

Heriot-Watt University

## THE SENATE

Minutes: 29 August 2024

In the Chair: Professor Richard A Williams, Principal and Vice-Chancellor

Present:

Dr Nasir Al Lagtah	Dr Bill MacPherson
Professor Mushtak Al-Atabi	Professor Mercedes Maroto-Valer
Dr Yousef Al-Guamei	Ms Holly McAdams
Mr Mohamed Al Musleh	Dr Alistair McConnell
Professor Lehel Banjai	Professor Martin McCoustra
Mr David Cavallaro*	Dr Richard McCracken
Dr Hassam Chaudhry	Dr Ruaraidh Mcintosh
Professor Malcolm Chrisp	Dr Yvonne McLaren-Hankin
Dr Demitrios Cotsovos	Professor Steve McLaughlin*
Dr Ross Curran	Dr Thomas Methven
Professor Paul Dalgarno	Professor Basheer Muhammed
Dr Louise Delicato	Dr Shameel Muhammed
Dr Christopher Dodd	Professor Gillian Murray
Professor Jo Drugan	Dr Hendrik Nahler*
Dr Neamat El Gayar	Dr Shereen Nassar
Dr Taha Elhag*	Mr Adrian Nathai
Dr David Ellis	Professor Mehdi Nazarinia*
Professor Anna Fenge	Dr Stefano Padiila
Mr Cameron Fields	Ms Rachel Poole
Dr Yun li Go	Dr Marta Romeo
Dr Noor Zainab Habib	Professor Christian Saemann
Dr Daniel Hale	Dr Mohammed Saleh
Dr April Henning	Dr Florian Sheuring
Professor Annie Hill	Dr Harpreet Seth
Dr Adnan Ilyas	Ms Devanshi Sharma*
Mr Ramon Inglada	Ms Rhidima Shivkumar*
Dr Timothy Johnson	Mr Nader Shouly*
Mr Karamjeet Singh	Ms Andrea Sneddon
Dr Britta Kalkreuter	Dr Ryad Soobhany
Dr Barbara Keating	Dr Katerina Strani
Dr Craig Kennedy	Mr Hai Tan
Professor Reza Kouhy*	Ms Pearlyn Tee*
Professor Angus Laing	Dr George Vasdravellis*
Dr Suzanne Lampert	Professor Fiona Waldron
Mr Andrew Lee	Dr Robin Westacott
Professor Sara Lombardo	Dr Euan Winton
Ms Jasmine Low	Dr Tze Chuen Yap
Dr Jia Lu	Dr Humphrey Yiu
Dr Alex MacLaren	

In attendance: Professor Martha Caddell  
Mr Iain Dods  
Ms Samantha Kane

Mr Phil Rowsby (Clerk)  
Dr Maggie King  
Mr Fraser Muir

Apologies: Dr Anne Bernassau  
Ms Sue Collier  
Professor Fiona Grant  
Professor Igor Guz  
Mr Mark Hamid  
Mr Fujiawara Jun  
Professor Julian Malins  
Professor Dame Heather McGregor

Mr M Shadi Mohamed  
Dr Katriona Myhill  
Ms Ruth Moir  
Dr Yasemin Nielsen  
Dr Rabee Rustum  
Dr Kathrin Stark  
Dr Monica Tamariz  
Dr Marta Vallejo

\* denotes partial attendance

MINUTE REF		ACTION BY	ACTION DATE
<b>M24/57</b>	<b>CHAIR’S WELCOME &amp; NOTE OF APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b>		
	<p>The Principal and Vice-Chancellor welcomed all participants to the meeting, especially those new members of the Senate who were attending for the first time.</p> <p>Professor Paul Dalgarno and Dr Bill McPherson were congratulated on being elected to represent Senate on Court.</p> <p>The apologies for absence were noted.</p>		
<b>M24/58</b>	<b>MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: 13 JUNE 2024</b>		
	<p>The Senate <b>received</b> and <b>approved</b> as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 13 June 2023, with minor corrections to the sequencing of the minute references.</p>		
<b>M24/59</b>	<b>MATTERS ARISING &amp; ACTION LOG</b>		
	<p>The Senate noted updates of the following actions.</p>		
	<p>M24/40.02: SSR dashboard to be circulated to Senators.</p>	Kirsty Scanlan	06.09.2024
	<p>M24/43.04: Regular Research newsletter under development.</p>	Steve McLaughlin	October 2024
	<p>M24/45.02: QESR Outcomes Report would be uploaded to Admincontrol.</p>	Clerk	29.08.2024
<b>M24/60</b>	<b>PRIORITIES FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2023/24 INCORPORATING PRINCIPAL’S REPORT</b>		
	<p>The Senate <b>received</b> a report from the Principal which included the remarks on the educational and financial context of higher education and the impact at each campus location. He noted the challenging environment due to the decline in international student numbers; Scottish student fees which are not fully covered by SFC; and the reduction in RUK students.</p> <p>A key theme highlighted the financial challenges and the focus on diversifying income streams to reduce the planned deficits. It was noted that the University receives only 11% of funding from SFC whilst other Scottish universities are wholly dependent on this.</p> <p>The Principal outlined successes based on research and knowledge translation activities, the growth in CDTs; major collaborative programmes in logistics and quantum technology; and achieving the £65M of grants during 2023/24. Reference was made to success in recent student feedback and destination surveys. The Principal congratulated colleagues from Chemical Engineering judged first in the UK in the NSS for their student focused, community approach.</p> <p>The Senate <b>received</b> a report from the Vice-Principal and Provost focused on finance and resources. He explained how the Resource Management Group (RMG) operated; discussions held with senior leaders across schools and professional services to manage the planned deficits; voluntary redundancy would be avoided; through transforming operations and securing new income streams the University would ensure financial sustainability and provide opportunities to invest. He noted that the University was on course to meet the majority of SPIs in Strategy 2025.</p>		

Following a question, it was confirmed that the University was increasing its approach to maximising the recovery of research costs and intended to move from a median position across the UK to the upper quartile. It was noted that the University was distinctive with the number of industrial partnerships it had and that most universities cross-subsidise activities.

The Principal outlined aspects of the Strategy 2035 development process including the guiding principles; developing communications strategy; methods to enable the institution to develop and grow; the guiding principles for decision-making; and the continued tracking of activities under the headings Delivering Excellence, Assuring Sustainable Growth and Aligning People, Systems and Processes.

The Senate **noted** the update.

**M24/61 GOVERNANCE EFFECTIVENESS**

Professor Fiona Waldron presented on the actions which had taken place, and which were planned, following the external governance review and the joint meeting of Senate and Court which had discussed the report's recommendations.

**M24/62 GLOBAL STUDENT PLANNING AND PRIORITIES**

Cameron Fields, Student Union President presented the global priorities for the Student Representative Bodies.

**M24/63 PRIORITIES FOR THE UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE FOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION**

Professor Gill Murray, Deputy Principal (Business and Enterprise) presented the year's priorities for the University Committee for Research and Innovation (UCRI) as its vice-chair.

**M24/64 PRIORITIES FOR THE UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE FOR LEARNING AND TEACHING**

Professor Malcolm Chrisp, Deputy Principal (Education & Student Life) presented the year's priorities for the University Committee for Learning & Teaching (UCLT) as its chair.

**M24/65 PRIORITIES FOR THE UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE FOR QUALITY AND STANDARDS**

Professor Fiona Waldron presented the year's priorities for the University Committee for Quality & Standards (UCQS) as its chair.

**M24/66 PRIORITIES FOR THE ORDINANCES AND REGULATIONS COMMITTEE**

Professor Fiona Waldron presented the year's priorities for the Ordinances and Regulations Committee (ORC) as its chair.

**M24/67 PRIORITIES FOR THE UNIVERSITY DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE**

Professor Mehdi Nazarinia presented the year's priorities for the University Discipline Committee (UDC) as its chair.

Following a question, it was noted that suggestions for simplifying student discipline processes should be passed to the Chair of the appropriate School Discipline Committee.

**M24/68 BREAKOUT SESSIONS**

Following the presentations, the Senators divided into breakout sessions of around 6-10 members to discuss two questions posed by the Chair: How can we ensure these priorities can be delivered as part of a global university? What are some of the challenging areas and how might we work together to achieve them?

**M24/69 PLENARY DISCUSSION AND FEEDBACK FROM THE BREAKOUT SESSIONS**

The Senate **received** feedback from three rapporteurs from the breakout sessions and agreed that all feedback would be collated and received at the next Senate meeting.

Clerk                      October  
2024

The rapporteurs noted the presentations provided both challenges and opportunities. These included simplified communication and messaging to help drive change and improve morale; re-building staff and student communities; and allowing research to thrive across all campuses with greater synergies to L&T activities.

It was noted that the student experience had been negatively affected by the cost-of-living crisis and the associated lack of student visibility on campus due to part-time employment.

It was suggested that the level of priorities was quite overwhelming and that colleagues were already time poor. It was noted that other activities must stop to ensure the committee priorities could be delivered.

The rapporteurs also noted the importance of ensuring Strategy 2035 had regular short-term milestones.

Committee chairs to develop a combined timeline for the key priorities and deliverables for consideration by Senate

Committee                      October  
Chairs                              2024

**M24/70 INTERIM CHAIRING ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE FOR RESEARCH & INNOVATION (SEN-24-43)**

The Senate **noted** the interim arrangements which would be in place until a replacement Deputy Principal (Research and Impact) was appointed.

The Senate **received** and **endorsed** the proposal.

**M24/71 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There were no items of other business.

**M23/58 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

- Wednesday 16 October 2024
- Thursday 28 November 2024
- Thursday 06 February 2025
- Wednesday 23 April 2025
- Thursday 12 June 2025

Also, a Joint Meeting of Court and Senate (expected in May 2025)