

Senate

25/16 A meeting of the Senate was held at 2.15 pm on Thursday 19 June 2025 in Chancellors G06.

Present:

Vice-Chancellor (Chair)
Professor Maarten Ambaum
Dr Mona Ashok
Dr Will Bailey-Watson
Dr Caroline Baylon
Dr Chris Dalton
Dr Ilan Dwek
Professor Richard Frazier
Professor Becky Green
Professor Louise Hague
Professor Carmel Houston-Price
Dr MARRISA JOSEPH
Professor Yelena Kalyuzhnova
Professor Uma Kambhampati
Kizzy Keast
Jackie Liu
Dr Shu-Ling Lu
Professor Elizabeth McCrum
Dr Sarah Marston
Dr Richard Messer
Professor Henny Osbahr
Sally Plank
Dr Karen Poulter
Professor Rebecca Rist
Professor Sokratis Stergiadis
Professor Katja Strohfeldt
Brian Turner
Professor Sarah von Billerbeck
Vin Wijeratne
Professor Adrian Williams
Dr Hong Yang
Professor Parveen Yaqoob
Professor Dominik Zaum

Incoming and outgoing RSU Officers:

RSU Activities
RSU Education
RSU President
RSU Welfare
RSU Inclusion

Built Environment UG Senior Rep - Harry Hand
Law UG Senior Rep - Martina Hudson
Mathematical, Physical & Computational Sciences UG Senior Rep - Eddie MacDonagh

Louise Sharman (Secretary)

The Vice-Chancellor welcomed new members to the Senate and in particular the incoming RSU Officers. The Vice-Chancellor thanked the outgoing officers and those Senators whose term of office would end shortly.

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:

Dr Richard Bonser, retired Senior Lecturer from the School of the Built Environment

David (Dave) Hallam, Analyst Programmer (TEL) who worked in DTS

25/17 Minutes of the last meeting

The Senate approved Minutes 25/01 to 25/15 of the last formal meeting held on 26 February 2025. All relevant matters had been passed in full to the Council at its meeting on 10 March 2025, and Senate had received an extract in return from the Council on matters relevant to Senate.

Items for Presentation and discussion

25/18 Update on the academic workload project

The Senate received a presentation from Professor Carmel Houston Price on the academic workload project.

The presentation highlighted:

- The aims and objectives of the project: *to develop and implement a University-wide workload model that will enable academic excellence and support staff wellbeing and strategic decision-making through fair distribution of workload and appropriate allocation of resources*
- The primary aim was to support the fair, transparent, consistent and reasonable distribution of work among academic staff:
 - Ensure the principled, appropriate and equitable allocation of time for similar activities across Schools, recognising disciplinary differences where needed
 - Support staff wellbeing by helping to ensure workloads are reasonable
- We additionally expect the project to support academic excellence:
 - Support clarity around individual responsibilities and expectations

- Enable priority to be given to activities that support UoR's strategic objectives
- Ensure individuals have time and opportunity to achieve agreed objectives
- And to enable better planning and decision-making:
 - Support a more consistent, evidence-based approach to staff resourcing
 - Provide better management information to inform decision-making (e.g. cost of activities; impact of new proposed initiatives; EDI-related disparities)
 - Provide staff time allocation data for TRAC (instead of TAS)
- Principles underpinning the project:
 - *Equity* – the model should be used to manage workload for all academic staff, providing a framework that promotes fairness across the University while offering the flexibility to accommodate important disciplinary differences and personal circumstances, with clear guidelines around the use of such discretionary allowances
 - *Transparency* – the model should be simple for colleagues to use and understand, setting out clearly how workload is calculated and what is meant by a full load. It should allow individuals to check the accuracy of their own workload data and to understand how this relates to the activity of others
 - Consultation – academic staff, managers and other academic workload stakeholders will be consulted both during the development of the new model and beyond its implementation to help ensure it serves its intended purpose and to enable its continued improvement
- Consultations undertaken and data collected:
 - External information gathering
 - Research into requirements of WLMs that can be used for TRAC
 - Research into approaches taken at other UK HEIs and best practice in model development
 - Participation in HESPA Workload Management SIG
 - Meetings with Workload Model software providers
 - Internal information gathering
 - Review of UoR policies & frameworks (Individual Expectations Framework, Probation & Personal Titles, etc) to ensure model alignment
 - Review of currently used models, with individual follow-ups with HoS as needed
 - Looked at mean allowances/tariffs for each activity type/role & reasons for variances
 - Structured focus groups & surveys
 - Survey of workload managers (HoS, HoDs, academic line managers)
 - Survey of all academic staff
 - Focus groups with central leadership teams
 - Education & Student Experience (PVCs-ESE, APVCs, Directors of SEE & Student Services)
 - Research (PVC-R, APVCs, Dean of PGR Studies, Director of Research Services)
 - Staff development & wellbeing (CSO, HR/OH, CQSD, H&S)
 - EDI (School EDI leaders, EDI-CoP members)
 - Meetings/ongoing work with other key stakeholders - DTS, Finance (TRAC, Procurement), HR, PVC-Int/Global Engagement (Int Partnerships), REIO, UCU & PSO (Project Management)

- Need for an institution wide approach was highlighted in the disparities/ranges across Schools in respect of working hours, allowances and tariffs:
 - Working hours mean 1591 (min 1500 max 1650)
 - Maximum permitted workload mean 1.39 FTE (min 0.88 FTE max 0.4 FTE)
 - Allowance for institution-funded research T&R mean 0.29 FTE (min 0.2 FTE max 2.20 FTE)
 - Allowance for institution-funded research TI mean 0.13 FTE (min 0.03 FTE max 0.3 FTE)
 - Allowance for institution-funded research RI mean 0.37 FTE (min 0.2 FTE max 0.94 FTE)
 - Tariff for research seminar coordinator role mean 0.06 FTE (min 0.01 FTE max 0.10 FTE)
 - Tariff for module convenor role mean 51 hours (min 0 hours max 300 hours)
 - Tariff for academic tutoring (per tutee) mean 3.4 hours (min 1 hour max 11 hours)
- Data from the Staff Engagement Survey and academic staff survey identified staff dissatisfaction with current workload management
- Managers reported difficulties in allocating workload – e.g. setting appropriate tariffs/allowances, access to accurate data, lack of trust in the model being applied locally
- Approach to model construction:
 - New model constructed to conform to TRAC activity definitions
 - Allowances and tariffs for activities to be informed by institution means
 - Consistent allowances for broad activity types to apply to staff on same contract type i.e. citizenship, CPD & scholarship, institution-funded research. Allowances to be pro-rated for FTE, adjusted for certain circumstances (e.g. new starters) and may be reduced if the time is not required or used productively
 - Default tariffs to apply to specific activities, with guidance on permitted variance (e.g. to accommodate disciplinary differences or scales in size/complexity) i.e. leadership roles, teaching activities, PGR supervision
- Next steps:
 - Workshop for HoS/HoDs and others who manage workload – Friday 27th June, 9.30-12.30
 - Establish a proposed set of allowances & tariffs
 - Pilot application of allowances & tariffs in 4 or 5 Schools to ascertain impact on staff resource needs & revise if necessary – late 2025
 - Implement allowances & tariffs in planning for 2026/27 (where possible) – early 2026
 - Procure workload management software from external provider & work with provider to build model to meet our local needs (ongoing)
 - Implement new workload model across University in two phases, starting in 2027

The following questions and comments were raised by the Senate:

- Would the criteria align with the Personal Titles criteria or would Personal Titles need to be revised?
The criteria would need to align with a range of processes and the criteria for Personal Titles would need to be reviewed in light of the model
- A number of Schools and Departments had implemented their own workload models, similar to what was being proposed. What had worked well in getting buy in those areas was a conversation with colleagues, and allowing some flexibility whilst also setting objectives to bring

activities into line. It was also important that every line manager knew how to use the model with colleagues

- The surveys undertaken had highlighted interesting questions around whether the time allocated for tasks should be what the individual needed versus what the University needed
- It was hoped that the workshop would provide a resolution to the single most challenging point as to how to enable appropriate flexibility without enabling inappropriate flexibility
- The ranges of FTE varied considerably, it was likely to raise questions around what the top priorities were/was the University asking too much/too broad a range of activities. If the aim was to move to an institutional mean, then there could be less or more work for colleagues – a workload model would not create new time
- There was support for the workload model to inform the TRAC return
- The proposal appeared to allocate time and tasks in a more achievable and equitable way
- The Vice-Chancellor had chaired the UUK group looking into research bureaucracy. There was a concern that the application of TRAC was sometimes loose and that Treasury were interested in how accurate it was. Having an evidence-based workload model was important in providing robust data
- A key issue to address was what colleagues should be spending their time on, rather than what they wanted to do. The model would identify what was feasible within the time available
- Thinking around next steps and how to implement the model as business as usual was part of the next phase of work – the pilot models would be compared to see what issues emerge and need addressing
- The model would provide better data – that would help the University to understand the costs of various activities

The Senate thanked Professor Houston Price for the presentation and her work on the project.

25/19 Setting Student-Staff Ratio Targets for Academic Units

The Senate received for its information a paper from Pro-Vice-Chancellor Professor Zaum in respect of setting Student-Staff Ratio targets for academic units. The paper had been considered by UEB, who had given their agreement to:

- proposed process for setting and SSR targets, and allocation of Schools and Departments into different Bands
- proposed method for adjusting SSRs for internal purposes to better reflect workloads
- proposed uses of SSR to inform planning and resourcing decisions

It was noted that Staff costs accounted for the largest share of expenditure at the University; and fee income from UG and PGT students constituted its largest share of income. Consequently, the ratio between staff and student numbers was an important indicator of financial sustainability of the institution, and of individual Schools and Departments. Furthermore, in most departments of the University, teaching and student support constituted a very significant part of academic colleagues' workload. Student-Staff Ratios (SSRs) were therefore a useful, if imperfect indicator for workload.

The University needed to identify SSRs for different Schools and Departments that were both financially sustainable, and could support academic objectives (both with regard to teaching and research) and a

strong student experience. Across different disciplines, SSRs would vary, reflecting both different teaching requirements (e.g. practice- and lab-based teaching) that were more staff intensive in certain disciplines, but also economies of scale in some large programmes. Not all academic areas would have SSRs that considered independently would support the financial sustainability of that particular discipline at the University. A degree of variation and consequently cross-subsidy across disciplines would be required to maintain appropriate disciplinary breadth across the University, and to support strategically important activity. However, existing practice and breadth of offer could not be a justification for not reviewing and addressing SSRs within particular disciplines.

The purpose of the proposal was to identify SSRs across Schools and Departments that would support the overall financial sustainability and academic excellence of the University, and reduce (though not eliminate) the need for cross-subsidies across disciplines. A strategic and forward-looking understanding of the staffing resource that was available to academic units was key to support wider academic planning, not just financial, but also teaching and research planning; so Schools and Departments could tailor the scope of their academic activities to the staffing resource available.

The paper detailed three proposals:

- 1) Setting SSR Targets** - One advantage of using SSR data was that it has long been collected at a disciplinary level across the sector, and thus allowed for discipline-specific benchmarking; capturing disciplinary differences in teaching requirements, and how they were reflected in staff resource. Most, but not all Schools and Departments map onto a single HESA cost centre, but for some this required decisions on what discipline to benchmark against. Whilst SSR data had long been collected at disciplinary level by HESA, no data had been collected and published since 2021/22, following unresolved sector-wide discussions about an update on the methodology for calculating SSRs. Since then, there had been significant changes to sector costs as a consequence of inflation, while a key source of income from students – home UG tuition fees – had been fixed. It was therefore proposed to adjust SSRs for inflation as 2021/22 SSRs would not reflect a benchmark for a financially sustainable student-staff ratio now, after four years of significant inflation. To establish discipline-specific SSR targets, the following approach was proposed:
 - Schools and Departments were benchmarked against discipline specific SSRs, using HESA data.
 - Benchmarks were adjusted for inflation by 15%.
 - Disciplines would be grouped into three bands of SSRs, with allocation to each band on the basis of disciplinary SSR benchmarks. The following banding was proposed:
 - Band 1: With an SSR range of 20-24, this band includes disciplines with large student cohorts (100+ students per year), and mostly classroom-based subjects. For all Schools and Departments included in this band, the upper bound of the adjusted benchmark was above 21. It excluded subjects where there were SSR related accreditation requirements (i.e. an SSR of 20 or below), even if their adjusted benchmark was higher; or where annual intakes were significantly below 100 students (e.g. Architecture).
 - Band 2: With an SSR range of 16-20, this band included Schools and Departments where the upper bound benchmark was above 16. It included disciplines with smaller student cohorts (< 100 per year) as well as practice- and lab-based teaching. It excluded Languages and Cultures, where the “Languages for All” provision had very low SSRs. It was proposed that for the time being, Languages and Cultures was included in the lowest (3rd) Band.

- Band 3: With an SSR range of 12-16, this included disciplines with an upper bound benchmark below 16. These included disciplines with small student cohorts such as Languages and Meteorology, and the Charlie Waller Institute (CWI) and Speech and Language Therapy where SSRs at 15 or below were accreditation requirements.
- 2) Adjusting SSRs to better reflect workloads** - There were some elements of workloads that SSRs did not capture, but which were relevant for understanding both workloads and financial sustainability of Schools and departments. It was therefore proposed that the University calculate both the “raw” SSR (on the basis of the relevant T&R and TI FTE, as well as HESA student number data), and an “adjusted” SSR that took these into account. The first of these was research income, as grants paid for replacement teaching, and SSRs then capture both the staff holding the grant, as well as additional staff hired to backfill their teaching responsibilities. To capture this, the staff number could be adjusted by the FTE of TI and T&R staff that were costed against research projects at the time of the SSR calculation. At the moment, the University’s financial reporting system only allowed identification of fixed term posts directly costed against research grants, but not the fractional FTE of Principal and Co-Investigators on permanent contracts. This currently needed to be manually extracted. With the implementation of the Current Research Information System (CRIS) and a new post award system, this data would be captured and could be reported on in the future (from 2026/27). The second was income from activities by academic staff that were income generating for the School or Department and part of their workload, but were not reflected in the student number calculation and thus not in SSRs. In particular, these include transnational education or other educational contracts, where students were not included in the student numbers used for the normal SSR calculations. The University could calculate the income/FTE (using TR and TI staff as used for SSRs, and reflecting that these activities were unlikely to involve RI staff), and adjust the SSR accordingly. Including “other income” in the SSR calculation would make it less comparable to the benchmark data (which would not include this) but seemed appropriate to inform the overall high-level understanding of workload and resourcing.
- 3) Using SSRs** - SSRs would be used in the future both to inform strategic planning and to inform decision making on resource requests, with Schools and Departments to be expected to have staffing closer to the median of the benchmark range, or be very close to the SSR required for accreditation purposes. In terms of strategic planning, SSR data would be used by PCB to inform the annual planning round, including both requests for financial savings or in considerations of resourcing growth. In the medium term (within three years), all Schools and Departments should move their adjusted SSRs to within the agreed target range, with those with significant research or other income likely to be at the lower band, and those with low research and additional income at the higher end. Those with SSR related accreditation requirements should have a “raw SSR” close to their accreditation requirement. Schools and Departments would be expected to manage their resources accordingly. In many cases, this could be done gradually and through natural churn and planned student growth, but in some cases might require targeted restructuring in small number of instances. Adjusting to the target SSRs might require operational and programme changes, such as the reduction or sharing of modules.

The implementation of a workload model where the balance of workloads across teaching and research reflected academic performance could also help to manage higher SSRs in areas with relatively lower research income. In the small number of cases where current SSRs were

significantly above the upper end of the target range (e.g. Computer Science), it was likely to require additional investment into staff to bring down SSRs.

In terms of decision making, the SSR data would inform decisions by the SRF group on staffing and resource requests. The data and methodology would be used to inform the assessment of the workload and resourcing requirements and implications of individual projects. SSR data will be updated annually, through an internal SSR dashboard.

For 2025/26, the SSRs data would be used to inform financial targets (savings) for Schools, and to apportion the remaining savings for 2025/26. For the purpose of identifying these savings, HBS would be excluded, as separate arrangements were in place to achieve savings and improvements to meet the previously agreed surplus and contribution targets. Savings targets would be based on an assessment of the distance to the relevant SSR benchmarks, taking into account the outcome of the VR process, and adjustments for research and other income, and expected recruitment for 2025/26. Should student recruitment in the autumn fall short of expectations, SSRs would also be used to identify areas for and expected scale of additional savings born by Schools.

The Senate had discussed this topic ahead of the meeting at the informal pre-meet; the following questions and comments were raised:

- There were questions around the robustness of the data used and how transparent it was -
The data used was HESA data which was robust. Data on student and staff numbers was all the University's official data. All of the data used was already collected for a range of purposes. The only adjustment to data was for cross teaching
- At what level should data be collected - School versus Department
It was important to collect the data at the right level – high enough to be meaningful, but also low enough to be helpful
- Had the SSRs been adjusted on the allocation of research time, for e.g. for PhD supervision?
This adjustment had not been made yet as data was still being collected – it was expected this would be in the next few weeks. A number of discussions had been held with Heads of School on the best way to identify time allocated on grants – it noted that there was a culture of underestimating time and it was important that realistic numbers were used
- In terms of Schools versus Departments and levels of granularity. It was important to remember that planning was based on Schools, and the University operated on the basis of Schools. Whilst it was important to enable collaboration between Departments, if the School level was not used there could be unintended barriers
- The data would be helpful in strategic planning
- The ratios would need to be attuned to longer term trends as part of the planning process. Some Schools might need to raise their SSRs or bring them down
- As the project gains traction Council would be interested in whether there were any risks, particularly for example to NSS?
There was no easy direct relationship between SSR and NSS results, but it would be important that change was managed well so as to not cause any unintended consequences. Some SSRs would be adjusted via normal churn others might require some strategic changes

- In some Schools student numbers, particularly international, varied considerably between years – how would that be managed?
The planning process was done on the basis of multi years – any dramatic changes could be a short-term blip or part of a longer-term trend – the planning process was aware that fluctuations in numbers would be expected and would keep this under consideration

The Senate thanked Pro-Vice-Chancellor Professor Zaum for the paper.

25/20 Research Intensive Staff and expectations of salary recovery through grants

The Senate received for its information a paper from Pro-Vice-Chancellor Professor Zaum in respect of Research Intensive (RI) Staff and expectations of salary recovery through grants – this was a companion piece to the SSR paper (25/19). The paper had been considered by UEB who agreed that:

- All permanent Research-Intensive staff at Grade 7, 8 and 9 should normally be expected to have costed at least 50% of their FTE into active research grants. This should be assessed on a rolling, three-year basis, recognizing inevitable fluctuations in the size and timing of awards.
- Appropriate allowances should be made for relevant colleagues who were holding significant leadership or citizenship positions in the University, as recognised through a workload model. Allowances should also made for colleagues who were holding large charity grants funding research teams but not PI time.
- Heads of School and line managers could allocate teaching and other responsibilities to Research Intensive staff in line with the HESA definition of the Research-Intensive employment function; and encourage them to make use of this in cases of RI staff who have little or no time costed into grants.
- For those colleagues who had not met these expectations for a number of years, line managers should start a conversation as soon as possible to agree a move to a T&R contract.

A number of questions and comments were raised by Senators, as follows:

- It was confirmed that the data in the table was correct in terms of staff numbers
- Was there an overlap between the two papers, and were they contradictory, if RI staff were moved to T&R would that impact the SSRs?
The papers served two slightly different purposes – SSRs was for the University's planning, RI was to help individuals in those roles in their performance and career progression. Colleagues often changed contract type sometimes in the context of performance management discussions but also due to changes in career paths
- Personal Titles criteria were to change to include a requirement around research grant income
- If the University wanted to remain a research-intensive university, then it was important that more research grant income was gained
- Would this make the University less competitive in gaining research grants, would it create any risks?
It was not expected to create any risks but could mean that some colleagues might choose not to stay at the University. All of the Research Division Leads as well as the University Board for Research and Innovation were supportive of the proposals as it sent a message around research's importance

- It was important that T&R and TI contracts were not devalued. As SSRs did not include RI, any move to T&R could impact the ratio
Any change of contract type was consensual. If RI colleagues were not performing then wider conversations would be needed

The Senate thanked Pro-Vice-Chancellor Professor Zaum for the paper.

25/21 UBTLSE Quality Assurance and Standards in Education

The Senate received a number of items from UBTLSE (also see Minute 25/24) explicitly concerned with Academic Quality and Standards.

UBTLSE regularly considered reports relating to the maintenance of quality and standards in teaching and learning. This report was based on items discussed at meetings on 11 March, 22 April and 3 June 2025. Senators were asked to review the items contained in the report as they formed part of the evidence base upon which Senate could provide assurances to Council that University provision remained in line with the expectations of the Office for Students (OfS) and other key regulatory bodies.

The report contained recommendations/actions in respect of:

- The Student Contract (and compliance with Guidance from the Competition and Markets Authority).
- Assurances on Quality, including:
 - OfS Condition of Registration E6 Harassment and Sexual Misconduct
 - University Annual Quality Assurance Report 2023/24 (updates)
 - Portfolio Management Process
 - Continuation Taskforce
 - PhD Completion and Continuation
 - Teaching, Learning and Student Experience Risk Register
 - Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies
 - UK Visa and Immigration compliance
 - Sector bodies and national initiatives (for information)

The Senate was asked to:

- Consider the contents of the report and provide assurance for Council as to the quality of provision
- Approve amendments to the Student Contract

In respect of the Student Contract, the Senate noted the proposed textual amendments to the Student Contract (Fees Policy and Terms & Conditions), noting that the substantive changes to the Fees Policy had been approved by the University Executive Board. It was noted that the amendments to the Student Contracts for 2026/27 had been made in response to updated guidance from the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) and the subsequent responses and action from the OfS and Trading Standards. As well as reviewing the contracts in light of the CMA's guidance colleagues in Legal Services had also reviewed the judgements passed by Trading Standards to inform the updates. With respect to the Fees Policy the University Executive Board had agreed that, as an institution, it would reserve the right to increase fees (in line with the changes to Tuition Fees announced by the Government, and in light of

financial circumstances). This represented a more agile approach which allowed the University to raise fees year on year. However, detailed in the Fees Policy was a maximum amount by which fees would increase. Additionally, amendments to Section 7 of the policy would help future-proof activities by allowing for the accommodation of new forms of payment. Amendments to the Terms and Conditions included:

- a) Updating information concerning additional costs of programmes, noting that whilst the Programme Specifications identify additional costs, students may be bound by the contract for five or more years, during which time that information may become outdated. The updates identified the levy of further 'additional costs' as being exceptional and where required to maximise educational opportunities.
- b) The 'limitation of liability' clause has been removed from T&Cs. In reviewing the judgements from Trading Standards it was noted that these clauses were a particular vulnerability for institutions. The amendments removed any cap from damages.
- c) Amendments to the *force majeure* provisions (section 13.4 in the revised UG T&Cs) would see the removal of 'staff illness' from the list of events outside of the University's control. This change had been made in response to the updated CMA guidance. The amended clause also provided examples of actions that might be taken to mitigate impacts arising from reliance on the clause, which would demonstrate the University taking a reasonable and balanced position.
- d) Further amendments centred on placement provision. The amendment gives the University the right to terminate the contract if a student cannot undertake a placement because they do not have the right to work in the UK or because a placement provider cannot make suitable adjustments to accommodate a disability. The clause gives the University the right to terminate where we have exhausted all possibilities to deliver the placement or place the student on a suitable alternative programme.

The Senate raised the following comments and questions:

- What implications were there for Schools in respect of the *force majeure* provision in relation to staff illness
It was not expected that there would be significant implications for Schools as a result of this change in provision. All Schools planned for staff absences and made changes as necessary when colleagues were away from the University for a period
- Would the new contract apply to all students or new enrolments?
The contract would apply to all students

The Senate reviewed and unanimously approved the changes as detailed to the Student Contract.

The Senate unanimously approved the report for submission to the Council, confirming that the UBTLSSE report provided assurance and evidence that the University was maintaining quality and standards in learning and teaching.

25/22 Report of the Vice-Chancellor

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

University Strategy:

- As outlined in the all-staff talk, work would begin at the start of the new academic year on a refresh of the University Strategy which would end in 2026. This would be an evolution of the existing strategy; have a clear direction of travel; and be in place for a substantive period. Further details would be communicated in the Autumn.

Community:

- The appointment of Vin Wijeratne as new Chief Financial Officer, Professor Alan Howard as APVC Education and Student Experience, Professor Gail Marshall as APVC Research (Heritage and Creativity), Jon Foster-Pedley as APVC (Global Engagement), Dr Adam Humphreys as Head of School for Philosophy, Politics and Economics, Professor Daniela La Penna as Head of School of Humanities, Emma Ashley as Director of Finance, Tanya Lines as Head of EDI
- Staff Survey – The recently concluded Employee Engagement Survey, the first such survey run since before the pandemic. The headline results of the survey indicated an overall engagement score of 77% which was 4 percentage points above the benchmark for Higher Education. Positive feedback showed the importance of teamwork and collaboration at Reading, with colleagues showing high understanding of and engagement with work to support environmental sustainability and equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI). The survey did identify areas where the University could improve, particularly in respect of managing change, staff workload and changes to systems and processes alongside improvements to reward and career development opportunities. The results were available at both the Institutional level and split by School or Directorate. Having shared the headline results with all colleagues, focus would now move to identifying and communicating key institutional actions. Alongside this Heads of School/Directorate would share local results with their teams and plan local actions. Future surveys would be run using the same platform.
- Mental Health Charter – the University had been awarded the University Mental Health Charter (UMHC) Award by Student Minds, recognising our commitment to fostering a mentally healthy university community. This award placed the University amongst 17 universities in the UK to achieve full recognition.
- Supreme Court Ruling - In response to the recent Supreme Court ruling, the University was reviewing its policies and practices to ensure legal compliance. This included areas such as accommodation, scholarships, data collection, and toilet facilities. It was recognised that this was a very sensitive issue and that members of community would hold a range of views.

Excellence:

- The Complete University Guide - was published this month and the University position remained broadly the same at 36 out of 130. At note at institutional level, our graduates were increasingly content that their activity fits with their future plans. Seven subjects across arts and sciences featured in the top ten this year, up from six last year, including: Speech & Language Therapy (1, up three places), Land & Property Management (1, maintained), Building (2, up one place), Agriculture & Forestry (3, up five places), Geology (covering Meteorology and Climate science – ranked 7, down two places), Food Science (7, up four places), Art & Design (9, up one place).

- Agri-Food Futures Update - In May, UEB approved a business case to establish a leadership structure for the Agrifood Futures strategy in order to provide the visionary leadership required to drive the research-led brief for the Enabling Investments outlined in the strategy.
- Access and participation - strong progress was being made in evaluating the activities that help all students thrive, regardless of background. Twelve new evaluation reports had been published under the Access and Participation Plan (APP), approved by the Office for Students in 2023 and running to 2027/28. These reports assessed initiatives such as school outreach, mentoring, study skills support, and curriculum decolonisation.
- Significant new research awards – Three projects were funded through the Tipping Points call. Other major successes included several doctoral training awards, including a renewal of the BBSRC Food Biosystems Doctoral Training Landscape Award (value £15m), a NERC Doctoral Landscape Award (CROCUS, £8m).
- ECMWF – the partnership with ECMWF had now seen two cohorts of PhD students recruited (13 in total). A ground-breaking event would be held in the next few weeks

Sustainability:

- Financial Sustainability - Two targeted voluntary redundancy (VR) schemes launched earlier this year (one across selected departments and another within Chemistry) had progressed well, saving approximately £2 million annually. Ongoing initiatives include the launch of Global Sustainability Leader Scholarships, strategic planning within Schools, and efforts to enhance flexibility in Professional Services. Further savings will be necessary in the next academic year to return the University to a surplus, potentially involving structural changes. Student recruitment outcomes this summer would be a key factor, especially amid increased competition from high-tariff universities.

Engaged University:

- Community Festival – the University welcomed over 8,000 visitors to campus. The event had been a great success and the Senate recorded its thanks to all those involved

In response to a question raised on the Supreme Court Ruling, the Vice-Chancellor assured the Senate the University was reviewing its policies and practices to ensure legal compliance. This included areas such as accommodation, scholarships, data collection, and toilet facilities. A working group had been set up, led by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor had met with a small group of students who had raised a number of issues that would be taken back to the group. The group was working on guidance and would pull together existing resources in a focussed way.

In respect of the Immigration White paper it was noted that this could make the UK unattractive to international students. The Vice-Chancellor noted that UUK were in discussion with Government over this issues including the 6% fee.

Items for report and approval

25/23 Report of the University Executive Board

All items were covered above.

25/24 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 11 March, 22 April and 3 June 2025.

The report contained updates on:

- Key decisions and changes to policies
- External Examiner nominations
- Exceptional Circumstances Process Review
- Home Foundation Year
- Micro-credentials
- Portfolio Review Pathway

The Senate noted the report and approved the external examiner nominations.

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

The Senate received the report of the University Board for Research and Innovation held on 9 June 2025. It was noted that the Board had:

- Approved the changes to the research committee structure, including the discontinuation of UBRI – in future reports to Senate would come from UCRI
- Received updates including: Outcomes of the review of Interdisciplinary Research Centres (IDRC); expectations for senior research-intensive staff; presentation on research costs and strategies for maximising recovery
- Received an update on progress with the University's research culture programme
- 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 annual statement of compliance with the Concordat to Support Research integrity

The Senate approved the Concordat to Support Research Integrity for onward transmission to the Council.

25/26 Report of the International and Global Engagement Strategy Board

The Senate noted the report of the International Global Engagement Strategy Board. It was noted that at the start of 2025, the membership and terms of reference for the Global Engagement Strategy Board were reviewed and updated to ensure that they aligned with the Internationalisation and Global

Engagement Strategic Framework and to ensure that the Board remained fit for purpose. The Board was also renamed. Going forward, the Internationalisation and Global Engagement Strategy Board would focus on strategy and implementation monitoring. The Board would:

- Keep oversight of the strategic initiatives that had/would be agreed following the endorsement of the new UEB mission/vision by Council in November 2024
- Approve and monitor plans and policies supporting the Internationalisation and Global Engagement Strategic Framework
- Approve the institutional annual implementation plan
- Create/approve an annual guidance statement for distribution by the Planning and Change Board to Schools and Directorates
- Approve objectives and KPIs related to each of the IGE Strategic Framework's four aims and monitor their progress, associated risks, supporting structures as well resources allocation/requirements - ensuring these were embedded in School and Directorate plans within the University's planning process

A new programme management approach to strategy implementation and monitoring would be implemented. This would allow the PVCI and IGESB to keep oversight of strategic projects as well as implementing the key objectives of the IGE Strategic Framework by embedding incremental changes into School and Directorates, to be eventually incorporated into business-as-usual.

The Board had met twice since these changes on 10 February and 15 May 2025. Matters of note arising included:

- The Internationalisation and Global Engagement Strategic Framework
- Strategic Initiatives
- South East Asia (SEA), China and South Asia Hubs
- IFP Proposal Report
- UoRM Provost 100 Day Report
- KPI Dashboard
- Global Partnerships Risk Management Framework
- NUIST
- Proposed joint institute with Tianjin

25/27 Student Recruitment and Admissions Update

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

25/28 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 over the last year including: work on sustainability, colour run, paid internships, T&L excellence awards, career sessions, self-defence workshops, ending violence against women and girls, documentary on men's mental health, pancake run, accessible sports, support for disabled student accommodation, Christmas with the Community, and girls night in/out.

The Senate welcomed the incoming RSU Officers and noted their plans and manifesto pledges for the coming year particularly in relation to: enhancing the student community, non-drinking activities, functionality of space outside of the library, student housing, cost of living, focus on marginalised groups, improving society inclusivity.

25/29 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

25/30 Reports of Examiners for Higher Degrees by thesis

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

25/31 Examinations for Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates

The Senate authorised the Vice-Chancellor to approve May/June/July 2025 examination results on its behalf.

25/32 Chair's Action

The Senate noted that the following items had been approved by Chair's action:

- That Dr Simon Clarke's term of office on Joint University/UCU be extended for a further term
- Amendments to Ordinance A9 and B3 to amend Director of Finance to Chief Financial Officer
- Award of Emeritus/ta Professor and Honorary Fellow to colleagues leaving under the Voluntary Redundancy Scheme
- Appointment of External Examiners for a Higher Doctorate candidate

25/33 Appointments to Committees and other bodies

In respect of appointments, the Senate noted that:

- There was one vacancy available from 1 August 2025 for members of the Senate to join the Joint Standing Committee on Honorary Degrees Committee
- There were four vacancies on the Arts Committee from 1 August 2025
- There was one vacancy available from 1 August 2025 for members of Senate to join the Senate Agenda Group

The Senate reappointed:

- Ilan Dwek to the University Research Ethics Committee for a further term to 31.7.2028
- Stuart Black and Calvin Smith to Student Appeals Committee for a further term to 31.7.2028
- Rav Savania as Chair of Student Disciplinary Committee for a further period to 31.7.2027

25/34 Retirement of Professors

The Senate approved that that under the provisions of Ordinance B7 the title of Professor Emeritus/Emerita be conferred with effect from the date indicated on:

Professor Moira Clark (30.2.2025)

25/35 Other Retirements

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

James Lamburn (20.12.2024)
Sandra Batchelor (31.12.2024)
Karen Hullis (31.12.2024)
Amanda Clarke (7.2.2025)
Lucina Jenkins (28.2.2025)
Jocelyn Robinson (30.4.2025)
Christopher Bussey (2.5.2025)
Mark Foster (30.4.2025)
Andrew Grice (30.4.2025)

25/36 List of meetings in 2025-26

The Senate received the final version of the list of meetings for 2025-26 for its information.

25/37 Dates of next meeting 2025/26

Wednesday 5 November 2025 at 2.15 pm (in person)

Wednesday 7 January 2026 at 2.15 pm – reserve meeting (online)

Wednesday 25 February 2026 at 2.15 pm (online)

Wednesday 29 April 2026 at 2.15 pm – reserve meeting (online)

Thursday 17 June 2026 at 2.15 pm (in person)

25/38 Report from the Council

The Senate received an additional report from the Council for its information.