UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

SENATUS ACADEMICUS

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7 JUNE 2023

Present: Rasha Abu Eid, Adetayo Adeyemi, Kaitlin Agius, Akosua Akwaaboaa Akyem-Pepra, Waheed Afzal, Scott Allan, Joanne Anderson, Euan Bain, Simon Bains, Martin Barker, William Barlow, William Barras, John Barrow (Teams), Nigel Beacham, Daniel Berg, Thomas Bodey, George Boyne, Alex Brasier, Marion Campbell, Alice Calesso, Isla Callander, Alessandra Cecolin, Delma Childers, Chris Collins, Matthew Collinson, David Cornwell, Rebecca Crozier, Chantal den Daas, Andrew Dilley, Lauren Dorward, Pete Edwards, Marie-Luise Ehrenschwendtner, Karin Friedrich, Fatima Garcia Bernal, Beatriz Goulou, Aravinda Meera Guntupalli, Malcom Harvey, Richard Hepworth, Jonathan Hicks, Alison Jenkinson, Gareth Jones, Dragan Jovcic, Kirsty Kiezebrink, Karl Leydecker, Beth Lord, Colin Lumsden, Laura McCann, Catriona MacDonald, Gary Macfarlane, Nicola Mcilraith, Michelle MacLeod, David McLernon, Alasdair MacKenzie, Alan MacPherson, Vanessa Mabonso Nzolo, Pietro Marini, Sam Martin, Javier Martin-Torres, Samantha Miller, Heather Morgan, David Muirhead, Thomas Muinzer, Mintu Nath, Sam Newington, Paul Okoe, Nir Oren, Shantini Paranjothy, Ekaterina Pavlovskaia, Tom Pizarro-Escuti, Amudha Poobalan, Tavis Potts, Justin Rochford, Diane Skåtun, Thereza Raquel Sales de Aguiar, Joachim Schaper, Karen Scott, Hossa Skandary-Macpherson, Beniamin Liviu Stefan, Charlaine Simpson, Alan Speight, Valerie Speirs, Lorna Stewart, Fiona Stoddard, Ruth Taylor, Bert Timmermans, Steve Tucker, Neil Vargesson, Jennifer Walklate, Ursula Witte, Ilia Xypolia.

Apologies: Sumeet Aphale, Lesley Anderson, Harminder Battu, Siladitya Bhattacharya, Jason Bohan, Irene Couzigou, Kate Gillies, Greg Gordon, Ian Greener, Constanze Hesse, Lesley Lancaster, David McGloin, David Mercieca, Martin Mills, Graeme Nixon, Graeme Paton, Brice Rea, Tom Rist, Joost Rommers, Ann-Michelle Slater, Adelyn Wilson, Haina Zhang.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

90.1 The Principal opened the meeting, welcoming members of Senate to the final meeting of the academic year. The Secretary reminded members of procedures: there were no planned fire alarms; 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. The Secretary also noted that the University's Senior Governor was joining the meeting on Teams as an observer. It was also highlighted to members that that item nine on the agenda would be brought to a future meeting to permit technical issues within the paper to be addressed.

90.2 Subject to the noted change to item nine Senate approved the agenda and the meeting proceeded.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF 19 APRIL 2023

91.1 Jen Walklate, School of Social Science noted that the point made in minute 85.10 didn't just reference the situation of matters being directed to wrong Ethics Committees but also related to substantial delays occurring within anthropology and other interdisciplinary areas. The secretary agreed to amend the minute accordingly.

91.2 Subject to this minor change members of the Senate approved the minutes from 19 April 2023.

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

92.1 In addition to matters detailed in his written report on developments within the sector, the Principal highlighted topics covered in the Open Session which had taken place earlier in the day and which were particularly relevant to Senate. He highlighted the continuing positive progress being made with rebuilding research capacity: the number of staff on a T&R contract continued to rise; research income had risen by eight percent; a number of interdisciplinary fellows had been appointed and interdisciplinary PhD studentships had been advertised. Within education he noted that there had been an increase of 14% in work experience opportunities for students which was anticipated would improve employability levels in the future.

92.2 The Principal also noted that he had covered some challenges and opportunities around the financial position, international student recruitment and workload.

92.3 Ilia Xypolia, School of Social Science asked for an update on the situation with the buildings which had been closed for structural reasons the previous week.

92.4 Responding, the Secretary confirmed that the actions had been taken as part of a proactive process looking for occurrences of reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC) within the estate. Staff had been trained to identify RAAC following advice from the UK Government on the incidence of its use in construction dating from between the 1960s and 1980s. The University has been undertaking the process and following a second investigation, to ensure it had all been found, four buildings had been closed one of which was the boiler house at Hillhead so not subject to regular access. The buildings were closed while external specialist structural surveyors were brought in to look at the structural integrity of the affected buildings and to advise on the required next steps. The specialist report was currently being prepared which would determine what would be required next. It was confirmed that any activity in the affected buildings had been rehoused appropriately to permit required work to be carried out.

REPORT FROM THE UNIVERSITY COURT

92.1 Ilia Xypolia, on behalf of the Senate Assessors, provided an update on the April 2023 meeting of the University Court. In addition to the written report included in the Senate papers, Ilia highlighted that the meeting had taken place at the Rowett Institute and had included a presentation from Brian Henderson, Director of Digital and Information Systems on the future direction of the University's digital strategy and the associated modernisation of processes. Court had also discussed financial reports and the deficit and received update on the two major estates projects.

HONORARY DEGREE NOMINATIONS

93.1 Senate voted to approve the nominations circulated as separate confidential papers.

93.2 The Secretary noted that the Honorary Degrees Committee had noted concern over the relative lack of diversity in the nominations coming forward to the Committee. When the new process had been introduced it had already been decided to introduce proactive calls for nominations and this would be continued but would in the future include articulation of the aspiration to encourage more diversity amongst the nominations being brought to the Committee. The Committee had also agreed to introduce a diversity matrix for tracking diversity of the nominations being put forward to Senate.

93.3 Ilia Xypolia, School of Social Science noted that the nominations did not always make clear the candidates' connection with Aberdeen and also requested that the name of the nominating staff member be included for Senate.

93.4 The Secretary responded and explained that permission from the individual nominating would be required before they could be identified as part of the process before a degree is approved and accepted, and that by not including these details ensured that nominations were considered on their own merit and without any 'reaction' to the person making the nomination. With regard to the request for better identification of a candidate's connection with Aberdeen the Secretary agreed that this would be possible, however, Senate were reminded that sometimes the connection is aspirational and so this would take different forms in different cases.

93.5 Thomas Bodey, School of Biological Sciences, queried whether the Committee could not broaden the pool of nominations themselves if it considered the nominations to be particularly lacking diversity.

93.5 The Secretary confirmed that it was possible for a member of the Committee to submit a nomination, but they had to be brought forward on the same basis as any other nominations. She further noted that one of the aims of the new process was to widen the pool of staff bringing forward nominations and to move away from the situation where two or three individuals put forward most of the nominations.

93.6 The Principal confirmed that the intention was to seek assistance from Senate to improve diversity amongst nominations rather than any suggestion that it was a task for Senate alone.

STRUCTURE OF THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2024 AND BEYOND

94.1 Ruth Taylor, Vice-Principal (Education) noted that there had been a lot of discussion of the proposals at the April meeting but, due to insufficient time during the meeting to complete discussion, with the permission of Senate, she had invited the submission of written comments outside the meeting. Owing to Senate not having had the opportunity to hear all these views she had decided to bring a single proposal back for further academic discussion before returning in September with a firm proposal.

94.2 Ruth noted that the previously presented four proposals had been refined following further consultation which had, as requested at the last meeting of Senate, included discussion with the University Research Committee. The paper presented one proposal which had been developed in response to discussions.

94.5 From the detailed feedback included in the paper, Ruth indicated that her presentation would highlight where adjustments had been made to the proposal, or had not been required as there was consensus on the proposed principles. The presentation would also set out the principles underpinning the proposed structure.

94.6 In her presentation, Ruth highlighted the particular areas of the revised proposal where Senate was asked to provide academic input. These were:

- Teaching should commence w/c 23 September 2024 (week 9 of AY) with Welcome Week w/c 16 September 2024 (week 8 of AY) to optimise student recruitment activity.
- Put in place a three-term structure for the academic year (AY), with 'term' as the terminology for the teaching periods. Adjust the naming of the current Term 3 to Term 3 (PGT) to identify it clearly it as PGT-only teaching (noting that some UG fieldwork currently takes place during that time-period)
- Implement 13-week terms for terms 1 and 2, including one floating week; and a 12-week term 3 with no floating week (PGT teaching in term 3)
- Align University holidays, as far as possible, with school holidays in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire for the Winter break and the Spring break.
- Implement an 'Induction/Transition and Employability Week' (ITEW) at the beginning of terms 1 and 2 for continuing UG students with this time being used for a Welcome Week for new UG and PGT entrants.

94.7 Following the presentation, the Principal noted the amount of careful consideration and reflection which had been paid to the views expressed at the previous meeting of Senate.

94.8 Karin Friedrich, School of Divinity, History, Philosophy and Art History raised some points made within her School:

- Recognition from the School that term 3 was designated for PGT teaching and this was supported within the School, however, concern remained that there was still a possibility that this would become an expected term of full teaching for all, with the potential to impact those with school-age children at home for the summer, and research staff finding time needed for research activities being impacted if a Head of School were to decide that the new structure provided the opportunity to introduce a full extra term of teaching.

- Concern was also expressed that if term 3 became a further term of expected teaching, this would impact negatively on workloads. She noted that the Research committee had said the proposed new structure 'could' be neutral in workload contexts not that it 'would' be neutral.

94.9 Responding, Ruth noted that the points made in the paper were intended to address the issues raised by Karin. The intention behind the proposed structure was to provide something which was understandable to all staff and students and was not intended to increase workloads within Schools. She noted that the nature of PGT structures was different from the majority of UG teaching and therefore she did not expect that the proposed structure would lead to changes to delivery of teaching. She noted that the development of new January start programmes and staff associated with them was a different and separate matter for discussion between Schools and Admissions / Recruitment colleagues.

94.10 The Principal acknowledged the hypothetical risks but asked the Senior Vice-Principal to comment on the latitude available to Schools to make the sort of changes being discussed without strategic oversight.

94.11 Karl Leydecker, Senior Vice-Principal, confirmed that this was not the intention. It was anticipated that the University would work together as a community recognising the actions of an individual School had impacts across the institution for associated services. He confirmed that in the context of workload discussions Heads of School had been asked to consider teaching allocations across the full year. Factually he noted that the University had moved from being predominantly an undergraduate institution to one with a strong PGT element and associated with this a different pattern of teaching. He noted that this was already well embedded in some parts of the University. He acknowledged the potential for anxiety amongst sections which had not yet had experience of January start programmes. He noted that the reality of the situation was that the University was reliant on international PGT student recruitment in order to remain financially viable, and required the associated clarity for international student recruitment. This was a transition which the university was required to make, and the intention of the proposal was to provide clarity around a framework which everyone was able to work within.

94.12 Aravinda Guntupalli, School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition, noted that colleagues had been pleased to see PGT teaching recognised as it was in the proposed model. She noted a desire for the three terms all to be equal rather than the 13:13:12 in the model. This made the structure particularly unequal for January start students for whom the timing of the dissertation aligns differently.

94.13 In reply, Ruth clarified that if term 3 also was a 13-week term (12 weeks of teaching with one 'floating' week), the need for a three-week Spring Break had the effect of pushing teaching even further into the summer. The compromise suggested still provided for equal lengths of teaching in each term but protected a little more time for research.

94.14 Neil Vargesson, School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition, reported support from his School for recognition of Term 3 mainly due to a perception that current PGT students studying in this period do not feel recognised within the system. He also welcomed the recognition that

the formal third term provided potential for workload allocation of teaching to two of the three terms.

94.15 Karen Scott, School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition, reiterated support for the third term being designated as PGT and suggested that rather than the phrasing used on the slide it would be preferable for Term 1, Term 2, Term 3 (PGT) to be used. She also queried the flexibility within the structure for projects on some programmes to begin at times different to the published term dates.

95.16 Ruth acknowledged the intention to appropriately maintain the flexibility offered currently for individual programmes to operate in a way different from the published dates and indicated her willingness to pick the discussion up outside of Senate to ensure she understood the issue completely.

95.17 Ekaterina Pavlovskaia, School of Engineering noted the three-week spring break had been welcomed by the School together with the proposed 12-week summer term which aligned well with the PGT teaching within the school. She queried the rationale for moving the start of the Spring Break forward from its usual position in week 36 to week 35.

95.18 Responding, Ruth clarified that change had been made to ensure the period of teaching after the Spring Break was sufficient for students to recognise the need to return to campus. Concern had been expressed that if the period was too short students might feel encouraged to break accommodation contracts and not return for the teaching.

95.19 Ekaterina expressed the view that it might be preferable to leave the teaching where it was currently, as with the return to on-campus exams students would be required to return to complete their exams and providing a longer teaching period before the break offered better opportunities for continuity in teaching.

95.20 Thomas Muinzer, School of Law, noted the three-term structural change had not been particularly well received in the School. Within the School there was a feeling that staff were teaching too much already, with limited research time, and that the perception of the introduction of the third term would exacerbate this further. He suggested a possible way forward for overcoming this perception might be for the Head of School to reach out to staff in the School directly to explain the rationale.

95.21 Euan Bain, School of Engineering, queried whether section 8.1 in the paper could be updated prior to its next iteration, to include explicit reference to consideration of the School of Engineering's TNE partnership with Harbin University. He further noted, from a staff wellbeing perspective, that the loss of the clear week for marking in week 21, prior to the Winter break, might inadvertently lead staff to feel the need to use some of their annual leave for marking as they feel the pressure not having been able to clear marking prior to the break. He suggested that the institution should commit to keeping the three weeks after the break clear for marking and not begin to fill the weeks with other activities. In addition, he queried whether consideration had been given to reducing the three-week break between Term 2 and Term 3 in order to create more separation prior to the start of the new academic year.

95.22 Ruth confirmed that the points made by Euan would be reflected on but noted that moving the weeks as described created overlap with other activities and consideration had to be balanced with the consequences for other activities.

95.23 Alex Brasier, School of Geosciences, noted a feeling amongst colleagues that the current proposal was a substantial improvement from previous suggestions and the School particularly welcomed the three-week Spring Break. He further noted a concern that the third term might lead to pressure for more teaching to be undertaken rather than for research projects for postgraduate students. In general, the School welcomed the proposal.

95.24 Sam Martin, School of Biological Sciences noted support from the School particularly for the structure offered by the third term and the three-week Spring Break.

95.25 Joanne Anderson, School of Divinity, History, Philosophy and Art History, echoed the point made by Alex (95.23) about the nature of the teaching during the third term differing from the rest of the year as the majority of teaching took the form of one-to-one supervision. However, it was noted that annual leave alone is not sufficient to cover the six-week period of school holidays for those with young children and other caring responsibilities, and this must be taken into account in any moves towards more structured teaching over the summer, together with the impact on research output.

95.26 Commenting on the research aspect, Marion Campbell, Vice-Principal (Research), noted that the Research Committee had commented that there were a number of aspects of activity typically undertaken in the summer, including fieldwork, but that this had been accounted for in the revisions made. The Committee had discussed the need to ensure that there were clear periods across the year for each member of staff to focus on research and that this did not necessarily need to be the summer. The Committee had been cognisant of the need for Schools to recognise the need for research time and to balance this appropriately with teaching to ensure research and teaching are balanced across the year.

95.27 Responding to Marion's points, Joanne Anderson, highlighted that many staff were responsible for UG and PG teaching. Staffing was such in many parts of the University that meant it was not possible to release staff from either area and that flexibility must be maintained to enable everything to be undertaken.

95.28 Diane Skatun, School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition, queried whether data were available to quantify the level of face-to-face teaching taking place over the summer? She suggested it might be useful for Senate to be able to monitor the degree to which lecture-based teaching was being undertaken during the period.

95.29 Ruth confirmed that this was something she would explore.

95.30 The Principal noted that the feedback provided gave a good basis for further revisions and that a final proposal be brought forward at the next meeting.

PRESENTATION: DIGITAL STRATEGY

96.1 Senate received presentation updating them on the Digital Strategy from Pete Edwards, Vice-Principal (Regional Engagement) and Chair of the Digital Strategy Committee, and Brian Henderson, Director, Digital & Information Services (DIS) . Pete Edwards noted that he would provide an overview of the Digital Strategy and some of the aspects the Committee would be looking at in the coming year and that Brian Henderson would provide some detail of the work ongoing within the Directorate to support the Digital Strategy.

96.2 Pete highlighted the close relationship of the Digital Strategy in supporting the implementation of Aberdeen 2040 particularly in relationship to the modernisation of the physical estate and the part digital technology plays within this. Pete also indicated the importance of Artificial Intelligence, automation of workflows and classroom evolution in coming years.

96.3 Brian highlighted the operational organisation of the Directorate into 12 workstreams and how these support the Digital Strategy. In particular, he highlighted five areas of priority work for the immediate future and the challenges associated with them:

- Applications transformation
- Student Management System
- Security & Governance
- Sustainability
- Service Improvement

96.4 Euan Bain, School of Engineering thanked Brian and his team for their work and in particular the work done to support his School. Euan noted that during a recent School away day, he had posed one of the Principal's questions: 'In relation to the delivery of education, what is the most

value destroying activity academic staff are asked to undertake?'. Those present had unanimously responded with Student Monitoring and specifically the systems used around it most notably the MyTimetable system. Euan asked for assurance and timelines around plans for the Student Monitoring system, MyTimetable and the Student Record system. He noted that the systems were having a negative impact on staff and potentially a negative impact on students who are not being picked up in academic or welfare terms when they should be.

96.5 Responding, Brian noted that Jason Bohan had picked up the work started by Abbe Brown in relation to Student Monitoring. He confirmed that Digital Strategy Committee (DSC) had approved a proposal in relation to 'C6/C7' process change and that the budget was in place to take this work forward. The work package was in the process of being defined and the list of prioritised work would be commenced shortly. He noted his wish to see the work continue beyond the immediate priorities to the secondary list of changes needed.

96.6 Aravinda Guntupalli, School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition noted that in addition to C6/C7 colleagues had requested that Annual Leave booking was another source of frustration as the manual nature of processes were frustrating and time consuming and suggested this was something suited to digital enhancement. The other subject discussed had been around induction and the frustrations experienced by course coordinators, and those teaching at the start, with students arriving late and not realising the need to use their university email address and so the school was making a plea for students to be made aware of this as part of the induction process. Aravinda also asked for details of the strategy in relation to equality aspects within the University.

96.7 In reply, Brian confirmed that the 'Zellis' system for annual leave was already in use within DIS. Debbie Dyker, Director of People confirmed that work was already in progress to enhance the Staff Portal to enable booking and tracking of annual leave. Brian confirmed that the Digital Accessibility Workgroup, which he chaired, and which had started off working on captioning, had moved on to consideration of wider aspects of accessibility to digital services and content. He noted that, while the group focussed currently on neurodiversity, it would welcome comments or membership to take forward the work of the group. In relation to the comments connected to induction, Brian confirmed he would follow up the comments as they would be useful within current work looking at the registration process.

96.8 Dave Cornwell, School of Geosciences, queried the extent to which solutions to problems were being sought internally within the University. He noted that digital skills were evident across the university and questioned whether the possibility existed to create the University's own student record, for example.

96.9 Brian noted that DIS were keen to work with schools and also to offer work placements for students in this sort of area and would be interested to hear of anything specific within the school in this context. He noted that, particularly in terms of sustainability, the world has moved away from internal development of solutions in the increasingly complex area of software development.

96.10 Thomas Bodey, School of Biological Sciences questioned how the digital estate could be entirely integrated without relying on a single provider who, because of the need to supply multiple universities would not provide sufficient agility to respond to any one individual institution's needs.

96.11 Brian replied detailing that the technical level which was currently being implemented was API driven to ensure that data could be passed easily between systems in real-time to replace the University's previous systems which relied on overnight processing for the movement of data. Brian noted that there were currently 52 different data flows in and out of the student management system and as such integration work required a significant amount of resource to ensure its maintenance. Brian stressed the need to ensure thorough and robust tender and procurement processes were used for the replacement system. He highlighted the strength of

the sector working together (through UCISA for example) to challenge providers over systems provision and poor behaviour.

96.12 Thomas sought further clarity regarding the strategic opportunities already in existence which Pete had referred to in his presentation.

96.13 Pete replied using automation as an exemplar. He noted that automation was already widespread with some being used in the University already. In this area the future was focused on hyper-automation, AI and machine learning which would orchestrate lots of different systems from different suppliers and interfaces as a replacement for the current requirement that this is done by an organisation itself. Brian provided the example of the Fresh helpdesk system which uses a chatbot which it was anticipated would be further developed. He added there was similar work ongoing within recruitment and that the Directorate of People were seeking to expand their use of chatbots too.

96.14 Michelle MacLeod, School of Language, Literature, Music and Visual Culture, noted the comments made by Pete regarding the recruitment of four members of Senate for the DSC and requested that amongst these non-technical members of staff were included to ensure balance and accessibility is maintained for non-IT staff.

96.15 Pete confirmed that this was very much the intention for DSC.

96.18 Martin Barker, School of Biological Sciences sought clarification on whether the University was playing a waiting game for major innovations such as Student Management Systems and was observing others in order to learn from their experiences and if so, was there not a danger that the University risked being left behind.

96.19 Pete confirmed that this had always been the case in the world of software. He noted that part of the 'horizon scanning' process involved a lot of communication with other institutions and also noted the need to look beyond hype from suppliers trying to sell a product. Pete noted that on several occasions during the previous 20 years the University had thought it was going to replace the student record system but had paused and noted that this could not happen again. Brian noted the Institution was not an early adopter in the student management system area but highlighted the immaturity of the market.

96.20 Dragan Jovcic, School of Engineering, questioned, as a previous member of DSC, how to ensure that the Committee is aware of the needs and concerns of staff across the institution. He noted that as a committee member he had often received feedback from colleagues which focused on interactions with Helpdesk however Dragan suggested the work of DSC rarely touched on the subject. He suggested the work of the Servicedesk should be a standing item on the DSC agenda. He highlighted the need to close the feedback loop to ensure academics were reassured that problems were being looked at. He also queried how, in the climate of budgetary pressure, cost effectiveness of DIS could be monitored.

96.21 Pete confirmed in terms of staff representation on DSC that in addition to four members of Senate there would be two Heads of School, a wide range of representation from professional services. He also highlighted that the Digital Forum provided a further opportunity for engagement with the strategy and operational matters. Pete noted that Dragan's intervention at DSC had been instrumental in moving the Helpdesk service up the agenda and he confirmed as convener it was now a standing item on the agenda.

96.22 In the context of 'Return on Investment' Brian noted the significant progress made in preparation and evaluation of business cases within the University. He noted that with a project of the size of the Student Management System it would not only be scrutinised by DSC but also, because of its size, would require consideration at senior management level.

ITEM FROM THE RESEARCH COMMITTEE

RESEARCH IMPACT

97.1 Senate received a [presentation](#) from Gary Macfarlane, Dean for Interdisciplinary Research and Reach Impact. Gary updated Senate on work being undertaken to maximise research impact at an institutional level in connection with Aberdeen 2040 and also the next Ref. Following his presentation, he sought input from Senate members about how best to support that work.

97.2 Neil Vargesson, School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition queried whether the school impact leads referred to during the presentation and if they had he asked whether it would be possible for the list to be circulated to Senate members.

97.3 Gary confirmed that the information would be circulated.

Clerk's note: *The provided list was circulated by email to members following the meeting.*

97.4 Jen Walklate, School of Social Science, noted that Anthropology had held an away day the previous day at which they had discussed impact and so raised two queries: firstly, what support would be available to the staff writing up impact case studies and secondly, what the thinking around long-term impact was as anthropological projects often have far reaching impact over a longer period of time, than might be accounted for by REF.

97.5 Responding Gary noted the importance of ensuring effective systems were in place to record relevant activities which might be useful in terms of impact. These were not always apparent at the outset of research and so it was important that all outputs were recorded. This was something the Impact Team are working on. Gary noted how important it was that, as well as looking forward, time was spent looking back as impact happening currently had inevitably come from past research. With regards to the issue raised regarding workload, Gary recognised that assessing impact and writing up case studies did take time and noted that these were able to be recognised in the workload model.

97.6 Karl Leydecker, Senior Vice-Principal added that the revised workload model, seen by Senate previously, did include provision within it for the allocation of additional time above and beyond the standard allocation of time for research, for people either making significant contribution in terms of impact or running especially large grants. The extra time was available to heads of school for allocation as appropriate. Karl noted that the information provided by Gary highlighted the economic importance of impact work, and hence the need to create a culture which values impact related activity as part of workload.

97.7 The Principal noted that the institutional Research Leave Scheme contained provision for undertaking impact work as well as outputs.

97.8 Marion Campbell, Vice-Principal (Research) confirmed that impact activity was recognised through the scheme. Marion also highlighted that money was available to support activity promoting impact.

97.9 Karl reiterated that Impact was now included as a separate pillar within the promotions system and that impact was now recognisable in its own right, alongside the other pillars of Education, Research, Scholarship and Clinical Service.

97.10 Thomas Muinzer, School of Law raised energy specific issues, noting the specific favourable position occupied by the University and the City as a hub for energy transition. He noted the special place offered by this in terms of potential impact activity and queried the plans for making best use of this opportunity?

97.11 Replying Gary noted the importance of the University establishing the position of its research in this context as impactful research has to be underpinned by excellent research. He noted that energy research is an area the University is focusing on in terms of the interdisciplinary challenges. He noted that this should provide the potential impact resulting from this work. He further noted that engagement with stakeholders at an early stage of research was important in terms of facilitating impact. As such, work in this area was a good example of what is being done.

97.12 The Principal noted the possibility of a wide range of impacts offered by energy transition research from policy impact to behavioural impact by energy consumers, to efficiency impacts in the production of energy. The area was a fantastic opportunity.

97.13 Pete Edwards, Vice-Principal (Regional Engagement) noted the huge number of opportunities offered by the regional energy sector and funding made available, for example, to the Energy Transition Zone (ETZ) by Scottish Enterprise and discussions around how the University was able to be part of this work were already quite advanced. He highlighted that the University had opened many channels, but it was important that these were used and engaged with. Through listening to partners the potential was available to maximise impact.

97.14 The Principal highlighted the ultimate impact in this area would be to speed up the rate at which the transition was occurring and noted that, if the University were able to evidence that, it would likely be a four-star impact case study.

97.14 Thereza Raquel Sales de Aguiar, Business School asked what lessons could be learned from the previous REF exercise in terms of supporting impact cases and what were the barriers? She also noted that impact is included in promotions criteria and queried whether promoting impact formed part of the assessment of Heads of Schools and Disciplines performance measurements?

97.15 Responding to the first question, Gary noted one of the lessons learned from the last REF in terms of impact was that the University started too late. This was something being addressed currently. He noted however many case studies were eventually required as part of REF that, in order to ensure provision of sufficient at a high enough level, it required many t more to be followed at this early stage due to the difficulty in predicting exactly what would happen within the timescale required.

97.16 Thereza commented that individual schools may have faced specific difficulties and queried what had been done to determine what these were.

97.17 Gary confirmed that the Impact Team had been round and met with school REF and Impact Leads to determine what exactly these problems were, and this had identified some common issues which would be addressed. The school specific issues would be addressed by the school tailored plans.

97.18 Regarding the query about monitoring performance of Heads of school in promotion of impact, Karl confirmed he was currently undertaking Annual Reviews for Heads of Schools and they recognise that impact is as important as environment and output in terms of research, and schools need to have a very clear plan around all three elements in terms of REF. Karl confirmed that this was included in Heads of Schools' objectives, and he expected these to be shared with school academic line managers to give clarity to what is being sought. Karl indicated that if individuals still had issues which they did not feel had been addressed it was important these were submitted to Marion or Gary.

97.19 Simon Bains, University Librarian noted that dissemination had been highlighted as an important criterion in terms of impact and that this was something he was committed to the Library assisting with. He queried whether there would be value in connecting the Library's Open Access Team more with the Impact Leads in order that the Library was involved in any discussions about dissemination or any barriers to it.

97.20 Gary replied to say that it was intended that training and information events would be held up until the next REF and dissemination would be part of this and the library would be a key player in its delivery.

97.21 The Principal noted the importance of dissemination as part of impact but highlighted that dissemination alone did not create impact. There had been cases previously which had been based on dissemination to demonstrate impact.

97.22 Sam Martin, School of Biological Sciences noted that he had attended sessions on impact which had been very useful. He raised a query around evidence gathering and the fact that staffing at partner organisations might change during the REF cycle. He asked whether gathering evidence at the current time was worthwhile or whether it would be better regarded if it were from 26/27 closer to the next REF, similarly with publications.

97.23 Gary advised that this was an area where a single approach did not suit all areas and noted that judgments were needed all the time. He suggested that if a single contact was particularly valuable and judged likely to move on then gathering evidence now might be a good move but generally it would be better to wait and see what the focus was, what was being claimed and where evidence gaps might need to be plugged. He acknowledged that in some cases it might be better to add evidence now rather than waiting.

97.24 Marion Campbell, responding as a REF Panel member, noted that it was less about the timing of when the evidence was gathered and more about the fact that the evidence was available. She noted that from previous experience it was difficult to gather evidence retrospectively and recommended collecting evidence whenever it was available. She further noted that there had been a debrief with all schools following the last REF which had discussed particular issues that had been encountered, and these were being fed into the process this time. One issue from last time was around the balance between output and impact and she noted that this was much clearer now with all schools appreciating the importance of impact and the challenge of bringing this into everyday life within a school.

97.25 Waheed Afzal, School of Engineering asked about partnership with industry and consultancy work where policy on consultancy can be quite restrictive. He queried whether any work was underway to revaluate these policies for them to be improved.

97.26 In response, Pete Edwards, Vice-Principal (Regional Engagement) acknowledged the need to look at the policies around company formation and consultancy. He noted that at the last meeting of Senate, through the Enterprise and Innovation Committee these policies would be reviewed and that a task and finish group had already been established and had begun work looking at the IP and Revenue Sharing Policy. He anticipated that once this was complete work would begin on the Consultancy Policy.

97.27 Karen Scott, School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition, commented that she welcomed the current focus on impact and that she had noted within the presentation that a 3-star impact was worth more financially than a 4-star paper. This was something she felt was important and suggested staff had not been sufficiently aware of in the past.

97.28 Gary noted that he was taking the opportunity to share the figures at every impact meeting he attends as he considered it so important. He added that it was also important to emphasise that impact was not something for a few individuals rather it was for all researchers.

97.29 Dragan Jovcic, School of Engineering, welcomed the recognition of the importance of impact. He noted the importance of early engagement, when in receipt of a large grant, with the Principal Investigator (PI) in order to understand the routes for developing impact cases as this requires to be supported by excellent research. From a PI perspective, getting part way through the work and getting good outputs creates choices about how to prioritise time and resources: should the focus be on excellence or impact? He provided the practical examples from engineering of engagement with standardisation or engagement with professional bodies which may not necessarily bring excellence but are very important from an impact perspective. He noted that sometimes it may not be possible to justify resources from a grant to go down the impact route. In these cases, he stressed early engagement and support were vital.

97.30 Gary agreed that impact should not just be thought of at the end of a piece of research work. Impact needs to be considered from the beginning of the design process for a piece of research. Hence engagement of the PI with the Impact Team from the very beginning was crucial.

97.31 Michelle MacLeod, School of Language, Literature, Music and Visual Culture, like Dragan, welcomed the 'normalisation' of impact as one of the pillars of work that should be undertaken. She noted that the requirement of REF still focussed on impact case studies and she asked how the University could encourage individuals who have never previously considered impact, to engage with the process prior to the stage of case studies.

97.32 Gary noted that the REF impact case studies are clearly very important to the University financially, however, he noted that impact had to be about more than just REF. The University should be seeking to undertake research that made a difference. He acknowledged that not everyone was familiar with the process but noted that this was where the training could make a difference. He also noted the formation of cohorts for support, particularly amongst early career researchers, was especially helpful as specific training packages could be delivered focussing on ensuring maximum research impact could be delivered.

97.33 Karl Leydecker, Senior Vice-Principal noted that in terms of the promotions criteria all three of Engagement, Innovation and Impact were included. All three criteria were important. A lot of engagement with the external environment was important in creating the overall research environment. He noted, however, that although environment is important it does not detract from the need to deliver impact.

97.34 Neil Vargesson, School of Medicine, Medical Sciences & Nutrition suggested that those who had contributed impact case studies in the last round could be used to lead workshops to help staff understand what a case study should be and/or to discuss what impact is.

97.35 Gary confirmed that this was exactly what was planned. Those who had submitted a case study would share how they had gone about it and the lessons they had learned. The intention was that sessions would be delivered, as far as possible, in a subject specific way.

97.35 In drawing discussion to a close, the Principal noted the importance of the topic for the University and how the 'normalisation' of impact had to become part of research culture. He highlighted that, from a REF perspective, excellence of outputs and impact were both keys to success. He noted that the institution was in a better place culturally in terms of the recognition of the significance of impact while still needing to focus on making the most from case studies as possible. The intention must be to submit a small number of very high quality impact case studies. The University needed to be tactical in its next submission to ensure that it receives the maximum it can from its submission.

ITEMS FROM THE QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE
MBUS HOOD

98.1 Steve Tucker, Dean for Quality Assurance and Enhancement and Chair of the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) introduced the graduation hood for the previously approved new Degree of Master of Business. The hood combined elements of the MA hood with the lilac border to provide distinction for the MBus students.

98.2 Senate agreed by consensus to approve the proposed hood.

CHANGES TO REGULATIONS FOR VARIOUS DEGREES

99.1 Steve outlined the proposed changes to both the Supplementary Regulations for the Award of All Degrees in Science and the Award of All Master of Arts (MA) Degrees which arose from the requirement for Qatar-based programmes to offer Academic Skills courses as either Arts or Science. The requirement to take these courses is included in both MA and BSc programmes and as such it was felt appropriate to classify these as 'Academic Skills' and to count them towards the Group A courses for both Degrees.

99.2 Senate agreed by consensus to approve the proposed changes.

100.1 In drawing the formal discussions of the meeting to a close, the Principal noted the meeting was the final meeting of the academic year and thanked members for their contributions throughout the year. He commented that one of the most important attributes of a regular meeting such as Senate was not that everyone should always agree but rather that members should disagree well. He noted that, with the odd exception, this had been achieved in the current academic year and he looked forward to welcoming members back for next year and to continuing to disagree well.

ROUTINE BUSINESS:

URC REPORT TO SENATE

101.1 Senate noted the routine report from the University Research Committee

UEC REPORT TO SENATE

102.1 Senate noted the routine report from the University Education Committee

QAC REPORT TO SENATE

103.1 Senate noted the routine report from the Quality Assurance Committee

SENATE & ASSESSOR ELECTIONS

104.1 Senate noted the outcomes of the recent elections and the timeline for the ongoing Assessor elections.