

Council

16 May 2024

17.00-19.00

Shilling Building Seminar Room 0-04



Actions

Action	Minute ref.	Responsible	Date
Council Briefing: To address student recruitment historic and current trends, performance and planning for clearing.	24/98	MFlws/PM	9 July 2024 Addressed
UKVI: ARCC to receive compliance reports twice per year.	24/110	AB	Noted for 24/25 schedule of business
Student Wellbeing: A report to Council at the meeting of 4 July 2024.	23/285	NB	9 July 2024 Item 12 at this meeting
Council committee structure: for further discussion by circulation with feedback to Council via Strategy & Governance Committee.	23/332	AB	In progress
Freedom of Speech: The Chair of Council to formally write to the SU Board of Trustees, on confirmation of the OfS Condition of Registration for Freedom of Speech.	23/100	DMH	Completed 16 May 2024

Action from current meeting

~~Action completed since last meeting.~~

Approvals

Approved at this meeting	Minute ref.	Responsible	Date
Minutes and actions of the meetings held on 22 February 2024 (M24/01-24/63).	24/67	AB	16 May 2024
The appointment of two independent members of Council for 2024/25.	24/113	AB	16 May 2024
The reappointment of two independent members of Council for a second term of office.	24/106	AB	16 May 2024
An amendment to the Academic Structure for the academic year 2024/25 recommended by Academic Board.	24/116	AB	16 May 2024

Council

16 May 2024

17:00 – 19:00

Shilling Building Seminar Room, o-04

M24/64 – 24/128



Minutes

Present:	Dame Margaret Hodge (Chair of Council)	Tim Mitchell
	Dr Donna Brown	Gerry O'Hagan
	Dame Sally Dicketts	Professor Julie Sanders (Vice-Chancellor and Principal)
	Ann Ewing (Vice Chair of Council)	HHJ Khatun Sapnara (MS Teams)
	Hannah Hockin	Sharanya Sivarajah
	Sarah Honeycombe	David Walker (MS Teams)
		David Williams (MS Teams)
Apologies:	Professor Michael Farthing	Balram Veliath
	Professor Bob Fitzgerald	Ian Wilson
	Sarah King	
In attendance:	Dr Nick Barratt	Executive Director of Student Journey
	Professor Tracy Bhamra	Provost and Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Global)
	Professor Mark Fellowes	Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Strategy, Planning & Resources)
	Katie Green	Strategic Policy Manager (for item 10)
	Professor Wyn Morgan	Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education & Student Experience)
	Rob Thrower	Acting Chief Financial Officer
	Alison Wallis	Director of Strategic Planning (for item 11)
Secretary:	Andrew Boggs	University Secretary
Clerk:	Pauline Martin	Senior Governance Officer (Minutes)
Observer:	Rikke Jensen	UCU

1. WELCOME

Everyone was welcomed to the meeting.

24/64

APOLOGIES

	NOTED apologies received from Professor Michael Farthing, Professor Bob Fitzgerald, Sarah King, Balram Veliath and Ian Wilson. The meeting was quorate.	24/65
2.	DECLARATION OF INTERESTS	
	There were no declarations of interest in agenda items.	24/66
3.	MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING	
	APPROVED minutes and actions of the meetings held on 22 February 2024 (M24/01-24/63).	24/67
	NOTED following confirmation of the OfS Condition of Registration for Freedom of Speech the Chair sent a letter to the SU Board of Trustees, completing action 23/100. The letter would be shared with Council.	24/68
4.	MATTERS ARISING	
	NOTED a report on student wellbeing was scheduled for the meeting of 4 July	24/69
5.	REPORT OF DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE CHAIR OF COUNCIL	
	NOTED the Chair of Council approved a change of honorary award to Professor Jennifer Thomas, professor at University College London, as the University of London Regulations do not allow the award of an Honorary degree to be made to current employees. Professor Thomas, a Bedford alumna, has now been offered an honorary fellowship which, it is anticipated, will be awarded at a summer graduation ceremony. Council approved the initial award by circulation, noted at the 22 February 2024 meeting of Council (Ref 24/48).	24/70
6.	UN-STARRING OF ITEMS	
	There were no items unstarred.	24/71

MAJOR BUSINESS

7.	VICE-CHANCELLOR AND PRINCIPAL'S UPDATE	
	RECEIVED a report from the Vice-Chancellor and Principal, taken as read.	24/72
	NOTED the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) report review of the Graduate route visa was published on 14 May 2024 and found no evidence of widespread abuse. With net migration figures due to be published, a government response to the MAC Report is expected.	24/73
	NOTED the scope of the report was wider than visa abuse, also focussing on graduate outcomes, transitions into skilled work and impact on the wider UK economy. The Government response could include tying visas more closely to an institutions' ranking and we continue to work closely with UUK and on modelling the implications of the findings of the report.	24/74
	NOTED the focus and progress of the ongoing work of the Reputation and Rankings Group, further to the briefing to Council in February.	24/75

	NOTED the publication of QS World University Rankings By Subject 2024 (QS WUR) on 10 April 2024, which ranked 6 Royal Holloway subjects in the top 200 in the world, up from 5 in 2023.	24/76
	NOTED the update on global issues and international conflicts. We continue to engage with Universities UK through the Vice-Chancellor's group and the operational groups including the University Secretary.	24/77
	NOTED, on campus, the Live Issues Group meet twice per week and is working well. The SU and the SU President were thanked for the shared messaging with the Vice-Chancellor to the University community, reinforcing the University's values.	24/78
	NOTED the update on the Senior Leadership team and CFO recruitment.	24/79
8.	CoStar	
	RECEIVED a briefing on CoStar, and the University's role in co-ordinating the five National Labs and the location at Pinewood.	24/80
	DISCUSSED the supporting activities around the CoSTAR grant award and interface with the University.	24/81
9.	NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY 2024	
	NOTED the report on the campaign to support the NSS and further plans to sustain continuous improvement to respond and act on student voice and feedback.	24/82
	NOTED that engagement with the NSS achieved 72% (70% 2023) results were expected mid-July.	24/83
	NOTED establishment of an NSS working group to ensure awareness of the student voice, understand their experiences in the classroom and wider experience including IT, teaching support, challenges for academic progress.	24/84
	NOTED the push to improve short- and long-term outcomes in underperforming departments, sharing good practice across Schools and departments.	24/85
10.	ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION PLAN	
	<i>18.05 Katie Green joined the meeting.</i>	
	NOTED the report to Council updating on the development of the new Access and Participation Plan which followed the briefing and extensive discussion at the Pre-Council briefing.	24/86
	NOTED the final version would be presented to Council at the next meeting on 4 July.	24/87
	NOTED the timeframe for submission to the OFS by 31 July and with likely addressing of their response queries confirmation should be provided to the university 12 weeks after submission.	24/88

	<i>18.10 Katie Green left the meeting, Alison Wallis joined for item 11.</i>	24/89
11.	RH2030s STRATEGY	
	RECEIVED an update on strategy development:	24/90
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The draft strategic ambitions and their objectives. • The draft statement of our vision to become a university of social purpose. 	
	DISCUSSED: The ambitions and vision:	24/91
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflected the values - brave and impactful, articulating a clear vision and enabling the university to stand out from the crowd, would represent a huge change for staff and were right for the future. • Aims would need to be translated into action plans with clear targets and milestones, and including boundaries for clarity on what cannot be done. • In implementation, audiences would be targeted differently to articulate what the strategy means for them. • There would be no universal consensus on our values but they have been developed through a process of extensive consultation with students and staff and what we want to be. 	
	NOTED the next steps:	24/92
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • July Council – KPIs and the numbers. And to approve the RH2030s Strategy • November Strategy Meeting - the roadmap. 	
	<i>18.30 Alison Wallis left the meeting</i>	24/93
12.	STUDENT NUMBERS	
	NOTED the report of the current position with student recruitment for 2024/25.	24/94
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undergraduate (UG) Home and International applications, today -5.1% on 2023, compared to the sector -0.7%, our competitors +2.7%. • UK UG applications are more affected than international recruitment and our position is similar to the S10 Group. • Our applications are possibly being affected by Russell Group increasing their UK intake to compensate for uncertainty with international recruitment. 	
	NOTED PGT -66.6% on 2023 (an usual year) and -24.2% on 2022 and the actions as previously reported were continuing.	24/95
	NOTED whilst some challenges remained application turnaround times were improved, and the process was much quicker.	24/96
	DISCUSSED	24/97
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study Group's experience in the international student recruitment market and the proportion of our international students coming through Study Group. • Areas where we could be more agile and increase income. • The dynamics causing variance in applications by subject. • Preparation for clearing, including targets and entry tariffs. 	

	AGREED to schedule the pre-Council briefing on 4 July to address historic and current trends, performance and planning for clearing.	24/98
13.	FINANCE	
	RECEIVED and NOTED the current year financial report and full year forecast as at March 2024, and assumptions. The full year forecast was for a small favourable operating surplus subject due to the steps taken to reduce expenditure and the expectations that areas will take action to manage their budgets.	24/99
	NOTED one area was currently at risk of not achieving budget and subject to closer monitoring and the need to consider further cost controls.	24/100
	NOTED capital spend was currently below budget and forecast to remain so and covenant headroom was confirmed as clear subject to the forecast assumptions.	24/101
	NOTED that it had been confirmed that there was no VAT tax liability on the demolition costs for Rusham Park.	24/102
	NOTED that the costs of the decant of the Bourne Building would impact next year and likely to be capital expenditure rather than revenue, although there was no estimate at this time.	24/103
14.	ESTATES	
14.1	NOTED a verbal update on the Bourne Building RaaC issues where the most recent H&S survey reported 150 (9%) of the 2600 panels as suboptimal. All panels were supported as soon they were identified and 25 staff had now relocated out of the building due to RaaC.	24/104
	NOTED that consultation was underway to develop a plan to move laboratories and Academic staff to other suitable locations with the least disruption to staff and their work as possible and minimising cost. Costs were not yet known and would impact next year.	24/105
14.2	NOTED a confidential verbal update on residential development.	24/106
15.	UNIVERSITY SECRETARY'S UPDATE	
15.1	NOTED the UKVI report of the visit on 18 July 2023, received by the university on 20 March 2024, reviewed by Executive Board on 23 April 2024 and shared with Council members on 25 April.	24/107
	NOTED the overriding issue related to compliance with reporting obligations. The actions arising from the review by Executive Board, three of which had been addressed, were part of a more extensive number of actions on students and staff.	24/108

	NOTED the summary and status of actions being taken to address the issues raised by the UKVI report included the appointment of a UKVI Compliance Manager, establishment of a Steering group with representatives from HR and Student administration, consideration of disaggregating the single licence into separate staff and student licences, and internal audit reports.	24/109
	AGREED ARCC to receive compliance reports twice per year.	24/110
15.2	NOTED the update on recent regulatory and legislative developments, included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delay to implementation of the lifelong learning entitlement (LLE) • Government communication on antisemitism • Update on Economic Activity of Public Bodies Bill 	24/111
	NOTED publication of the MAC report as noted under item 7.	24/112
15.3	APPROVED the appointment of two independent members of Council for 2024/25 with further consideration regarding the final two vacancies, NOTING that Finance and Marketing/Communications skills remained currently unfilled.	24/113

STARRED ITEMS FOR REPORT AND FORMAL APPROVAL

16.* REPORTABLE EVENTS

There were no reports of any reportable event under OfS condition 3(i) at this meeting. 24/114

17.* REPORT OF DECISIONS AGREED BY CIRCULATION

NOTED: 24/115

- Approval of the appointment of Tim Mitchell as an Independent member of Council with effect from 19 March 2024.
- The approval of a recommendation from Executive Board to Council, following legal advice, which was sought by email on Wednesday 6 March 2024 to approve a recommendation on a matter of commercial and legal sensitivity. Confirmation that Council approved the recommendation was sent by email to members on 15 March 2024.

18.* COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP – Reappointments

APPROVED the reappointment of two independent members of Council for a second term of office. 24/106

19.* ACADEMIC STRUCTURE

APPROVED an amendment to the Academic Structure for the academic year 2024/25 recommended by Academic Board. 24/116

20.* EDI REPORT

RECEIVED and NOTED the annual EDI Report. 24/117

21.* SEALING OF DOCUMENTS

NOTED the application of the University seal:	24/118
18 April 2024: Contract between RHBNC and LST Partnership LLP T/AS LST Projects, for conversion to recording studio at Engineer's Cottage, Egham Hill, Egham, Surrey TW20 0EX.	24/119
18 April 2024: Contract between RHBNC and T&B (Contractors)Ltd, for passive fire stopping at Gowar & Wedderburn RHUL, Egham Hill, Egham, Surrey, TW20 0EX.	24/120
18 April 2024: Collateral warranty for work by T&B Contractors for passive fire stopping in Gowar & Wedderburn.	24/121
18 April 2024: Collateral warranty for passive fire stopping to service penetrations on Founders Building.	24/122

OTHER MATTERS

22. COMMITTEE REPORTS

NOTED the report from the Chair of Remuneration sub-committee with responsibility for ensuring that the actions required by the Charity Commission are completed in order to continue to remunerate the Chair of Council.	24/123
NOTED the feedback from the effectiveness review of the Chair of Council conducted in January 2023 which had received an almost 100% return, which included suggestions and ideas that were shared with, and welcomed, by the Chair of Council.	24/124

23. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were none.	24/125
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24. OTHER BUSINESS


There was none.	24/126
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25. DATES OF NEXT COUNCIL MEETINGS

On Campus unless indicated otherwise:	24/127
<ul style="list-style-type: none">4 July 2024, 17:00-19:00 and Briefing session: Student Recruitment 15.30-16.30.3 October 2024 17:00-19:00 and Briefing session: CoStar 15:00-16:30.21 November and 22 November: Residential, Council Strategy Day and Council meeting at Cumberland Lodge, Windsor Great Park.	

THE EXHIBITION BOOK The following minutes are provided in this Exhibition Book as a separate document and NOTED.	24/128
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EB1	MINUTES OF COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEETINGS <i>Minutes designated "unsigned" are those not yet signed off by the Committee but approved by the Committee Chair</i>
	Students, Education and Research Committee 6 December 2023
	Strategy & Governance Committee 18 January 2024
	Finance Committee 18 January 2024
	Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee 7 February 2024
	People, Staff Development, Reward and Wellbeing Committee 8 February 2024
	Finance Committee 7 March 2024 and 14 March (<i>not yet available</i>)
	People, Staff Development, Reward and Wellbeing Committee 21 March 2024 (<i>not yet available</i>)
	Students, Education and Research Committee 11 April 2024 (<i>not yet available</i>)
	Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee 18 April 2024 (<i>not yet available</i>)
	Remuneration Committee 18 April 2024 (<i>not yet available</i>)
	Strategy & Governance Committee 18 April 2024 (<i>not yet available</i>)
	The following Committees have not met since the last meeting of Council
	None, all have met.
	EB2
	Final Minutes of the meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 November 2023



Dame Margaret Hodge DBE MP
Chair of Council

Date 9 July 2024