

**NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY****SENATE****20 September 2023**

- Present:** The Vice-Chancellor and President (in the Chair), Professor Brian Walker (Deputy Vice-Chancellor), Professor David Burn, Professor Stephanie Glendinning, Professor Matthew Grenby (Pro-Vice-Chancellors), Shah Yaseen Ali (President, Students' Union), Dr Shoba Amarnath, Professor Chris Baldwin, Professor Mike Capaldi, Lulu Chen (Education Officer, Students' Union), Professor Zofia Chrzanowska-Lightowlers, Professor Darren Evans, Professor Catherine Exley, Professor Jens Hentschke, Professor Andy Husband, Professor David Kennedy, Dr Darren Kelsey, Dr Anjam Khan, Chirag Kumar (Postgraduate Officer, Students' Union), Lucy Leeds (Welfare and Equality Officer, Students' Union), Dr Gareth Longstaff, Professor Rhiannon Mason, Claire Morgan, Dr Charles Morisset, Professor Anoop Nayak, Dr Meiko O'Halloran, Professor Vee Pollock, Professor Judith Rankin, Professor Alison Shaw, Dr Robert Shaw, Dr Laila Singh and Dr Laura Woodhouse
- In attendance:** Dr Colin Campbell (Registrar), Nick Collins (Executive Director of Finance), Jackie Scott (Executive Director of People Services), Dr Simon Meacher (Head of Executive and Governance Office) and Heidi Shultz (Executive and Governance Team Manager)
- Apologies:** Professor Caroline Austin, Justin Cole, Professor Richard Davies, Dr Marie Devlin, Professor Nigel Harkness, Professor Alex Hughes, Professor Anya Hurlbert, Professor Rene Koglbauer, Kate McGill, Professor Graham Morgan, Professor Jane Robinson, Professor Candy Rowe and Professor Ruth Valentine

**MINUTES****1. OPENING REMARKS**

The Vice-Chancellor welcomed new members of Senate to their first meeting.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were received.

**3. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of Senate on 28 June 2023 were approved as a correct record and signed.

[Circulated with the agenda as Document A. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

**4. VICE-CHANCELLOR AND PRESIDENT'S BUSINESS**

Received the Vice-Chancellor and President's report. Highlights of this report are discussed below.

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Reported:

a) National Student Survey (NSS)

National Student Survey results were released on 10 August 2023 and the overall picture for the University was more positive than 2022 in terms of our Russell Group position. A full report on NSS results would be presented at the next meeting of Senate.

b) Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)

The University had been pleased to learn the outcome of its participation in TEF 2023 at the beginning of August. The TEF panel had awarded the University an overall rating of silver, with Student Experience rated as bronze and Student Outcomes rated as silver.

c) Student Numbers

Entry grades were kept high for clearing, and the University came out of clearing at lunchtime on results day. Senate received an update on international student intake. More detailed information would be provided ahead of the next meeting of Senate.

d) Industrial Action

The Marking and Assessment Boycott (MAB) had been withdrawn and colleagues were ensuring any outstanding marking and assessment would be returned as soon as possible, with the increased workload at the start of the academic year also taken into consideration.

The University received notice from the University and College Union that a further period of industrial action would take place between Monday 25 September and Friday 29 September 2023.

e) Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) Valuation 2023

On 19 July 2023 the USS Trustee had published its Technical Provisions consultation on the assumptions to be adopted for the 2023 valuation. The valuation outcome signalled that benefits were expected to improve to the level of those which existed before April 2022 and total contributions would fall to a total of 20.6% of salary (from the current 31.4%), with rates of 6.1% for members and 14.5% for employers for at least the next three years. The consultation further highlighted the improved financial position since the last valuation in 2020.

f) The Daily Mail University Guide

[The Daily Mail University Guide](#) was published for the first time on Friday 8 September with the University ranking 36<sup>th</sup> overall. The table contains measures found in other UK League tables such as NSS (2023), tariff, SSR, alongside measures not found in other UK league tables, such as First Generation Students, Graduate Salaries, and Research Income.

g) The Guardian University Guide

[The Guardian University Guide](#) was published on 9 September 2023 with the University ranking 67<sup>th</sup> overall, down 4 places from last year. Five of our subjects were in the Top 10 of their respective rankings: Fine Art (2<sup>nd</sup>), Animal Science (6<sup>th</sup>), Construction, Surveying & Planning (9<sup>th</sup>), Journalism (10<sup>th</sup>), and Dentistry (10<sup>th</sup>). This league table used the NSS results from 2022 rather than 2023.

h) Energy Research and Funding

The University's focus on energy-related research was highlighted. The Energy Demand Research Centre led by the universities of Sussex and Newcastle had been funded by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) and would drive forward change in the energy system and help to meet the UK's net zero target by 2050. Also led by Newcastle University, the new national Research Hub for Decarbonised Adaptable and Resilient Transport Infrastructures would identify pathways and solutions for delivering a resilient, net-zero transport system that works for people and communities and had received funding from UKRI and the Department of Transport.

i) Horizon Europe

It had been announced on 7 September 2023 that the UK would rejoin the EU science research scheme Horizon and, as of that date, UK based scientists and institutions would be able to apply for money from the £81bn fund. Newcastle had been a major beneficiary of European research funds, and many colleagues would welcome the opportunity to work collaboratively across European borders and to apply, with greater confidence, to the world's largest research funding programme.

j) Colleague and Student Success

The Newcastle University team from the School of Natural and Environmental Sciences and Careers Service led by Dr Lee Higham had received the Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence from Advance HE for their collaboration through the Employability and Enterprise Working group.

Dr Joanna Matthan, Dean of Academic Affairs, Newcastle University, had received a National Teaching Fellowship for excellence in teaching in anatomy, and innovative teaching approaches.

Professor Ruth Valentine, Interim Pro-Vice-Chancellor Education, had been awarded a National Teaching Fellowship for her work on improving opportunities to widen student participation.

Professor Jennifer Richards (School of English Literature, Language and Linguistics) had been named a Fellow of the British Academy.

Emerita Professor Sue Robson (formerly Head of the School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences) had been awarded a Churchill Fellowship to carry out research into support for the learning and wellbeing of autistic children in the UK.

Preti Taneja (School of English Literature, Language and Linguistics) had been elected as a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, the charity that represented the voice of literature in the UK.

k) Senate Elections

Changes to the Statutes aimed at strengthening the relationship between Senate and Council approved by the Privy Council in 2020 had taken effect this year. The changes determined that the membership on Senate of the two members of Council appointed by and from Senate had to be extended to match their appointment on Council, and that

two additional members of Senate should be elected. There would be one vacancy in the Professorial constituency and one vacancy in the Non-Professorial constituency.

An election would therefore take place, beginning in October, with the result to be announced at the next meeting of Senate on 15 November 2023.

l) Senate Sub-committees

Members of Senate were invited to submit expressions of interest for vacancies on three Senate sub-committees for members drawn from the membership of Senate.

Noted that:

1. It was agreed that, in future, personal statements from each candidate would be provided to members of Senate prior to voting.

***Resolved that Senate approve the appointments as detailed below:***

<b><i>Dr Darren Kelsey</i></b>	<b><i>University Engagement and Place Committee</i></b>
<b><i>Professor Darren Evans</i></b>	<b><i>University Global Committee</i></b>
<b><i>Dr Laila Singh</i></b>	<b><i>University Research and Innovation Committee</i></b>

m) Barnard Castle

The University had, for many years, appointed a member of staff to serve as a governor at Barnard Castle School in County Durham in accordance with the school's constitution. Following the retirement of a member of staff, an opportunity arose for another colleague to be appointed as the University's representative. This was communicated to members of Academic Board on 12 July 2023.

A number of colleagues wrote to the Registrar expressing concern that the University should be seen to be giving preferential treatment to an independent school given the University's commitment to widening participation. Also received was one expression of interest in serving as the University's representative as a school governor.

***Resolved that Senate recommend the University no longer appoints a school governor but that University colleagues may serve as governors in a personal capacity, if desired.***

n) Programme Withdrawal

In response to a question asked by a member of Senate at the meeting in June 2023 regarding the procedure followed for the withdrawal of degree programmes in Geospatial Engineering, and a subsequent query from another member of Senate at this meeting, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (SAG E) advised the correct process had been followed, but that the sign-off date that had been provided initially had been inaccurate. Students had been consulted about the proposed withdrawal at a Staff-Student Committee meeting and student representatives had also been present at the Board of Studies where the proposal was considered. Students were also getting involved in helping to re-design the Geospatial offer going forward. It was agreed that the Interim Pro-Vice-Chancellor Education would forward confirmation of due process being followed to members of Senate.

5. **SUMMARY REPORT FROM COUNCIL, 10 JULY 2023**

Received a summary report from the meeting of Council that took place on 10 July 2023.  
[Circulated with the agenda as Document C. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

## 6. RESEARCH SUPERVISOR DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

Received a report from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research and Innovation.

[Circulated with the agenda as Document D. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Noted that:

- a) A review of Newcastle's PGR Supervisor Development Programme had been identified as one of the priority objectives under the PGR Strategic Delivery Plan (April 2022).
- b) There was no current requirement at the University for research supervisors to undertake training. Research had shown, however, that some element of mandatory and/or discretionary development for new supervisors was the norm at regional and Russell Group universities, while experienced supervisors were often directed to ongoing development and accreditation opportunities.
- c) A working group, consisting of a cross-section of internal stakeholders (including academic, professional, and technical colleagues, and postgraduate research [PGR] students), had proposed that from the start of the 2024-25 academic year there should be a distinction made between 'new PGR supervisors and PGR supervisors new to Newcastle University', and 'existing/experienced PGR supervision'. This would ensure relevance, so that the development opportunities would be targeted to meet the needs of the participants and were fit for purpose across a broad range of experience.
- d) New PGR supervisors and PGR supervisors new to Newcastle University would be required to follow 'PGR Supervision Essentials Development,' which would incorporate elements addressing core values and principles relating to people, processes, skills, and academic research culture.
- e) Workload and incentivising would need to be considered in reference to implementing a mandatory training programme. It was suggested that some external supervisors (such as those holding NHS contracts) may require exclusions from mandatory training.
- f) Members of Senate reflected that student requirements and input, in addition to supervisors' requirements, would be crucial when designing the programme. Peer-to-peer workshops were often utilised by other organisations, resulting in positive feedback and the sharing of best practice.
- g) Members of Senate were broadly supportive of the set of principles that would underpin the expectation that colleagues who hold a PGR supervisory role undertake mandatory development and re-accreditation relevant to that role.

***Resolved that Senate recommend support for:***

- ***The Key Principles for PGR Supervisory Development set out in Section 2.***
- ***The proposed framework, development, and implementation of the PGR Supervisor Development Programme, which includes incentives for successful completion of the programme, and potential sanctions for non-engagement detailed in Section 5.***

## 7. TEACHING EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK

Received a paper from Dr Sarah Graham, Dean of Education in HaSS and Rachel Dearlove, Head of Educational Governance and Quality Assurance.

[Circulated with the agenda as Document E. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Noted that:

- a) The Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) panel considered the University's overall rating to be silver and noted that student experience was deemed to be typically of a high quality with some very high-quality features. It was also noted that nearly all the student outcomes features were rated as very high quality or outstanding for all groups of students.
- b) The Student Experience Aspect was rated as bronze and the panel noted that, overall, the student experience indicators did not provide initial evidence of very high quality. The submissions provided evidence of some features (SE3, SE4 and SE6) of the aspect being very high quality for most groups of students.
- c) The Student Outcomes Aspect was rated as silver and the panel noted the student outcomes indicators provided initial evidence of very high quality/outstanding, and the submissions provided evidence of very high quality (some outstanding) provision across all groups of students and for all courses and subjects.
- d) Members of Senate reflected on the positive results and were informed that the next TEF assessment was due to take place in the 2026-27 academic year.

#### 8. **DISRUPTION TO PROGRAMME DELIVERY, EXAMINATIONS AND ASSESSMENTS ARISING FROM AN EMERGENCY SITUATION**

Received a paper from Dr Sarah Graham, Dean of Education in HaSS and Rachel Dearlove, Head of Educational Governance and Quality Assurance.

[Circulated with the agenda as Document F. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Noted that:

- a) In November 2022, a 'no detriment' approach had been approved by Senate as an appendix to the Emergency Guidance document for use during periods of disruption. During the 2022-23 academic year the 'no detriment' approach had been further reviewed and a revised 'no detriment' document, with training and guidance, had been provided for colleagues to follow in the context of the MAB and associated missing marks.
- b) Having now used the 'no detriment' approach widely across the University, it was agreed that for consistency and fairness, the guidance document needed to be more directive, with the 'no detriment' approach built in. As a result, the wording in the Emergency Guidance document had been revised, although the principles had been retained. The Guidance had been endorsed by University Education Committee at its most recent meeting on Wednesday 13 September 2023.

***Resolved that Senate approve the updated 'Additional Regulations for Implementation in an Emergency Situation' for use in the current academic year in response to ongoing disruption.***

#### 9. **WORKLOAD PLANNING**

Received a report from the Executive Director of People Services.

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Noted that:

- a) The University Workload Planning Policy was introduced in August 2020. The policy had been developed following a series of task and finish group meetings with representatives from across the University and UCU. The policy included a requirement for each faculty to review the operation of the policy annually.
- b) The Task and Finish Group met again in August 2023 to review the second annual report from each of the three faculties with the group concluding that all three reports remained in compliance with the policy.

#### 10. **WHITE SPACE**

Noted that:

- a) The Vice-Chancellor invited members of Senate to submit suggestions for future agenda items.

#### 11. **ACADEMIC DISTINCTIONS – TITLE OF PROFESSOR EMERITUS (STATUTE 29(4))**

Reported that, in accordance with Statute 29(4), Senate may accord the title of Professor Emeritus on professors retiring from the University.

Considered a proposal from the Vice-Chancellor and President following consultation with the relevant Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor, for the conferment of the title of Professor Emeritus.  
[Circulated with the agenda as Document H. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

***Resolved that the title of Professor Emeritus be conferred on:***

***Professor Nicola Curtin, with effect from 8 February 2024***  
***Professor Jeff Errington, with effect from 20 September 2023***  
***Professor Tim Kirk, with effect from 1 October 2023***  
***Professor Mark Walker, with effect from 31 December 2023***

#### 12. **SENATE SUB-COMMITTEES**

Received revised terms of reference for University Engagement and Place Committee and University Global Committee.  
[Circulated with the agenda as Document J. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

#### 13. **MINUTES FROM COMMITTEES OF SENATE**

Received a report from the meeting of:

- a) University Education Committee: 5 July
- b) University Engagement and Place Committee: 24 July 2023  
[Circulated with the agenda as Document K. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

#### 14. **MEMBERSHIP OF SENATE**

Received a report.  
[Circulated with the agenda as Document L. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

#### 15. **SENATE DELEGATION OF POWERS**

Received

[Circulated with the agenda as Document M. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

**16. STANDING ORDERS OF SENATE**

Received

[Circulated with the agenda as Document N. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

**17. REPORTED BUSINESS**

Received a report of action taken in accordance with agreed procedures, approved where necessary by the Vice-Chancellor on behalf of Senate and/or the Chair of Council, and by other University bodies and Chairs.

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