at its meetings.

51.3 **ACTION: Hold Senate Informal Briefing on the quality, research, and student experience related risks. Acting Associate Director Governance, Legal & Risk**

52.23-24 **Applications for Honorary, Visiting and Emeritus Professors – Faculty of Health Studies (Document SEN052/23-24)**

52.1 Senate considered and **approved** an application for the Honorary Professor appointment for Dr Sohail Abbas in the Faculty of Health Studies for a period of three years with effect from the 2 January 2024.

53.23-24 **UKVI Policy, Procedure and accountability (Document SEN053/23-24)**

53.1 The Interim Academic Registrar provided an overview of the report noting that it followed a proposal made to Senate in July 2023 relating to the approach taken to manage risks and requirements in relation to UKVI.

53.2 The Senate was advised the Visa Compliance Group had been relaunched. It was meeting monthly and reporting to Executive Board. Oversight of UKVI was being maintained with the assistance of a risk register and feedback was being used to ensure continuous improvement of processes.

53.3 The Senate noted that all outstanding risks in relation to Registry and Student Administration had been addressed and as such **endorsed** the actions as presented in the report.

54.23-24 **Safeguarding & Prevent update 2023-24 (Document SEN054/23-24)**

54.1 The PVC Learning Teaching and Student Experience provided an overview of the report and advised Senate that since it had been written responsibility for Prevent had moved to the Centre for Inclusion and Diversity following the appointment of a Dignity and Respect Support Manager. The Prevent lead remained unchanged.

54.2 The Senate was advised the report provided an overview of the university obligations in relation to its safeguarding and Prevent duties and highlighted activity in relation to UKVI

compliance and the development of a safeguarding training place and associated resources. Safeguarding training events were run on a regular basis and all members were encouraged to attend.

54.3 The Senate discussed the report and noted that it was essential that UBIC were undertaking appropriate action in relation to Safeguarding and Prevent via the Joint Academic Board.

54.4 **ACTION: Ensure UBIC are fulfilling requirements for Safeguarding and Prevent. DVC/PVC, LTSE.**

55.23-24 **Research and Innovation Committee (Document SEN055/23-24)**

55.1 The PVC Research, Innovation and Engagement provided an overview of the report noting it provided a summary of the activity of the Committee at its last meeting.

55.2 The Senate discussed the report and **approved** the Author Rights Retention Policy and endorsed the Researcher Concordat submission **recommending it for the approval** of Council.

56.23-24 **Honorary Awards Committee (Document SEN056/23-24)**

56.1 The Vice-Chancellor presented for approval recommendations made at the Honorary Awards Committee on the 8 January 2024.

56.2 The Senate considered the recommendations for one Outstanding Contribution Award and seven for Honorary Degree. One objection was received to two of the nominations.

56.3 The Senate **approved** the recommendations for eight honorary awards by a majority.

57.23-24 **Learning & Teaching Committee (Document SEN057/23-24)**

57.1 The Committee received and noted the report.

58.23-24 **People Matters (Document SEN058/23-24)**

58.1 The Committee received and noted the report.

59.23-24 **Minutes of the meeting on 18 October 2023 (Document SEN059/23-24)**

59.1 The Committee received and noted the report.

60.23-24 **Matters arising and action tracker (Document SEN060/23-24)**

60.1 The Committee received and noted the report.

61.23-24 **Faculty Board Summaries**

61.1 **Faculty of Engineering and Digital Technologies (Document SEN061/23-24)**

61.2 The Committee received and noted the report.

61.3 **Faculty of Health Studies (Document SEN062/23-24)**

61.4 The Committee received and noted the report.

61.5 **Faculty of Life Sciences (Document SEN063/23-24)**

61.6 The Committee received and noted the report.

61.7 **Faculty of Management, Law, and Social Sciences (Document SEN064/23-24)**

61.8 The Committee received and noted the report.

62.23-24 **Register of Interests (Document SEN065/23-24)**

62.1 The Committee received and noted the report.

63.23-24 **Draft agenda for the meeting on 13 March 2024 (Document SEN066/23-24)**

63.1 The Committee received and noted the report.

64.23-24 **Schedule of Business 2023-24 (Document SEN067/23-24)**

64.1 The Committee received and noted the report.

65.23-24 **Terms of reference and membership 2023-24 (Document SEN056/23-24)**

65.1 The Committee received and noted the report.

66.23-24 **Any other business**

66.1 The Senate was advised that a national review in relation to suicides in Higher Education was being undertaken by NCISH with a report expected in the Spring of 2025 that would outline good practice as well as areas for improvement. The Associate Director Student Success & Well Student would co-ordinate the institutional response and ensure its connection to the mental health framework.

66.2 The Senate was also advised that the Department for Education had asked the Office for Students to review the use of student recruitment agents within the sector.

Secretary: Katherine Wass, Governance and Projects Officer

Date: 23 February 2024

