

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

SENATUS ACADEMICUS

Minutes of the meeting held on 2 November 2022

Present: Rasha Abu Eid, Kaitlin Agius, Waheed Afzal, Julia Allan, Scott Allan, Sumeet Aphale, Joanne Anderson, Lesley Anderson, Euan Bain, Simon Bains, William Barlow, William Barras, Siladitya Bhattacharya, Harminder Battu, Thomas Bodey, Jason Bohan, George Boyne, Alex Brasier, Abbe Brown, Marion Campbell, Alice Calesso, Isla Callander, Alessandra Cecolin, Delma Childers, Chris Collins, Matthew Collinson, David Cornwell, Irene Couzigou, Rebecca Crozier, Chantal den Daas, Mirela Delibegovic, Andrew Dilley, Pete Edwards, Marie-Luise Ehrenschwendtner, Tom Escuti, Karin Friedrich, Isla Graham, Malcom Harvey, Peter Henderson, Richard Hepworth, Constanze Hesse, Jonathan Hicks, Alison Jenkinson, Gareth Jones, Dragan Jovicic, Kirsty Kiezebrink, Karl Leydecker, Beth Lord, Laura McCann, Catriona MacDonald, David McGloin, Gary MacFarlane, Nicola McIlraith, Michelle MacLeod, Alasdair MacKenzie, Andrew McKinnon, Vanessa Mabonso Nzolo, Kathryn Martin, Samantha Miller, Thomas Muinzer, David Muirhead, Mintu Nath, Graeme Nixon, Adeleja Israel Osofero, Nir Oren, Amudha Poobalan, Graeme Paton, Ekaterina Pavlovskaja, Michelle Pinard, Bettina Platt, Tom Rist, Justin Rochford, Miles Rothoerl, Thereza Raquel Sales de Aguiar, Karen Scott, Diane Skåtun, Benjamin Liviu Stefan, Ann-Michelle Slater, Alan Speight, Valerie Speirs, Mary Stephen, Lorna Stewart, Ruth Taylor, Dawn Thomson, Neil Vargesson, Jennifer Walklate, Adelyn Wilson, Tracey White, Ursula Witte, Ilia Xypolia, Zeray Yidhego.

Apologies: John Barrow, Sandi Cleland, Kate Gillies, Greg Gordon, Georgios Leontidis, Pietro Marini, Martin Mills, Jonathan Pettit, Brice Rea, Joachim Schaper.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

- 23.1 The Principal opened the meeting, welcoming members of Senate to the meeting and in particular the new members attending for the first time.
- 23.2 The Secretary reminded members of procedures: the meeting would be recorded; members were asked to state their name before contributing to discussion and advised to use the chat function to state when they wished to ask a question, members were reminded that the chat itself does not form part of the formal minute, and to remain muted when not speaking. Any voting would take place using the auditorium functionality for those present in person and Forms within the chat for those on Teams.
- 23.3 Members of the Senate approved the agenda and the meeting proceeded.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- 24.1 Members of the Senate approved the minutes of 21 September 2022 subject to minor amendments to the attendance.

- 24.2 Matthew Collinson, School of Natural & Computing Sciences, raised a query in relation to the minutes of 28 September and a point he had made in relation to audio recordings (minute 19.17 refers). He had sought clarification as to why the lawful basis of legitimate public task was not appropriate for audio recordings of Senate. The Secretary agreed the minute would be amended to include this point. Subject to this amendment, and minor amendments to the attendance, the minutes of 28 September 2022 were approved.

ORAL REPORT FROM THE PRINCIPAL AND UPDATE ON THE SECTOR/UNIVERSITY DEVELOPMENTS

- 25.1 In addition to the written report on developments within the sector, the Principal noted that he was approximately half-way through his schedule of school visits. The visits undertaken so far had been very constructive and collegial. The Principal highlighted that student recruitment for the current academic year had not been as strong as expected and consequently the University was behind the expected revenue. It is hoped that some of this would be made up through the January student intake, however, it is not anticipated the shortfall would be reversed entirely and hence planned spending would be slowed down. Details would be confirmed once numbers in January are known. He noted that members of SMT and others had been working hard to rectify the difficulties encountered in September, some of which were external, and some were internal. He noted that there would be an Open Session on 14 November, and this would provide an opportunity for the whole community to be updated on the planned actions in this context. The Principal also highlighted the adverts for the 20 interdisciplinary fellows had resulted in 420 applications which were being taken forward by the Interdisciplinary Directors and Heads of School.
- 25.2 Karin Friedrich, School of Divinity, History, Philosophy and Art History, queried whether the recruitment shortfall had been created by recruiting fewer students than last year or fewer students than the University had been aiming for.
- 25.3 The Principal clarified that the University had generated more revenue from student recruitment than last year. If the January intake went well, revenue would be 15% ahead of last year but with fewer students.

REPORT FROM THE UNIVERSITY COURT

- 26.1 Diane Skåtun, on behalf of the Senate Assessors, provided an update on the October 2022 meeting of the University Court which had preceded the Court Strategy Day. In addition to the written report included in the Senate papers, Diane highlighted that some of the papers considered at Court were available from the committees' [website](#). Diane noted that, following the recent election, all four Senate Assessors had been present for the meeting as Ilia had joined them for the meeting. Diane reminded Senate that anyone wishing further information in relation to Court should feel free to contact the Assessors.

PROMOTIONS REVIEW

- 27.1 Karl Leydecker, Senior Vice-Principal, introduced the papers detailing the fully revised and reworked promotions system, at Senate for approval. He reminded Senate that much of the process had been considered at Senate previously. The papers now also included the detailed criteria. Karl highlighted areas which had changed following feedback received at Senate. Specifically, the discussion around the need for parity across the various career tracks had resulted in scrutiny of the framework to ensure this was the case. Karl noted that a Research+

track had been introduced to reflect that staff on research contracts may have less time to provide evidence under other pillars and this could be used to compensate for lower levels elsewhere.

- 27.2 Karl also highlighted that further clarification had been added in response to feedback received, for example the possibility of applying in a subsequent promotion round had been added. He noted that the discussion at Partnership & Negotiating Consultative Committee (PNCC) on 1 November had led to additions to indicate that the inclusion of high-quality research applications, regardless of the success of the application, was a valid criterion in recognition that not all applications could be successful, particularly in the current funding climate.
- 27.3 Karl noted that, with approval from Senate, it was anticipated that the new framework would be used in the next round of promotions, to be launched in December, that would take effect from 1 August 2023. He confirmed that there was still the possibility of making further amendments if required to meet the approval of Senate.
- 27.4 Abbe Brown, Dean for Student Support, queried whether there was specific recognition of the role of Personal Tutor in the framework? She also noted that Trademark should be one word and not as appeared in the documentation.
- 27.5 Karl confirmed that if the Personal Tutor role had been omitted this was an error which would be rectified.
- 27.6 Iliia Xypolia, School of Social Science, queried the procedures to be utilised in terms of anonymity. She noted that although the current system was anonymous and gender blind the inclusion of surname on the top of forms conveys gender for some cultures. She queried whether surnames would be included on the paperwork for the new process.
- 27.7 Karl confirmed that the new process would not be anonymised in the same way as the current system, which was only anonymous at the Role Analyst stage. Instead, the inclusion of the Social Bias Observers/Trade Union Observers in the revised system was designed to counteract the possibility of social bias, hence the process would not be anonymised.
- 27.8 Iliia went on to detail concerns raised by constituents with the inclusion of the 'research income' criteria and the associated wording. She gave the example of Grant Income and queried whether this related to applications for grants or actual income received. She requested that the language used is made more explicit to ensure that staff are not discouraged from applying for promotion on the basis that high quality applications had been unsuccessful in being awarded funding due to the nature of the funding environment.
- 27.9 Karl responded to say that feedback had already been received on this point and revised wording had already been prepared.
- 27.10 Marion Campbell, Vice-Principal (Research), confirmed the revised wording as 'high quality grant applications leading to grant income acquisition or high-quality fundable level funder scores' to address the issue raised. Marion further noted that the Chief Executive of the British Academy had confirmed that randomisation of awards would only be partial and would only apply above a certain threshold.
- 27.11 Diane Skåtun, School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition, noted the paper referred to approval but the agenda indicated an academic view was sought which was confusing.
- 27.12 Karl confirmed the paper was for approval as it had been considered by Senate on a previous occasion.

- 27.13 Diane further noted references to the workload model in the paper noting this was at Senate for an academic view and so queried how the promotions paper could be considered for approval before the workload model had been discussed.
- 27.14 Diane highlighted a variety of points raised by constituents: more than half of research only contract staff were in her school many of whom viewed this as their career. These staff had welcomed the inclusion of the Research+ criteria; queries had been received from staff who had been working towards promotion using the current criteria and how the new system would interface for these staff; section 4.5.4, in defining who would be on the promotions committee, refers to 'senior colleagues' which is subsequently defined in 4.5.9 as 'professorial level' however elsewhere the Committee could include Vice-Principals or Deans. As Deans could be appointed at all levels it was suggested that any Deans included should be at least the same level as those being assessed. Diane further highlighted references in Appendix Two to proposed changes to job titles for research track staff which are not referenced elsewhere in the documentation; the proposed implementation date of 2022 being tight given the workload model changes had not yet been agreed; queries had been received around the inclusion of an academic CV in the required documentation; in the context of colleagues going through the new process ahead of any evaluation of the operation of the process – how would these colleagues benefit from the implementation of any process changes identified by the evaluation?
- 27.15 Responding, Karl highlighted that any changes to a promotions system inevitably had to include a cut off in judging applications using the new system. This is unavoidable. He noted that there would be a further meeting of the Review Group to discuss the application documentation and how a narrative CV is integrated to this rather than requiring two separate documents as currently. The new documentation would have two parts. The main part setting out the case, and a supplementary part to detail factual information. Karl noted that changing to the new process would require a change in nomenclature around the various career tracks and that discussion was already underway with trade union colleagues on the Group around a Collective Agreement to change, for example, references to 'teaching' in contracts to 'education'. He further noted discussion around titles for grade seven research staff which had been considering whether these should change from Research Fellow/Senior Research Fellow to Lecturer (Research). This discussion was still ongoing and hence the paper does not include formal proposals in this regard. In terms of promotion panel membership Karl noted the intention to include a good balance of staff to ensure members are able to make the relevant judgements; hence the proposal is four members of professorial staff on each of the two committees to set a level of seniority; an Interdisciplinary Director to help ensure interdisciplinarity is assessed appropriately; Vice-Principals or their representatives, noting that as with the current role analysts, these may not be at professorial level.
- 27.16 Diane clarified that in terms of changing systems colleagues may have acted differently if they felt the system change beneficial/less favourable and that the swift implementation denied the opportunity for that judgement to be made.
- 27.17 Ekaterina Pavlovskaja, School of Engineering, queried how the two systems would run in parallel? Colleagues applying in September won't have received decisions before the new system comes in, in December, and how should unsuccessful applicants be advised in terms of the system changes.
- 27.18 Karl noted that this aspect had not yet been considered and undertook to take this point back to the Group.
- 27.19 Richard Hepworth, School of Natural & Computing Sciences, requested that variations between disciplines be recognised more uniformly throughout the document. In terms of the process, he observed that the current process includes subcommittees looking at subsets of

school(s) enabling a degree of subject specialisation in the committee. This will not be the case in the new process, and would the new committees be qualified to make judgements on the staff they are considering; the new process risks making Heads of School even more of a bottleneck than they are currently. He queried the possibility of incorporating breadth of subjects within the choice of senior academics for the committees in addition to increasing the number of these individuals.

- 27.20 Karl confirmed the possibility of school-level committees had been discussed by the Group but rejected as too heavy a process with too much bureaucracy. The Group do expect Heads of School to draw on expertise of senior colleagues within the school to ensure specialist discipline knowledge has been considered. Vice-Principals and Interdisciplinary Directors also have a subject background and thus would further augment the range of disciplines within each committee. Ultimately, committees will be guided by the External Referees who will provide specialist advice as to whether candidates meet the criteria expected. The Group acknowledged that if the balance on committees transpires not to be correct this would be reviewed, however, it had been the view that having one committee to look at all applications would provide better consistency in the decisions taken. Karl also agreed that the language in the documentation would be strengthened in terms of expressing the need for representation from a range of disciplines.
- 27.21 Tom Rist, School of Language, Literature, Music and Visual Culture, was supportive of the points made by Richard in terms of the range of disciplines included on committees. Tom was also supportive of the point made by Diane regarding the interdependency of the promotions proposals with the, as yet, unapproved workload model. Tom sought clarity around references in the documentation to 'line manager' and whether this should be 'academic line manager' and also queried what training would be available to this individual to evaluate and advise potential candidates regarding promotion. Tom queried what consideration had been given to simplifying the Promotion Application Form to make it more usable for 'time-pressed' academics.
- 27.22 Karl reconfirmed that the form would be receiving further consideration with a view to simplification and consideration would also be given to which evidence was already available in other formats, for example in PURE, and how this could be utilised and supplemented as part of the process. Karl acknowledged the significant amount of training and briefing which would be required for everyone involved in the new process and also acknowledged the need for senior colleagues' involvement in the rollout of such a significant change. He noted that the new system was intended to address deficits within the existing system, for example inequalities of access to certain grades in some areas, and as such the magnitude of the change required should not be underestimated. Karl reiterated the importance of the change in supporting individual career alignment with the institutional aims and values detailed as part of Aberdeen 2040. Karl confirmed there would be a significant level of detail in the implementation plan which would clarify intentions behind the changes being made but work with the implementation could only proceed once the details of the framework and criteria had received approval.
- 27.23 Aravinda Guntupalli, School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition, had received a query in connection with citizenship and whether some research risked being double counted as the same examples might be used as evidence in support of interdisciplinarity in addition to other parts of the portfolio. She also queried the extent to which some equality protected characteristics, not explicitly detailed in the documentation, might be accounted for in the process and how statistics from the sector might be taken into consideration. Also, in connection with equality and diversity she had received a query in relation to unconscious bias training which questioned whether Human Resources were the correct providers for this

training and whether further clarification could be provided regarding conflict of interest and who the conflict is considered to relate to.

- 27.24 Marion Campbell, Vice-Principal (Research) clarified that in the context of citizenship the criteria do not relate to the 'doing' of the research or teaching but rather the promotion and building of synergies and networks of wider examples in support of the promotion of interdisciplinarity as part of Aberdeen 2040.
- 27.25 Karl confirmed that he would ensure appropriate consideration was given to who should provide unconscious bias training; that conflict of interest should apply to anyone who feels they are conflicted in any way with a particular application and that if this was not clear in the documentation, he would be happy to revisit.
- 27.26 An elected member noted the difficulties associated with generating research income in some especially competitive disciplines; she also welcomed the reduction in the weighting of administration in the new system but questioned how this could be achieved without the recruitment of additional support staff.
- 27.27 Karl confirmed that the earlier discussion (minute 27.11) had already dealt with the issue of competition for research funding and that the issues with amount of administration would be addressed in the discussion of workload models.
- 27.28 Nir Oren, School of Natural & Computing Sciences, raised two points. Firstly, section 4.1 highlighted the importance of the annual review process within the promotion process and suggested that there might be value in incorporating the annual review documentation as part of the promotion documentation. Secondly, he noted the importance of the wording used in making a promotion application and suggested that there would be the potential to disadvantage non-native English speakers because of this. He noted that he had previously contacted Marion in this context to suggest support should be made available for writing grant proposals and that this could be widened to include promotion applications for non-native speakers. He suggested that the relative success of application might be monitored to see if this was an issue.
- 27.29 Karl confirmed that the intention was to ensure that everyone applying receives the best possible support, and that schools and line managers all have a role to play in this whether it is support for grant or promotion applications. Karl noted that he was unsure whether having all annual review documentation available as part of a promotion application was appropriate given the annual review was a private conversation between the individuals. He further noted that work was also required to train academic line managers carrying out annual reviews – this work had been paused during the pandemic but the need for training remained to ensure that line managers are aware of their responsibilities both in terms of supporting annual review and promotion applications. The intention is that there should be a seamless process of supporting staff from appointment through to promotion. With such a process there should be fewer people being turned down for promotion as there will be a common understanding within the institution of exactly what is expected at each career stage.
- 27.30 Rasha Abu Eid, School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition, requested clarity between choice of tracks in terms of clinical or scholarship and how this relates to contracts. Additionally, she had received a query regarding postgraduate qualifications in a specialist area being required for level two on the clinical track and noted that this might put clinicians from some areas at a relative disadvantage because of the difficulty associated with gaining access to some specialties.
- 27.31 Karl clarified that the details referred to were not requirements but were criteria for candidates to bring evidence towards – there is no expectation that anyone meets all the

- criteria in one area. The system is designed with maximum flexibility in mind for colleagues to apply under the pillars they feel most appropriate to their individual circumstances.
- 27.32 Malcolm Harvey, School of Social Science noted the conflation of the promotions item with the workload item and sought clarification on procedure if the workload item did not gain approval from Senate but the promotion review had already been passed.
- 27.33 Tracey Slaven, University Secretary, noted that policy development in this area is always an iterative process and that if further work were to be required on the workload model it would not undermine decisions made regarding the promotions process but rather the promotions process must be implementable in the context of the current workload model.
- 27.34 Euan Bain, School of Engineering, noted that constituents had raised similar concerns with him in terms of the disciplinary mix of panels and also in terms of the number of committees and that, as it stands currently, the procedure does not place any limit on the volume of applications which might be considered by a committee and that this might have a negative effect on the quality of decision making of the committee. He also noted that a professorial colleague had already intimated that they would not wish to be considered as one of the senior panel members because of the threat of information overload for panel members. Setting a maximum to the number of applications considered by a panel would mitigate against this.
- 27.35 Karl responded that he did not think this would be possible as there is no notion of there being a quota for the number of promotion applications which could be considered in any particular year and that he hoped that senior colleagues across the university would recognise the privilege of being involved in the academic promotions process and therefore be willing to take this on. He noted that this had been his experience in other institutions where the role was seen as very important.
- 27.36 Euan confirmed that the intention had not been to limit the number of applications but rather to increase the number of Committees.
- 27.37 Karl expressed a preference to ensure an appropriate amount of time for the task rather than increase the number of committees. He noted that at other larger institutions and at the funding councils, where a significant number of applications are scrutinised, the expectation can be that up to two days be spent on the task. The group had considered this issue and concluded that the proposal represented the most efficient and effective use of the resource available.
- 27.38 The Principal noted that, subject to Senate's endorsement of the proposals, there was a further step in the process. The proposals would be considered by PNCC and so there is space in the process to incorporate the feedback from Senate's discussion and comments.
- 27.39 Tom Rist, School of Language, Literature, Music & Visual Culture expressed his concern that the workload paper had not been considered prior to the promotion paper.
- 27.40 Following some discussion and clarification that responsibility for final approval rests with PNCC, Diane Skåtun, School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition, formally proposed a motion to delay the decision on endorsement of the promotions processes until after the discussion of the workload paper. The motion was widely supported and so was carried by consensus.

WORKLOAD REVIEW FINAL REPORT

- 28.1 Karl Leydecker, Senior Vice-Principal, introduced the revised and updated report from the Workload Review Group noting this was anticipated to be the final report from the group. He indicated that the covering paper detailed the changes made since it was last considered by

Senate, and that these were highlighted in green within the document for ease of reference. For example, the issue raised at Senate previously regarding transparency and what this equates to in practise; the inclusion, at the request of the trade unions, of reference to contracted working hours; the introduction of time for those with very large grant applications or those carrying out significant work around impact or engagement together with several other aspects. Karl picked up a point from the previous discussion highlighting that the model does not prescribe ten percent for administration but refers to citizenship and wider contributions to Aberdeen 2040. The twenty percent allocation, which some colleagues had for administration, had been moved to be incorporated within research and teaching rather than it being a separate item to recognise that all colleagues carry out administration associated with those activities. In effect the move is from a notional 40:40:20 model to a 45:45:10 for those with Education and Research contracts with the 10% being for citizenship and wider activities, to link back to the promotions criteria.

- 28.2 Jen Walklate, School of Social Science, noted concerns about how this would be implemented, shifting from existing contracts.
- 28.3 Karl clarified that the 40:40:20 split is not in fact contractual rather it is a policy matter and so the change does not require any contractual amendments. This was also noted when the paper was discussed at PNCC.
- 28.4 Matthew Collinson, School of Natural & Computing Sciences, noted that in connection with work accrued for the delivery of courses, under 3.7, the adoption of one of three models is prescribed across the institution which seems to be indicating that one size will fit all. He highlighted that even within a school there is a huge range of variation between disciplines. To move from the current model to a more theoretical model requiring estimation of parameters is difficult, particularly without a track record to draw on. Estimation of parameters can cause significant upset where this is done incorrectly.
- 28.5 Karl acknowledged the amount of work associated with such an implementation and the need for the implementation to be preceded by a modelling process. Thus, the paper was seeking to first agree a set of principles before moving on to implementation. Karl highlighted the number of workload models in use within the university currently and noted that most were agreed that it would be good to move to a reasonably consistent method for assessing workload, while still having the flexibility to recognise the variety of types of delivery.
- 28.6 Richard Hepworth, School of Natural & Computing Sciences supported the comments made by Matthew Collinson (minute 28.4 above) and noted that the School of Natural & Computing Sciences had already undertaken work to model workloads within the School during the last academic year with the conclusion that the model needed in depth revision due to the complexity of the exercise. Richard suggested that the document did not make it clear why option three is the preferred option: benefits and difficulties are noted with all options, but it is not clear why option three is the best. Richard highlighted that under option two (the light touch model) it was noted that one downside to the model might be disparities between schools in allocations made for the same activities which might cause concerns, however this is normal. It might be argued that there would be consistency expected between schools for some activities, for example being an elected senator, while other activities, for example PhD supervision would vary enormously between disciplines and this should be treated as a fact rather than a downside.
- 28.7 Karl noted that the document did explain why option three was considered the preferred option and suggested the experience of the School of Natural & Computing Sciences would be useful. Karl noted that different schools were in different places in terms of workload modelling. What is being sought is the establishment of some broad principles which would permit progress to be made with the next stage of the process. The allocation of work

associated with teaching activities is the most complex and is the aspect which is of highest priority for most staff. For this reason, cognisance needs to be taken of the work done to date and School Administration Managers need to be involved to determine what works before any rollout across the University.

- 28.8 Karin Friedrich, School of Divinity, History, Philosophy and Art History, echoed the points made about differences between disciplines and noted that the administrative effort which had been included within the blocks of education and research activities has the effect of wiping out a lot of teaching hours leading to teaching hours being very difficult to allocate under the new model. The current model of heaping administration on top of teaching had led to the current sense of everyone being over worked, which leads to the conclusion that we will either need more staff or to reduce the number of hours taught.
- 28.9 Karl suggested that an alternative approach would be to make administration more efficient.
- 28.10 Peter Henderson, School of Natural & Computing Sciences, noted his support for the proposal and raised a concern expressed by colleagues that while the intention would be to balance hours, workloads also needed to be balanced across terms. Some staff, particularly those teaching postgraduate courses, have very bunched-up teaching and do a lot of teaching across the summer while this isn't the case for others. If there is no recognition of this, it can create problems finding time for research and taking leave. He also noted issues with time for personal tutoring particularly if this were to be expanded to include postgraduate students.
- 28.11 Karl highlighted that the need to spread work across the year is included at the end of section two of the documents, where Heads of School are asked to take this into account.
- 28.12 Thomas Muinzer, School of Law, noted that discussions in the School of Law had identified issues with the reconfiguration of allocation of administration. He cited himself as an example noting that he directed year three, co-directed a research area and he would be coordinator of two large courses next term and noted that everyone has similar large administrative loads. The quantification of these administrative roles would be extremely important in developing a workload model colleagues would be able to accept. He noted that staff may run courses on which they deliver no teaching which highlighted the need to ensure administration would be incorporated appropriately in any model developed.
- 28.13 Bettina Platt, School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition, noted that the approach to have university-wide guidelines categorised broadly as proposed, is the correct approach. To ensure that everyone is clear on what the overarching expectations are, while still having flexibility at the school level, she suggested that examples should be school specific. Academic line-managers should be the ones making the judgement as to whether there is a reasonable balance for an individual as there will be activities which the document does not recognise explicitly. She queried how it would be possible to quantify and assess the proportions and whether the TRAC system would continue. How would the system measure workload and what would the consequences be if a Head of School or line-manager felt someone did not have an appropriate workload?
- 28.14 Alessandra Cecolin, School of Divinity, History, Philosophy and Art History, while recognising that the model aligns with institutional goals, noted that there would be the possibility that for staff in schools with large numbers of undergraduates the gap might widen between staff with large research grants and those required to cover teaching for them on account of the grant. This might be a particular issue for younger staff at the start of their research careers being expected to pick up excessive quantities of teaching to cover for staff with large grants. She queried whether this inclusion had the potential to further widen inequalities.
- 28.15 Zeray Yidhego, School of Law also welcomed the model and in particular the principles but noted that if there was a serious intention to quantify the jobs done, every effort needed to

be made to capture as many of the jobs done as possible. He cited, for example, writing references for students and graduates, an important and time-consuming task, and queried whether this was captured as part of teaching or research. He noted that there were many such tasks, which would be missed as part of a workload model.

- 28.16 Karl noted his expectation that writing references for current and graduated students would be included as part of teaching-related administration. In terms of queries raised around large grants, Karl clarified that this was only intended for the largest grants and was done with the intention of incentivising research activity following the recent REF outcome. The intention was to provide colleagues in receipt of the largest grants with recognition which would stand the University in good stead in the future.
- 28.17 The Principal highlighted that Senate was asked to approve the principles and direction of travel with workload planning not all the details surrounding implementation and suggested that this should be voted on.
- 28.18 Tracey confirmed the mechanisms for voting and the question asked together, with the options to approve, not approve or abstain.
- 28.19 Senate voted to approve the proposals for workload modelling with 72 votes in favour, 12 votes against and 11 abstentions.

PROMOTIONS REVIEW

- 29.1 Having voted to approve the proposals for workload modelling so clearly, Senate returned to the decision regarding the promotions review (minute 27.41 above refers). Senate agreed by consensus that the paper should proceed to be considered further by PNCC.

ITEMS FROM THE UNIVERSITY RESEARCH COMMITTEE - INSTITUTIONAL POLICY ON THE RESPONSIBLE USE OF METRICS

- 30.1 Marion Campbell, Vice-Principal (Research) introduced the draft institutional policy on the responsible use of metrics noting that the draft policy had already been discussed by the University Research Committee (URP) and that it was coming to Senate for an academic view. Marion noted that the University had signed up to the Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA) which commits the University to fairness and transparency around how metrics are used to assess research output. Therefore, the draft policy had been developed and was in front of Senate for comment.
- 30.2 Marion highlighted the overarching principles underpinning the document together with the responsibilities of the University to meet these responsibilities. The University is committed to the use of expert judgement and peer review to assess research outputs, recognising the various metrics which can aid that judgement and that the metrics should not be the sole drivers for judgement. The draft policy commits to expert judgement being the primary method of assessment augmented by a range of metrics. Marion noted that the paper included examples of what the 'basket' of metrics might include and that some of these might be useful in different contexts, for example in making an application for promotion.
- 30.3 Richard Hepworth, School of Natural & Computing Sciences welcomed the draft policy noting the paper referred to some common bibliometric measures, which included the instruction that they should be accessed via Scopus or Web of Science. Richard highlighted that these are not necessarily the best tools for all disciplines and requested that this might be rephrased as a suggestion rather than a direction.

- 30.4 Marion confirmed that there was no intention to be prescriptive and that this would be changed.
- 30.5 Iliia Xpolia, School of Social Science, provided feedback from her school who had raised concern with the use of 'experts' which were not defined in the paper.
- 30.6 Marion confirmed that this would be clarified to make it clear that this was intended to mean experts in the disciplinary field.
- 30.7 Aravinda Guntupalli, School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition, raised the issue of bias in some of the metrics highlighting evidence that female researchers are less likely to be cited and that the potential exists for bias on the basis of other characteristics. She noted the importance of there being an equality and diversity perspective included in the policy.
- 30.8 In noting the importance of this point Marion reiterated the importance of not focusing on one single metric but rather including a spectrum of metrics to augment expert review.
- 30.9 Bettina Platt, School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition, noted a particular issue with the use of Altmetrics as online media are particularly bad for citing things that are outrageous, and in some instances wrong, leading to these metrics potentially being biased and not a good indication of esteem.
- 30.10 Marion noted that this is not just an issue with online metrics and often the most highly cited references are those that are wrong. This adds to the need to take measures collectively and not as a single source of truth and this aspect would be strengthened in the paper.
- 30.11 The Principal noted that the paper would return to the next meeting of Senate.

**ITEMS FROM THE UNIVERSITY RESEARCH COMMITTEE –
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONCORDAT FOR RESEARCHER DEVELOPMENT**

- 31.1 Mirela Delibegovic, Dean for Industrial Engagement in Research and Knowledge Transfer, provided a brief presentation on the University's progress with implementation of the Concordat for the Career Development of Researchers.
- 31.2 Mirela reminded Senate that the University had signed up to the Concordat in July 2020 and that as a signatory the University had committed to improving the development of our researchers, their employment and wider support for researchers.
- 31.3 Consultation on implementation had been undertaken via the Concordat Steering Group and the Postdoctoral Research committee from November 2021 to develop an action plan. The Steering Group had identified the need for institutional agreement on a set of high-level principles needed to fulfil institutional commitments. In addition, in March 2022, recommendations had been made by the Research Culture Task and Finish Group (TFG) under the headings of a) Research Careers b) The Experience.
- 31.4 The TFG had recommended that early career research staff should be helped to develop research independence through being provided with:
- access to development opportunities, resources and support
 - a minimum expectation for 10 days development per year
 - mentoring and career guidance
 - an explicit promotions pathway
 - and representation as part of institutional decision making

- 31.5 Mirela further noted that the Group had acknowledged that some of the recommendations would have workload and financial implications, but that there were significant reputational risks associated with not proceeding with this work as we seek to strengthen Institutional potential.
- 31.6 Jen Walklate, School of Social Science queried how staff on teaching fellow contracts would fit into these proposals.
- 31.7 Mirela confirmed that consideration of this aspect fell within the remit of the Research Culture discussions and that inclusion of Teaching Fellows would be brought into those discussions.

**ITEMS FROM THE UNIVERSITY RESEARCH COMMITTEE –
RESEARCH PUBLICATION POLICY**

- 32.1 Simon Bains, University Librarian introduced the Research Publications Policy now in front of Senate for approval following discussion at Senate in September. Simon noted that the revised paper included specific responses, in section 4.1, to issues raised by Senate members previously.
- 32.2 Simon reminded Senate that the purpose of the policy was to ensure that staff retained their rights over publications to help in ensuring the University can comply with funder mandates in terms of Open Access. The policy sought to help to support aims within Aberdeen 2040 around access to research findings.
- 32.3 Simon noted that some publishers' systems made it impossible not to sign over rights as part of the submission process. Having sought legal advice on the matter, Simon confirmed that it was still possible to retain rights in these circumstances and advice indicated that a prior declaration to retain rights would take precedence. If necessary, the Library would step in and contact a publisher directly on behalf of any academic experiencing issues in this regard. Simon highlighted that the issue did not apply only to Aberdeen and that the University was working with several partners on this including JISC who are lobbying publishers to ensure that systems work in the way they are needed to for universities.
- 32.4 Simon confirmed that the Library would handle discussions on behalf of any academic contacted by a publisher directly regarding rights retention and, if necessary, would remove a publication from public access pending the outcome of discussions. Simon reassured Senate that this was considered low risk and that the sector, as a whole, was reporting few issues in this context.
- 32.5 Regarding issues raised around costs, Simon noted that this approach was one way of contributing to reducing costs. The more manuscripts are available in open access repositories, the less the University has to pay to publishers to facilitate this. He cited the example of the journal Nature which currently charges £9,000 to place an article on open access. If the University were to have to use limited resource to keep paying for open access in this way, there would be a risk that resource would be exhausted and therefore the University would be unable to comply with funder requirements.
- 32.6 Simon highlighted his expectation that immediate Open Access would become a requirement of the REF, in order to be eligible for inclusion in REF.
- 32.7 Dragan Jovicic, School of Engineering noted he was supportive of moves towards immediate Open Access and thanked the Library for their work in this area. Dragan suggested two amendments: drafting currently reads as if permission to opt out needs to be granted by the Library; that REF does not currently require immediate Open Access so he suggested these statements should be removed from the policy

- 32.8 Dragan further raised a query around the requirement to include a statement in submissions advising publishers of University policy. He noted it was not possible to include such a statement as part of the paper and this would require a separate communication which the policy seems to suggest would be the responsibility of the authors. Authors do not know where to direct these communications and doing so would take up significant amount of time. Dragan suggested that the Library should take on this responsibility and inform publishers on behalf of all University authors.
- 32.9 Simon confirmed that authors would not require permission to opt out from the policy and the Library just needed to be aware of individual exceptions to ensure publications are handled appropriately; regarding the query whether it should be an individual author's responsibility or the Library's, Simon suggested that experience elsewhere suggested this should be done by both parties. The Library, working with the University's solicitors, would be contacting publishers to advise them of the University's policy but that authors should do this also. Simon indicated that, if the paper received approval, his next priority would be discussions with SMT around the timeline for implementation.
- 32.10 Marion Campbell, Vice-Principal (Research) confirmed that the ability to opt out of the Policy would only be available to authors if this would not lead them to be in contravention of their funding conditions.
- 32.11 An elected member queried with Simon his statement about 'risk being low' and sought clarification of who was at risk: if the risk to the University is low what is the risk to the author?
- 32.12 In response, Simon noted a lack of case law and that he had been advised there would be no risk provided the publisher could not reasonably claim that they had not been made aware of the policy and hence the proposed approach of writing to publishers together with authors drawing their rights retention to the publisher's attention at the time of submission. Such a dual approach would make it impossible for any claim of not being aware of the policy to stand. Simon further noted the practise had been in place globally since 2007 with no reported difficulties.
- 32.13 An elected member noted that the workflows used by publishers made it very difficult to make a submission without signing away rights. In response, Simon acknowledged this was where it was particularly important that the community worked together and with JISC to ensure publishers' processes do not require this and the Library would offer support in this context.
- 32.14 Members confirmed their wish to hold a vote on the proposed policy. The Secretary confirmed the processes. Senate voted 61 in favour of the proposal, with 9 against and 13 abstentions. The Policy was approved.

ITEMS FROM THE UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE -

DECOLONISING THE CURRICULUM

- 33.1 Ruth Taylor, Vice-Principal (Education) introduced the paper proposing the roadmap for the work to be undertaken over the following years to decolonise the curriculum. She noted the paper focused on process and did not seek to prescribe how individual schools should achieve this and rather focused on the timelines the community might adopt. Ruth noted that the paper had been discussed by the Education Committee and included some feedback from that discussion.
- 33.2 For new Senate members, Ruth outlined that the Steering Group had been meeting since 2021 noting that school leads had been engaged and had worked as a collaborative, energised

- group. The Group had been informed by the work of the external Anti-Racist Curriculum Group which had arisen from work by QAA Scotland and AdvanceHE.
- 33.3 Ruth highlighted the need for the University to address the issue of the degree awarding gap which exists for our Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) students and noted that this process was part of that. The Group were developing resources, including a toolkit, to help schools at different stages of the process to take work forward. There were not intended to be prescriptive, and development would continue with these.
- 33.4 Ruth further highlighted that the principles for the timeline outlined in the paper were intended to be supportive, acknowledging that good work is already underway in some parts of the institution.
- 33.5 The principles focus on school education committees taking ownership of the process ensuring that the work is taken forward in a way that works for individual schools and disciplines. The timelines proposed in the paper suggest, where work has not already begun, it should do so in the current academic year and that by the end of 2023/24 schools will have looked across their provision and that by 2024/25, where not already achieved, content and assessment changes can be taken through school and university quality assurance processes with the aim of having the University implement all the curriculum changes by 2025/26.
- 33.6 Aravinda Guntupalli, School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition, welcomed the concept that this would not be a discrete process and would evolve through time. She noted that colleagues in the School of Social Science had established three groups to review the curriculum. There was clearly good work being undertaken and she asked whether this work could be shared.
- 33.7 Jen Walklate, School of Social Science welcomed the document and stressed the importance of decolonisation within the 'hidden' curriculum, in terms of making structures and mechanisms supporting the process, accessible. Work cannot focus solely on the curriculum.
- 33.8 Ilia Xpolia, School of Social Science suggested that the definition in the paper should become a working definition to reflect the dynamism of the process. She also noted the importance of ensuring inclusion of the Qatar campus in the process and how we articulate the inclusion of colleagues in Qatar within the process.
- 33.9 In response, Ruth acknowledged the importance of sharing good practice and noted one of the aims of the Group was to provide case studies and publications from the work across the institution. Ruth noted that there isn't a single thing to be done to address all the issues. She noted the Race Equality Strategy Group and the Anti-Racism Strategy aims to take forward our university ambitions on antiracism through a holistic approach. One of the workstreams for decolonising the curriculum is seeking to articulate all the work going on across the University. The work is seeking to address all University curriculum which includes the curriculum delivered in Qatar. The Qatar curriculum is the same as that in Aberdeen and so is definitely part of this work. Colleagues in Qatar are part of the Group.

ITEMS FROM THE UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE –

ACADEMIC YEAR 2023/24

- 34.1 Alan Speight, Vice-Principal (Global Engagement) introduced the paper seeking approval for the continuation into 2023/24 of the arrangements in place currently for 2022/23. The paper was revised to include responses to the feedback from the previous discussion at Senate. Alan noted the proposed extension would provide sufficient time for the Aberdeen 2040 Curriculum work to be undertaken to inform any changes to the future structure of the academic year from 2024/25 onwards, together with consideration of relevant student recruitment requirements.

- 34.2 Alan noted that the recruitment cycle is already in progress and clarity is required on the start date to permit its inclusion in offers being made to students. He noted the importance of providing the best opportunities possible for students to complete all required processes ahead of their arrival and of minimising late arrivals. The continuation of arrangements into 2023/24 enables support to be provided to international students who are still facing both direct and indirect pandemic-related disruption. The start date also aids with recruitment of students from countries where academic results are not available until later in the cycle, for example, from South Asia. He also noted that there is an increasing number of UK students opting to join through the Clearing process once their grades are known. He noted that the final stages of the conversion process, the period between offer making and registration, had become increasingly complex and therefore it is important that we provide as much time as possible for this stage. Increased diversification has brought increasing checks within the process which we must accommodate in our procedures. This will maximise our chances of reaching recruitment and tuition fee targets for September 2023.
- 34.3 The later start date would permit the University to remain competitive with comparator institutions. Alan noted the relatively late start date for Aberdeen was still comparatively early when viewed against our comparator set. To adopt a start-date any earlier than that proposed would very seriously constrain and compromise our ability to recruit students with attendant financial consequences.
- 34.4 Ruth Taylor, Vice-Principal (Education) drew Senate's attention to the feedback received in September and to section eight of the paper which lays out each item with a response. Ruth noted the overarching work ongoing around the structure from 2024/25 and noted that five models were under consideration currently and that there would be opportunity for discussion of these as work progresses. Feedback received previously which has not been incorporated for 2023/24 would be drawn into the work on 2024/25.
- 34.5 Ruth highlighted the structure proposed: the eleven plus two teaching and assessment weeks, with the 'floating' week for revision, does provide some flexibility for implementation in discipline areas.
- 34.6 Ruth noted that the proposal was not seeking approval at this time for marking deadlines as these were now the responsibility of the Quality Assurance Committee and would come back as part of the usual processes.
- 34.7 The Principal reiterated his comments from the discussion previously to note the essential requirement that the University has a competitive start date. He highlighted the significant investments planned for 2023/24 and the requirement the University gives itself the best possible opportunity to recruit students in support of that.
- 34.8 Diane Skåtun, School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition sought clarification of whether approval of marking deadlines was a matter for Senate that couldn't be approved without reference to Senate.
- 34.9 The Secretary clarified that with delegated authority to approve, the subcommittees of Senate had the power to approve business unless something was considered particularly contentious, for which Senate's input was required.
- 39.10 Neil Vargesson, School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition, sought clarification around whether teaching would still be considered on days categorised as falling into school holidays to permit staff to take annual leave.
- 39.11 Ruth confirmed that this is an area being considered closely and hence the public holidays are highlighted. Ruth confirmed that wherever possible teaching would be avoided on public

holidays however, where this was not possible, it must be made clear that staff were entitled to a day's leave in lieu which they should be encouraged to take.

- 39.12 Joanne Anderson, School of Divinity, History, Philosophy and Art History supported the point made by Neil and noted the challenges associated with accommodating local school holidays. She noted that the University not having a fixed reading week further complicated matters for staff when planning annual leave.
- 39.13 Ruth noted an understanding of the issue and highlighted that the 'floating' week is available for schools to use in whatever format is most appropriate in their disciplines. Going forward, this was a principal included in considerations. She noted the situation is further complicated by the nonalignment of school holidays between Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire.
- 39.14 The Principal noted the complexities of the situation and confirmed that Ruth was committed to taking these into account. Senate approved the proposal by consensus.

ITEMS FROM THE UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE –

UEC REPORT TO SENATE

- 40.1 Ruth Taylor, Vice-Principal (Education) drew Senate's attention to the routine report from the Education Committee and highlighted the items for approval in particular the amended Code of Practice on Student Discipline (Non-Academic). Ruth highlighted the strong focus the Committee had had on Aberdeen 2040 together with Assessment and Feedback as Institutional priorities. Ruth also drew Senate's attention to the beginning of the new approach to quality enhancement within the sector, noting that the documentation to be submitted to the Quality Assurance Agency Scotland (QAAS) was currently being finalised prior to submission to QAAS at the end of 2022, in preparation for the visit taking place in 2023. As part of this preparation a joint meeting of UEC and QAC had been scheduled to consider the documentation.
- 40.2 Senate confirmed its approval of the amended Code of Practice on Student Discipline (Non-Academic).

GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS TRAVEL

- 41.1 Gary MacFarlane, Dean for Interdisciplinary Research and Impact, highlighted the importance of domestic and international business travel in underpinning many key activities across education, research and student recruitment. Given the importance of travel, the University has taken a fresh look at how these essential activities are conducted due to their environmental impact and the commitment to be Net Zero before 2040.
- 41.2 The Sustainable Business Travel Working Group was set up by the Sustainable Development Committee to lead the work. The Group undertook an extensive consultation process including an online survey, focus groups and a confidential mailbox for written submissions. Gary noted the Working Group Report and recommendations had already been considered by SMT and PNCC. The Group had proposed a set of guiding principles and a Travel Hierarchy which are presented to Senate ahead of wider communication to the University.
- 41.3 Gary encouraged members of Senate to promote the principles in their constituencies and to encourage colleagues to make use of the principles when considering travel on University business.
- 41.4 Gary highlighted the four principles established by the Group as being:

Guiding Principle 1

Informed choices about what travel is required, and the way in which it is undertaken, will be made within a framework which takes account of the importance of business travel, its environmental impact, and consideration of alternative ways of undertaking the activity.

Guiding Principle 2

Informed choices about business travel will be taken within the context of the Aberdeen 2040 strategy and our commitment to achieving net zero carbon emissions before 2040. We will adopt a fair and transparent approach to monitoring our progress to meeting this commitment.

Guiding Principle 3

Our business travel procedures will be underpinned by a fair, transparent, inclusive and accessible process that takes account of the needs of the individual, teams and the University.

Guiding Principle 4

We will ensure that our approach and expectations in relation to sustainable business travel are communicated in an open and transparent way.

- 41.5 Gary noted that the Group had taken a balanced approach to recognise the need for business travel but also the need to reduce carbon emissions, taking account of the University's location and the associated travel challenges.
- 41.6 The Group had also sought to ensure parity in the approach taken to all categories and grades of staff.
- 41.7 The Principal noted the importance of the report as part of the University's commitment to sustainability and thanked the Group for their work in developing the set of proposals.
- 41.8 Matthew Collinson read a statement of behalf of Nir Oren, School of Natural & Computing Sciences who, while noting support for the proposals, had raised concerns with the apparent inflexibility of some, in particular the reliance on line managers and individuals to take decisions and the expectation that individuals would rationalise the need for travel; Nir encouraged the University to establish a carbon budget and establish a pathway for this to 2040; Nir had queried the origin of the six hour journey time specified in recommendation 19 and suggested it was purely arbitrary. Nir had expressed his support of the goals and noted the opportunity to become sector leaders in this area and suggested that the University might set more challenging targets.
- 41.9 Karl confirmed that Gary would pick these points up with Nir. He also encouraged others to engage with this significant change and to promulgate and discuss it, to ensure everyone buys into the Policy.

ANY OTHER ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

- 50.1 The Principal reminded members that noon on Monday 7 November was the deadline for volunteers for various Committees which include Senate elected members: Senate Business Committee, Honorary Degrees Committee, University Education Committee & Quality Assurance Committee.
- 50.2 Diane Skåtun, School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition suggested the Senate Business Committee should reflect on the time available to Senate when setting the agenda to ensure important papers were afforded sufficient time for discussion.

- 50.3 Tom Escuti, School Convener for Law asked if it would be possible for new student members to receive an induction to Senate.
- 50.4 The Secretary confirmed that she had recently run four such sessions and would be happy to do a similar session for students. The materials from the previous sessions were also available on the Senate [website](#).

UNIVERSITY RESEARCH COMMITTEE REPORT TO SENATE

- 51.1 Senate noted the routine report from the University Research Committee.

QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE REPORT TO SENATE

- 52.1 Senate noted the routine report from the Quality Assurance Committee.

SENATE ELECTION

- 53.1 Senate noted the arrangements approved by the Senate Business Committee for the election of new Senate members.

SENATE ASSESSOR ELECTION RESULT

- 54.1 Senate noted that in the recent election of a Senate Assessor to the University Court Iliia Xypolia from the School of Social Science had been elected to serve with immediate effect until 30 September 2023.