

Senate

24/17 A meeting of the Senate was held at 2.15 pm on Thursday 20 June 2024 in Chancellors G06.

Present:

Vice-Chancellor (Chair)
Professor Maarten Ambaum
Professor Tabarak Ballal
Dr Simon Clarke
Professor Phil Dash
Dr Ilan Dwek
Professor Richard Frazier
Professor Becky Green
Professor Louise Hague
Dr Chris Jones
Dr MARRISA JOSEPH
Professor Gunter Kuhnle
Dr Shu-Ling Lu
Dr Rachel McCloy
Professor Elizabeth McCrum
Dr David Marshall
Professor Gail Marshall
Dr Sarah Marston
Dr Mary Morrissey
Professor Keiichi Nakata
Professor Adrian Palmer
Dr Karen Poulter
Professor Rebecca Rist
Dr Sharon Sinclair-Graham
Dr Sokratis Stergiadis
Dr Shixuan Wang
Professor Parveen Yaqoob
Professor Dominik Zaum

Students:

RSU Activities
RSU Education
RSU President
RSU Welfare
RSU Inclusion
[student representative]

In attendance:

Dr Richard Messer

Louise Sharman (Secretary)

The Vice-Chancellor welcomed members to the Senate, and in particular the new RSU Officers. The Vice-Chancellor thanked all those Senators whose term of office was ending in July for their contributions.

The Vice-Chancellor outlined the format of the meeting to Senators encouraging them to raise any additional items for discussion under the Vice-Chancellor's report.

The Vice-Chancellor paid tribute to the following who had died since the last meeting of the Senate:

Lionel Kelly – Lionel joined the University in 1965 as a lecturer in English and American Literature, he left the University in 2022

Dr Marina Taylor – Marina completed her first degree and PhD in Chemistry at Reading, and then became a research fellow in Zoology before moving to Surrey

Marc Camille Chaimowicz – Marc had taught at the University for over 25 years, and was a Reader in the School of Art and Communication Design till 2012

The following colleagues have sadly died in service:

Lana Newton – Digital Portfolio Administrator within DTS

Sarah Glanville – Process and Administration Manager within Research Services

24/18 Minutes of the last meeting

The Senate approved Minutes 24/01 to 24/16 of the last formal meeting held on 28 February 2024.

Items for Presentation and discussion

24/19 Introduction from the Director of Knowledge Exchange Commercialisation & Partnerships – including Risk 6

The Senate received an introductory presentation from Dr Guy Hembury the Director of Knowledge Exchange Commercialisation & Partnerships who had recently been appointed to the role. The presentation highlighted to the Senate work being undertaken within Knowledge Exchange and reflected on Risk 6 [redacted, section 43].

In particular the Senate noted:

- [redacted, section 40].
- Knowledge Exchange (KE) was about creating socio-economic value and impact from knowledge

- Impact was not just about REF case studies – impact would only be achieved through working collaboratively with non-academic external organisations
- KE was any activity with a non-academic external partner, this could include: collaborative research, contract research, consultancy, facilities and equipment use, commercialisation, public and community engagement, CPD and short courses – across both staff and student activities
- The Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF) would complement both REF and TEF, as was a national framework for measuring and comparing the performance of universities
- The University was in Cluster X for KEF, defined as a large, high research intensive and broad disciplined university undertaking a significant amount of excellent research
- The University's current performance in KEF was strong [redacted, section 43] in terms of overall KE performance ranked 14th out of 18
- [redacted, section 43]
- [redacted, section 43]
- [redacted, section 43]
- [redacted, section 43]

The following questions and comments were raised on the presentation:

- Was improving KE performance about enhancing research income, or research activity with a KE component with partners?
[redacted, section 43]
- Were there any specific metrics that were being used to assess performance?
[redacted, section 43]
- The recent Research Away Day had discussed the commercialisation of research and how to focus on particular areas whilst fostering a good KE culture – how could both be achieved?
[redacted, section 43]
- In respect of the student body it would be important to work with Part 3, Masters and Doctoral students. Was there a plan to help those students who were already undertaking entrepreneurial work?
[redacted, section 43]
- Was there a particular percentage between academic and non-academic activity that should be pursued?
[redacted, section 43]
- [redacted, section 43]
- What was holding the University back on KE? [redacted, section 43]
[redacted, section 43]
- It was important to acknowledge that KE was not just about STEM/Business disciplines, there were opportunities for all Schools

The Senate thanked Dr Hembury for the presentation.

24/20 Agrifood Final Report

The Senate received a presentation from Professor Parveen Yaqoob, Dr Kate Hough and Kirsty Withers on the final Agrifood report.

The Report would be submitted to the Council at its meeting on 1 July 2024 who would be asked to approve the direction of travel and further enabling investments, including a Programme Manager post to work on implementation. An implementation plan would be developed during the autumn.

The presentation highlighted to the Senate:

- This was the final report of the Agrifood Scoping project, an 18-month project which ran from November 2022 to April 2024.
- The purpose of the scoping project was to identify the step change actions which would enhance Reading's position as a global leader in agriculture and food research and help the University to address global challenges relating to sustainable agrifood systems in a changing planet.
- In reflecting on the project approach it was important to note: the highly consultative approach involving colleagues and an appropriate level of external perspective; the top down and bottom-up approach; the pivotal role of the External Advisory Panel; the Theory of Change to help develop a vision.
- [redacted, section 43]
- The Agrifood Futures Research Strategy was the output of the Scoping Project. It was a long-term transformative research strategy which set the future direction for agrifood research at Reading across the breadth of research disciplines as well as in the core areas of food and agriculture. It would enhance and consolidate the University's position as a global leader in this area. [redacted, section 43].
- The reasons why the University undertook this Scoping Project were because:
 1. University had a strategic commitment to address global problems. The challenge of feeding the growing global population in a way that was sustainable and minimised impact on the environment in the midst of a climate crisis was among the most pressing challenges the world was facing.
 2. Reading has excellent reputation for food and agriculture research, however the results of the REF2021 in this area were disappointing and the University had seen a sizeable drop in the QS World ranking in agriculture and forestry. This meant that urgent action was needed to consolidate and rebuild research quality to preserve reputation and global position
 3. [redacted, section 43].
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The Senate thanked Professor Yaqoob, Dr Hough and Ms Withers for the presentation and congratulated all those involved in the work on this project.

The Senate, for its part, endorsed the overarching strategy and direction of travel for onward transmission to the Council.

24/21 Update on implementation of the Professional Services Review

The Senate received a short update on progress so far with implementing the recommendations of the Professional Services Review, in particular around:

- Business Process Review
- Reduction in the volume of exceptionalism
- Better alignment between the timing of projects and other activities required of services, and the resources available to them
- Henley Business School
- The introduction of a new Directorate model

It was suggested that the Senate might wish to have a dedicated presentation during 2024-25 focusing on progress in the Student Experience and Education Directorate, and the Research and Innovation Directorate. Further consideration would be given to this by the Senate Agenda Group.

24/22 Report of the Vice-Chancellor

The Senate received the Vice-Chancellor's address to the Senate, noting in particular:

Community:

- Appointment of Elizabeth Allen (Dean of Internationalisation and Head of ISLI), Sarah Marston (Head IoE), and Alex Slater (Interim Director of Student Experience)
- Hustings scheduled for 26 June for the Earley and Woodley constituency had been cancelled
- A HEPI and Advance HE event on Freedom of Speech, and the need for universities not just to ensure compliance with the law, but also to encourage a wider culture of openness and promote divergence of opinion on campuses.
- Student encampment - A peaceful protest, organised by the Friends of Palestine student society, and relating to the conflict in Gaza, was set up on the Whiteknights Campus (quad area) on Monday 20 May 2024. The University was now one of almost 40 universities currently subject to encampment and protest activities of this nature. This had highlighted the importance of supporting freedom of speech within the law. The society had four demands: that the University of Reading: *Condemns Israeli war crimes, including actions that violate the international law regarding climate change; Divests from companies who are openly complicit in genocide; Pledges to assist in providing scholarships to Palestinian students; Safeguards students' and staff members' freedom of speech without fear of prosecution, disciplinary action or hostility*
The Vice-Chancellor had met with the protesting students on a few occasions, and had published a statement in response to their demands. There had also been complaints from members of the university community including about some of the slogans used on placards, which had been removed. The Vice-Chancellor had also met students from the Reading SU Jewish society.
- The launch of the Professional Service Awards.
- The annual staff celebration would take place on Show your Stripes Day on 21 June 2024 with activities at Palmer Quad and 3Sixty
- In just over two years' time on 17 March 2026, the University would mark the centenary of the University of Reading receiving its Royal Charter. Together with the Chancellor, the Vice-Chancellor was chairing a small group to help plan and deliver activities with the proposed theme being 'Making a better world, together – our community, our actions and our impact.'

Excellence:

- Internationalisation and Global Engagement Framework - Caroline Baylon, PVC International had launched the Global Engagement and Internationalisation Strategic Framework. This sets out an ambition to engage more meaningfully with the world, with the aim of embedding an international approach across existing work, including student recruitment.
- Summer T&L conference - This year's conference would focus on Inclusive Teaching and Assessment in the Age of Generative AI

Sustainability:

- Climate Ambassador Volunteers - The DfE had officially launched the Reading-led Climate Ambassador Scheme at its national climate education programme in May. The Education Minister had called for 1,000 nationwide to sign up to the scheme.

- THE Impact Rankings 2024 - The University had been ranked joint 28th in the THE Impact Rankings (out of 2031 participating institutions), a rise of 33 places from the 2023 ranking. Of the 68 participating UK institutions, the University ranks fifth.
- London Higher Award - The University had been awarded the London Higher Award for Outstanding Contribution to Sustainability Leadership, recognising its exceptional leadership and impact on improving the environment in London.

Engaged:

- The World Reimagined Globe Arts Trail - in the summer of 2023, the University of Reading successfully fundraised just over £8,000 to purchase four globes from the World Reimagined project to create an arts trail in Reading. The World Reimagined was a ground-breaking art-education project designed to transform how we understand the Transatlantic Trade in Enslaved Africans and its impact.
- Community - The University held its second ever Community Festival on Whiteknights last month in partnership with the Reading Students' Union.
- Applications were now open for the Community Fund.

The following questions and comments were made on the report:

- Was there any indication of when the encampment might end?
The Vice-Chancellor reported that he had engaged in good faith with encampment on a number of occasions, and had negotiated with the relevant student bodies. The University had agreed to a number of requests, particularly in relation to sanctuary scholarships and divestment. Despite meeting a number of the demands the encampment had decided to remain, and had now submitted further demands. The University would take a hardline in relation to any phrasing that could amount to harassment
- The University's Investment Policy had been amended to reflect changes, namely, to extend the fossil fuel exclusion to financing activities, and to denote the Banking on Climate Chaos (BOCC) dataset as the source for any exclusion decision. This had resulted in the sale of investments in Barclays, Wells Fargo and Bank of America. It was understood that Reading was the first university to make this move, but that other HEIs were likely to follow.
- The Centenary Project was looking to launch a fund shortly so that colleagues/teams/student could bid for funding for centenary celebrations. A number of other activities were also planned including a legacy project and work on the University archives.

Items for report and approval

24/23 Report of the University Executive Board

Restructuring

The Senate received a paper setting out an approach to University Restructuring activity commencing Summer 2024 and running through 2024/2025 and 2025/2026 financial years.

It was noted that the University had challenging financial targets to meet to ensure financial sustainability. Members of Planning & Change Board were working closely with Head of Schools and Heads of Directorates to budget and plan the provision of University services and activities in line with these financial targets. This included detailed plans for growth in student numbers as well as achieving savings in the delivery of some activities and services.

Within this context, it was likely that some restructuring activity would be required across certain Schools and/or Directorates during 2024/2025 and/or 2025/2026 in order for the University to achieve its financial targets. Restructuring activity was governed by the University Restructuring Procedure which sets out the procedure to be followed as determined by the number of staff and the activity which is diminishing or ceasing.

There were no current formal proposals for restructuring within specific Schools or Directorates and the number and type of staff who might therefore be affected was therefore unknown. However, the University wished to ensure that any restructuring which might be required was carefully considered and took account of numbers and types of staff who might be impacted across the whole Institution, rather than considering only the local context.

It was therefore proposed to recommend to Council to approve the creation of a Consultation Group under clause 4.2 of the Restructuring Procedure. This Consultation Group would provide over-arching governance for any restructuring activity during the period. This Group would be the Consultation Group for the purposes of the procedure, but might then seek to agree authority to delegate to smaller, specific groups for individual activity in Schools/Directorates, as might be agreed as appropriate. This approach was deemed a reasonable and pragmatic approach to ensuring co-ordination and consistency of restructuring activity over this period. The Consultation Group would comprise the following membership:

Chair – Robert van de Noort
DVC/PVC/Head of Service – Dominik Zaum
Lay Member of Council – [tbc]
Academic nominated by Senate – [tbc]
HoS/HoD – Julie Rowe
Another Head of School or Appropriate Manager – [tbc]
Director of HR – Claire Rolstone

The Consultation Group would be responsible for leading formal collective consultation processes. Consultation must be undertaken with a view to reaching agreement on avoiding, reducing and mitigating redundancies. Within this framework, the Consultation Group would develop, through consultation with the Staff Forum and UCU, a consistent approach to any potential redundancies which might be required from different parts of the University. The Group would lead consultation regarding the use and scope of voluntary redundancy arrangements, the approach to selection pools, the use of selection criteria and scoring templates, as well as approaches to individual consultation processes, including agreeing draft templates where relevant.

This approach would ensure a defined and clear approach to any restructuring activity, ensuring equity in approach across different staff groups and ensuring appropriate support for staff.

Prior to establishing any formal collective consultation requirements, the Vice Chancellor would take the lead in engaging informally with the Trade Union and the Staff Forum.

Proposals for restructuring activity within Schools/Directorates would be brought to the University Executive Board, and where relevant to Council, via Senate, under the terms of the Restructuring Procedure, including the development of Consultation Papers outlining the rationale for change and the detailed changes proposed, including details of impacted roles.

The Senate noted the approach and agreed that Professor Gunter Kuhnle would be the Senate representative on the Consultation Group.

Developing a Workload Model

Pro-Vice-Chancellor Professor Zaum gave a verbal update to the Senate on plans to develop a Workload Model.

It was noted that:

- The University intended to initiate a project to develop an institution-wide workload model, building on and harmonising existing good practice in Schools and Departments across the University, and informed by good practice across the sector.
- An academic lead would be appointed, for a period of 2 years, to develop a detailed project plan and lead the delivery of the project.
- The model would be TRAC compliant and remove the need for the TAS survey.
- Academic staff time was the largest single resource (ca £143m in salary cost in 2023/24) that the University committed to teaching and research, as well as to other activities supporting the running and reputation of the University.
- Senate had recently (February 2024) approved the Academic Careers Framework for the University of Reading, outlining performance expectations of academic staff at different career stages. Supporting colleagues to work to the framework in a consistent and equitable way would be supported by an institution-wide workload allocation model.
- The objectives of an institution-wide workload model were three-fold: first, to enable and ensure the fair allocation of academic workloads across the University; second, to enable robust decision-making on resource needs and ensure an allocation of academic workload that effectively supports the University's strategic objectives, in particular academic excellence and financial sustainability; and third to ensure that workloads support colleagues in the development and delivery of excellent teaching and research.
- The principles underpinning the workload model included: Transparency; Consistency in workload allocations, with comparable allocations for comparable activities across the University; Embedding the expectations of citizenship and leadership as outlined in the University's Academic Career Framework; Taking account of the university's commitments to Equality and Diversity; Linking workload allocations to academic expectations and performance; TRAC compliance; Supporting manageable workloads across the institution; Financially sustainable
- The project had a number of strands.

- The Senate would need to approve the model in due course.

24/24 Report of the University Board for Teaching, Learning and Student Experience

The Senate received the Report of the meetings of the University Board for Teaching, Learning and Student Experience (UBTLSE) held on 12 March, 24 April, 13 May 2024.

The report contained updates on:

- Student Disciplinary Procedure and Regulations for Student Conduct
- Key decisions and changes to policies
- Examiner nominations
- Office for Students Quality Assessment Reports
- Teaching, Learning and Student Experience Risk Register
- Online Examinations
- Master's by Research
- Student Protection Plan
- Portfolio Review Pathway
- Exceptional Circumstances Process Review
- Updates on Working Groups (including Education for Sustainable Development)
- Sector bodies and national initiatives

The Senate approved the revised Student Disciplinary Procedure and Regulations for Student Conduct.

24/25 Report of the University Board for Research and Innovation

The Senate received a report of the University Board for Research and Innovation. In particular the Senate noted that UBRI had:

- Reviewed its Terms of Reference in advance of the next academic year and noted changes to membership for 2024/25
- Received updates from the PVC (R&I) including: Changes to templates for Annual Research Plans (previously Personal Research Plans) and Research Division Operating Plans; Updates on the University's most recent Research awards, applications and income data as of FQ3 2023/24.
- Reviewed a proposed approach to prioritising research culture activity at the University, building on the Vitae Framework.
- Received an update on progress with the Current Research Information System (CRIS).
- Received an update on progress with the University's preparations for the next Research Excellence Framework (REF).
- Approved the publication of the University's action plan as part of its signatory to Reforming Research Assessment (Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA)).
- Received the final report on Agrifood Futures
- Approved the annual statement of compliance with the Concordat to Support Research integrity and the annual report for the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers for onward transmission to Senate.

The Senate approved the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers and Concordat to Support Research Integrity for onward transmission to the Council.

24/26 Report of the Global Engagement Strategy Board

The Senate received and noted the report of the Global Engagement Strategy Board held on 19 and 22 May 2024.

24/27 Student Recruitment and Admissions Update

The Senate received and noted a report from Global Recruitment and Admissions on the current recruitment position.

24/28 Report from RSU

Members of Senate thanked the outgoing Officers for all their work and wished them well in the future. The outgoing officers reflected on some of their achievements including: changes to the Summer Ball, price of drinks, increasing sports activities, Girls Night In, Chinese New Year event, mental health work, and work on dealing with sexual violence.

The Senate welcomed the incoming RSU Officers and noted their plans and manifesto pledges for the coming year particularly in relation to employability, improved campus safety, cost of living, mental health support, sustainability, and equality and diversity.

24/29 Report of the Joint Standing Committee of Council and Senate on Honorary Degrees

The Senate received and approved the report from the Joint Standing Committee of Council and Senate on Honorary Degrees.

The Senate noted that with the new process implemented last round that a greater diversity of nominations had been received.

The Senate, for its part, approved the nominations for onwards transmission to the Council.

Items for note

24/30 Reports of Examiners for Higher Degrees by thesis

The Senate approved recommendations for the award or otherwise of Higher Degrees.

24/31 Examinations for Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates

The Senate authorised the Vice-Chancellor to approve May/June/July 2024 examination results on its behalf.

24/32 Appointments to Committees and other bodies

In respect of appointments, the Senate noted that:

- There were two vacancies available from 1 August 2024 for members of the Senate to join the Joint Honorary Degrees Committee
- There were three vacancies available from 1 August 2024 for members of Senate to join the Senate Agenda Group
- There was one vacancy available from 1 August 2024 for members to join UBRI
- There were four vacancies on the Arts Committee from 1 August 2024
- There was one vacancy on UREC from 1 August 2024
- Reappointed Andrew Bicknell, David Brauner, Becky Green, Eugene McSorley, Helen Osborne, Rav Savania, and Simon Sherratt to Student Appeals Committee to 31 July 2027
- Reappointed Richard Harris, Paul Jenkins, Marrisa Joseph, Amanda Millmore, Jane Setter, Sharon Sinclair Graham, Calvin Smith, Daniela Standen to SECR to 31 July 2027
- Appointed Caroline Rymer and Stuart Black to SCER to 31 July 2027
- Reappointed Louise Hague as Chair of SCAM to 31 July 2027
- Reappointed Hilary Geoghegan and Paddy Bullard to MERL to 31 July 2027
- Reappointed Karen Poulter to Personal Titles to 31 July 2027, and Becky Green to Personal Titles to 31 July 2026
- Reappointed Julie Lovegrove, Eugene McSorley, and Anastasia Christakou to UREC to 31 July 2027

24/33 Retirement of Professors

The Senate approved that that the following be accorded the title of Emeritus/ta Professor with effect from the date indicated:

Professor Givens (30 April 2024)

Professor Auchmuty (31 July 2024)

Professor Connaughton (31 August 2024)

Professor Shao (30 September 2024)

24/34 Other retirements

The Senate approved that that the following be accorded the title of Honorary Fellow for a period of five years with effect from the date indicated:

Karen Foy (31 March 2024)
Colin Barwick (8 April 2024)
Dr Rachel Crabtree (31 May 2024)
Keith Swanson (31 May 2024)
Linda Tse (30 June 2024)
Elizabeth Smith (26 July 2024)
Dr John Creighton (31 July 2024)
Fiona Corby (31 July 2024)
Sally Pellow (31 July 2024)
Simon Burden (31 July 2024)
Catherine Munro (31 July 2024)
Christopher Bacon (1 September 2024)
Dr Graham Holloway (30 September 2024)

24/35 List of meetings in 2024-25

The Senate received the final version of the list of meetings for 2024-25 for its information.

24/36 Dates of next meeting 2024/25

Wednesday 30 October 2024 at 2.15 pm (in person)
Wednesday 8 January 2025 at 2.15 pm – reserve meeting (online)
Wednesday 26 February 2025 at 2.15 pm (online)
Wednesday 30 April 2025 at 2.15 pm – reserve meeting (online)
Thursday 19 June 2025 at 2.15 pm (in person)