

Heriot--Watt University

## THE SENATE

Minutes: 28 November 2024

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

Present:

Dr Nasir Al Lagtah	Dr Jia Lu *
Professor Mushtak Al-Atabi	Dr Alex MacLaren *
Dr Yousef Al-Guamei *	Dr Bill MacPherson
Professor Lehel Banjai	Dr Alistair McConnell
Dr David Cavallaro *	Professor Martin McCoustra *
Dr Hassam Chaudhry *	Dr Yvonne McLaren-Hankin
Dr Florence Chiao Mei Choong *	Professor Steve McLaughlin
Professor Malcolm Chrisp	Professor Mercedes Maroto-Valer *
Dr Demitrios Cotsovos *	Dr Thomas Methven
Dr Ross Curran	Mr Lee Miles *
Professor Paul Dalgarno	Dr M Shadi Mohamed
Dr Louise Delicato	Professor Basheer Muhammed
Dr Christopher Dodd	Professor Gillian Murray
Professor Jo Drugan *	Dr Katie Myhill
Dr April Henning	Dr Noor Zainab Habib
Dr Ramon Inglada	Dr Shereen Nassar
Dr Taha Elhag	Mr Adrian Nathai
Dr David Ellis	Professor Mehdi Nazarinia
Dr Erkal Ersoy	Dr Yasemin Nielsen
Mr Joshua Ahurome Eseigbe *	Dr Stefano Padiila
Professor Anna Fenge *	Ms Rachel Poole
Mr Cameron Fields	Dr Marta Romeo
Dr Neamat El Gayar *	Professor Christian Saemann
Dr Ian Grant *	Dr Mohammed Saleh
Professor Igor Guz	Ms Devanshi Sharma *
Dr Noor Zainab Habib	Ms Rhidima Shivkumar
Dr Daniel Hale	Ms Andrea Sneddon
Professor Annie Hill	Dr Ryad Soobhany
Dr Adnan Ilyas *	Dr Kathrin Stark
Dr Timothy Johnson	Dr Katerina Strani
Mr Karamjeet Singh	Dr Nazia Talat
Dr Britta Kalkreuter	Dr Hai Chen Tan
Dr Craig Kennedy	Dr Monica Tamariz *
Professor Reza Kouhy	Ms Pearlyn Tee
Professor Angus Laing	Dr Marta Vallejo
Dr Suzanne Lampert *	Professor Fiona Waldron
Mr Andrew Lee	Dr Robin Westacott
Ms Jasmine Low	Dr Tze Chuen Yap *

In attendance:

Dr Fiona Armstrong	Mr Marcelo Pereyra [M24/95]
Professor Martha Caddell *	Mr David Richardson [M24/96]
Dr Alan Faulkner Jones [M24/94]	Professor Christine Rutherford [M24/94]
Professor Duncan Hand	Ms Kirsty Scanlan *
Dr Maggie King	Mr Alan Smith [M24/94]
Ms Ruth Moir	Mr Marc Quinn [M24/97]
Mr Fraser Muir	Ms Megan Morgan (Clerk)

Apologies:

Mr Mohamed Al Musleh	Dr Ruaraidh McIntosh
Dr Anne Bernassau	Dr Hendrik Nahler
Ms Sue Collier	Dr Harpreet Seth
Dr Yun li Go	Dr Florian Sheuring
Ms Samantha Kane	Mr Nader Shouly
Dr Barbara Keating	Dr George Vasdravellis
Professor Sara Lombardo	Dr Euan Winton
Ms Holly McAdams	Dr Humphrey Yiu
Dr Richard McCracken	
Professor Dame Heather McGregor	

Unnotified absence: Dr Shameel Muhammed  
Professor Joanne Porter

\* denotes partial attendance

MINUTE REF		ACTION BY	ACTION DATE
<b>M24/89</b>	<b>WELCOME AND APOLOGIES</b>		
89.1	The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting and noted the apologies as above. The Senate noted that Ms Megan Morgan had been appointed as Clerk.		
<b>M24/90</b>	<b>MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: 16 OCTOBER 2024 (SENM-24-10-16)</b>		
90.1	The Senate received and approved the minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2024, subject to a minor correction under M24/82.1 regarding the action plan.		
<b>M24/91</b>	<b>MATTERS ARISING AND ACTION LOG (SEN-24-57)</b>		
91.2	The Senate received and noted the Action Log. It was agreed that completed actions would now be removed from the Log.		
<b>M24/92</b>	<b>REPORT FROM THE PRINCIPAL &amp; VICE-CHANCELLOR (SEN-24-58)</b>		
92.1	The Senate received the report from the Chair which highlighted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Progress on the strategic themes, including research and enterprise and learning and teaching priorities.</li> <li>b) Strategy 2035 developments, with a <a href="#">dedicated SharePoint website available</a> to provide updates on strategy evolution.</li> <li>c) A joint meeting with the Court on 12 March 2025 to discuss Strategy 2035 framework.</li> </ul>		
92.2	The Chair noted improvements in the University's approach to tracking strategic priorities and committed to presenting a detailed progress update at the next meeting. It was also noted that ahead a similar 'Principal's Report' report would be presented to both Senate and Court.	RAW	February 2025
92.3	The Senate noted the report without comment.		
<b>M24/93</b>	<b>GLOBAL STUDENT UPDATE (SEN-24-59)</b>		
93.1	The Senate received the update from the Presidents of the Student Representative Bodies and noted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) local and global student engagement activities, including wellbeing initiatives and celebrations;</li> <li>b) the launch of the 'Big Six' student survey, rolled out across global campuses;</li> <li>c) an analysis of student advice hub cases; and</li> <li>d) a focus on creating a supportive and holistic student experience.</li> </ul>		
93.2	In discussion, Senators raised the need for inclusive and specific approaches to understand and address the needs of different student groups, including graduate apprentices and online learners. Senators noted the alignment of critical student survey themes with previous findings and supported a partnership-based approach to addressing key student concerns. The use of the Student Partnership Agreement was one of the main vehicles through which the University and Student Representative Bodies could work together on prioritised actions designed to improve the		

student experience. The importance of leveraging survey results to inform actionable solutions was highlighted.

**M24/94      LEARNING & TEACHING STRATEGY UPDATE:  
CURRICULUM, ASSESSMENT & TEACHING  
TRANSFORMATION (SEN-24-60)**

**94.1**      The Senate received and noted the update on the Learning and Teaching Strategy 2025, presented by the Deputy Principal (Education and Student Life) and Director of Learning and Teaching Academy.

**94.2**      Progress was outlined on building effective teaching teams, enhanced collaboration and improved assessment practices. Senators noted the five priority areas for School/Programme level enhancement in 2024-2025. Senators also noted initiatives for an integrated student experience, improved data insights, programme leadership and embedded early-careers support.

**94.3**      The discussion that followed included:

- a) The need for interdisciplinary collaboration and robust feedback mechanisms to monitor progress and avoid siloed working.
- b) The effectiveness of proxy indicators and core surveys to measure the achievements of different elements of the strategy.
- c) Interdisciplinary engagement with industry partners and current policy in programme development.
- d) Consideration required for graduate apprentices and non-traditional learners.

**94.4**      Senators welcomed the case studies and collaborative action to enhance the student experience and requested that good practice was communicated with the wider University.      All      Ongoing

**94.5**      The Global Change Maker Programme was referenced as a helpful guide to inform effective programme design. It was noted that that the Deputy Principal (Education & Student Life) had met with relevant departments to ensure that work was on track to achieve the 80% student satisfaction target across all subject areas.

**M24/95      SCHOOL RESEARCH AND ENTERPRISE STRATEGIES, AND  
CONTEXT OF GRIS (SEN-24-61)**

**95.1**      The Senate received and noted the update presented by the Deputy Principal (Enterprise and Business), Assistant Vice-Principal (Research and Impact) and Executive Deans.

**95.2**      The Assistant Vice-Principal (Research and Impact) reported that quarterly progress meetings had been held to review performance, risk and opportunities. It was noted that the value of research awards has been at around £47m for last 2 years, but that the level of unfunded research has increased, and the recovery value is inconsistent, affecting bottom line performance. There were risks in performance as success at this level of awards is heavily reliant on UKRI funding and the School of Engineering and Physical Sciences. Schools were aligning Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) with Strategy 2025 and Knowledge Exchange and Innovation Fund (KEIF) priorities. Work was ongoing to improve cost recovery, diversify funding and enhance data transparency.

- 95.3** Executive Deans provided an overview of progress within each School:
- a) EGIS: Proposals aligned with KPIs and above previous years; with a focus on mentoring, retention, research culture and transdisciplinary approaches. Awards were below KPI target, due to yearly cycles of large industrial awards.
  - b) EPS: Reliance for funding was dominated by one single institute, with emphasis required on industrial diversification and impact through a dedicated Impact Committee.
  - c) MACS: Evolving KPIs and data used before adjusting target values and removing the International Centre for the Mathematical Sciences ICMS £5m grant from proposals and awards. Two industrial-funded PhD models were developed and there had been increased Business and Enterprise engagement. MACS would seek to address the risk of a reliance on a small pool of active researchers.
  - d) SoSS/EBS: Increased proposal submissions and success rates; realigned priorities to integrate international campuses and focus on consultancy and impact.
  - e) SoTD: Focus on capacity building through research time protection, GRIs collaboration, and stabilising research amid operational changes.

**95.4** Senators welcomed the comprehensive update and noted the progress made. Discussion included the importance of refining KPIs, improving data transparency and aligning key research strategies with broader institutional priorities to address disparities across Schools.

**M24/96 KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE AND INNOVATION FUND (KEIF) SUBMISSION (SEN-24-62)**

**96.1** The Senate received and noted the update presented by the Deputy Principal (Enterprise and Business) and Chief Entrepreneurial Executive.

**96.2** The Chief Entrepreneurial Executive reported that the KEIF submission aimed to enhance Scotland's HEI Sector by driving knowledge exchange, research impact and innovation over the next five years. The University's KEIF strategy focused on increasing income, diversifying revenue through industry and public partnerships, and advancing commercialisation. It was noted that KEIF strategy would align with Scotland's National Strategy for Economic Transformation.

**96.3** The Senate acknowledged the importance of the KEIF strategy and submission and the role it would play in advancing institutional and national priorities.

**96.4** Draft KEIF submission to be circulated by correspondence, for comment.

Clerk

Immediate

**M24/97 UDC ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24, INCLUDING PROPOSAL TO APPOINT ADDITIONAL MEMBER OF SENATE TO THE UDC (SEN-24-63)**

**97.1** The Senate received the UDC Annual Report 2023-2024 presented by the UDC Chair and noted:

- 97.2**
- a) 777 academic misconduct cases in 2023-24, which represented 3% of the student population and was a 19% reduction from the previous year.
  - b) Average case resolution times, from date of referral to student receiving the outcome of the allegation, had reduced to 33 working days and student outcomes were, on average, communicated within the expected ten working days following School or University Discipline Committee decisions being made.
  - c) The majority of cases were from Scottish Campuses, with the proportion of Dubai cases being similar to the previous year. However, the case numbers from the Malaysia Campus were noticeably lower than in previous years.
  - d) The highest number of cases occurred in SoSS, followed by the Global College.
  - e) Plagiarism and collusion remained the most common form of misconduct, with emerging concerns on generative AI being addressed.
  - f) 79% of School-level referrals and 91% of University-level cases were proven.
  - g) The number of appeals against misconduct case decisions had decreased significantly.

**97.3** Senators welcomed the report and commended the ongoing work of the Student Conduct Team. It was noted that whilst incident rates for the misuse of generative AI were low, this may not be a true figure due to non-reporting. Senators were assured that students would receive further guidance on generative AI misuse.

**97.4** The Senate approved the appointment of Dr Myhill (SoSS) as a Senate member of the UDC, which resolved a long standing vacancy.

**M24/98 SENATE COMMITTEE FOR INTERIM BUSINESS & EFFECTIVENESS: REPORT OF MEETING ON 13 NOVEMBER 2024 (SEN-24-64)**

**98.1** The Committee noted the report without comment.

**M24/99 ORDINANCES & REGULATIONS COMMITTEE: REPORT OF MEETING ON 31 OCTOBER 2024 (SEN-24-65)**

**99.1** It was agreed that this item would be deferred to the next meeting, so that a quorate number of Senators could be present.

**M24/100 UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE FOR LEARNING & TEACHING: REPORT OF MEETING ON 24 OCTOBER 2024 (SEN-24-66)**

**100.1** The Committee noted the report without comment.

**M24/101 UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE FOR RESEARCH & INNOVATION: REPORT OF MEETINGS ON 19 SEPTEMBER 2024 AND 17 OCTOBER 2024 (SEN-24-67)**

**101.1** The Committee noted the report without comment.

**M24/102 UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE FOR QUALITY & STANDARDS: REPORT OF MEETINGS ON 2 SEPTEMBER 2024 AND 4 NOVEMBER 2024 (SEN-24-68)**

**102.1** The Committee noted the report without comment.

**M24/103 SENATE FORWARD AGENDA (SEN-24-69)**

**103.1** The Committee noted the forward agenda without comment.

**M24/104 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

**104.1** Thursday 06 February 2025  
Wednesday 23 April 2025  
Wednesday 12 March 2025 (Joint Meeting with the Court)  
Thursday 12 June 2025