

THE SENATE

Minutes: 12 June 2025

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

Present:

Dr Nasir Al Lagtah
 Professor Mushtak Al-Atabi
 Dr Yousef Al-Guamei
 Professor P. A. Muhammed Basheer
 Dr David Cavallaro
 Dr Hassam Chaudhry
 Professor Malcolm Chrisp
 Dr Demitrios Cotsovos
 Dr Ross Curran
 Professor Paul Dalgarno
 Dr Louise Delicato
 Dr Christopher Dodd
 Professor Jo Drugan
 Dr Taha Elhag
 Dr Erkal Ersoy
 Professor Anna Fenge
 Dr Yun li Go
 Professor Igor Guz
 Dr Daniel Hale
 Dr April Henning *
 Professor Annie Hill
 Dr Ramon Inglada
 Dr Britta Kalkreuter
 Dr Craig Kennedy
 Professor Reza Kouhy
 Dr Suzanne Lampert
 Ms Jasmine Low *
 Dr Jia Lu
 Dr Alex MacLaren
 Professor Julian Malins
 Ms Holly McAdams
 Dr Alistair McConnell
 Professor Martin McCoustra
 Dr Richard McCracken
 Dr Yvonne McLaren-Hankin

Professor Steve McLaughlin
 Dr Thomas Methven
 Mr Lee Miles
 Dr M Shadi Mohamed
 Dr Shameel Muhammed
 Professor Gillian Murray *
 Dr Katie Myhill
 Dr Hendrik Nahler
 Dr Shereen Nassar
 Mr Adrian Nathai
 Professor Mehdi Nazarinia
 Dr Yasemin Nielsen
 Dr Stefano Padilla
 Dr Lucy Robertson *
 Dr Marta Romeo
 Dr Rabee Rustum *
 Professor Christian Saemann
 Dr Mohammed Saleh
 Dr Florian Scheuring
 Ms Devanshi Sharma
 Mr Karamjeet Singh
 Ms Andrea Sneddon
 Dr Ryad Soobhany
 Dr Katerina Strani
 Dr Nazia Talat
 Dr Monica Tamariz
 Dr Hai Chen Tan
 Professor Fiona Waldron
 Dr Robin Westacott
 Dr Euan Winton
 Dr Tze Chuen Yap
 Dr Humphrey Yiu *
 Dr Marta Vallejo
 Dr George Vasdravellis

* denotes partial
attendance

In attendance:

Professor Fiona Armstrong *
 Professor Martha Caddell
 Professor Michel Kaiser [M25/43]
 Ms Samantha Kane
 Dr Maggie King
 Ms Rosemarie McIlwhan [M25/44]
 Professor Gabriela Medero [M25/43]
 Ms Ruth Moir

Mr Fraser Muir
 Professor Tadhg O'Donovan *
 Professor John Sawkins
 Ms Kirsty Scanlan
 Professor Edward Sweeney
 Professor Robert Thomson [M25/43]
 Ms Megan Morgan (Clerk)

Apologies:

Professor Lehel Banjai
 Dr Anne Bernassau
 Dr Florence Chiao Mei Choong
 Ms Sue Collier
 Dr Neamat El Gayar
 Dr David Ellis
 Mr Cameron Fields
 Ms Jun Fujiwara
 Dr Noor Zainab Habib
 Dr Adnan Ilyas
 Dr Timothy Johnson
 Ms Angela Justin
 Dr Barbara Keating
 Professor Angus Laing

Mr Andrew Lee
 Professor Sara Lombardo
 Professor Dame Heather McGregor
 Dr Bill MacPherson
 Professor Mercedes Maroto-Valer
 Dr Ruairaidh McIntosh
 Ms Rachel Poole
 Professor Joanne Porter
 Dr Harpreet Seth
 Mr Nader Shouly
 Ms Ridhima Shivkumar
 Dr Kathrin Stark
 Ms Pearlyn Tee

MINUTE REF		ACTION BY	ACTION DATE
M25/32	WELCOME AND APOLOGIES		
32.1	The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting and noted the apologies as above. The meeting followed a new format with videos shared in advance; the approach was well received by Senators and attendees.		
32.2	The Chair noted that this was the last meeting of the current academic year and thanked all members for their contributions, with particular thanks to those who would demit office on 31 July 2025. A short Senate Effectiveness Survey would be circulated post-meeting. The Chair highlighted the upcoming retirement of the Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching) and Executive Dean (School of Textiles and Design) and thanked them both for their contributions.	Clerk	Immediate
M25/33	MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 23 APRIL 2025 (SE-25-28)		
33.1	The Senate received and approved the minutes of the meeting held on 23 April 2025, subject to a minor amendment in M25/25.3.	Clerk	Immediate
M25/34	MATTERS ARISING AND ACTION LOG (SE-25-29)		
34.1	The Senate received and noted the Action Log. It was agreed that completed actions would now be removed from the Log.		
M25/35	REPORT FROM THE PRINCIPAL & VICE-CHANCELLOR (SE-25-30)		
35.1	The Senate received and noted the report presented by the Principal and Vice-Chancellor, which outlined recent institutional achievements and developments in the Higher Education Sector.		
35.2	The Chair provided an update on Strategy 2035 staff engagement. Recent engagement activity was noted, which included 1,500 visits to the Strategy Hub , more than 100 attendees at the Joint Court-Senate meeting, and over 80 staff feedback responses.		
35.6	In discussion about Strategy 2035, Members commented on the implications for staff associated with the very ambitious growth of students in the Heriot-Watt Online Virtual Campus and the increase in flexible learning and study which would affect academic staff workload and require changes in practice and process. It was noted that Strategy 2035 would be on the agenda at the forthcoming Senate planning meeting in August, and that the Committees of Senate would play a key role in the detailed planning and operationalisation of the Strategy, with regular reporting back to the Senate. The Chair reminded Senate that Strategy 2035 would not be launched until August 2026 giving time for detailed discussion and planning. The Chair acknowledged the need for continued dialogue with Senate, and through the Committees of Senate. It was further noted that strategy meetings such as the annual Learning and Teaching Away Day gave a good opportunity for more extended discussions, and consideration was being given to bringing that forward, or having an additional meeting.	FW/MN/TO/G M	August 2025
		MC/TO	August 2025
M25/36	GLOBAL STUDENT UPDATE (SE-25-31)		
36.1	The Senate received and noted the update from the Student Union Vice-President Academic (UK).		
36.2	The Vice-President Academic (UK) reported that Student Officers had met in Edinburgh and completed an in-person induction. Three global student priorities for 2025-2026 were developed: 1) strengthening belonging and community, 2) supporting students' future readiness, and		

3) addressing the financial and living cost pressures. The priorities aimed to increase collective ownership of the Student Partnership Agreement, alignment of actions and enhancement of the student experience.

- 36.3** In discussion, members commended the clear strategic priorities, noting variations in the student experience across different campuses. The importance of the Student Partnership and sensitivity to external pressures on students were highlighted. Members raised points on the high frequency of student surveys being issued, with a request for this to be reviewed at relevant committees. Access to a diverse student experience at the Galashiels Campus was discussed, particularly around access to sports. The Vice-President Academic (UK) reported that work was ongoing to improve access to sports across all campuses.

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M25/37 ORDINANCE AND REGULATIONS COMMITTEE: REPORT OF PREVIOUS MEETING (SE-25-33)

- 37.1** The Committee received and **noted** the report presented by the Chair of the Ordinance and Regulations Committee (ORC).

- 37.2** The following items were **approved** by the Senate:

- a) Modifications to Regulations: A3 (Admissions), which removed the word “international” from Section 2.13 to cover all UK partnerships.
- b) Modifications to Regulation A13 (Student Discipline) to reflect the formalisation of School Discipline Committees (SDC) as sub-committees of the University Discipline Committee (UDC). The modifications would align with UDC and SDC Terms of Reference and Student Discipline Policy and Procedures.

- 37.4** The following items were **endorsed** by the Senate, for onward Court approval:

- a) Modifications to Ordinance G1 (*Appointment and Duties of the Chancellor*), which reduced the required number of Court and Senate members on the Joint Committee to two from each body. Student representation was included to ensure all constituents were represented.
- b) Withdrawal of Ordinance P10 (Award of Degrees to Associates of the Heriot-Watt College), on the basis that no such awards had been made since 1965.
- c) Modifications to Ordinance C6 (Appointment of Student Members to the Senate) which replaced reference to “Student Union” with “Student Representative Bodies” (SRB), removed specific SRB titles and revised Clause 3.4 to clarify that the 10% requirement was from the entire SRB.

M25/38 REPORT FROM UNIVERSITY DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE (SE-25-34)

- 38.1** The Senate received and **noted** the report, presented by the Chair of UDC.

- 38.2** The Senate **approved** amendments to the Global Student Academic Misconduct Policy. These amendments were endorsed by UDC, following consultation and the inclusion of an appeals process and research ethics breaches section, with a penalty tariffs table.

- 38.3** The Senate **endorsed** the current UDC membership, with vacancies existing in the School of Social Sciences (SoSS) and the School of Textiles and Design (SoTD). Work was underway to secure

Engineering and Physical Sciences (EPS) representation in the Malaysia campus.

38.4	In discussion, members noted UDC collaboration with the Academic Integrity Group to enhance student and staff guidance. The rising misuse of generative artificial intelligence tools to falsify references was noted. Positive feedback on recent School training sessions was highlighted, with members noting improvements in training and awareness. Members commented that academic integrity sessions during student induction would be beneficial, with work in progress noted. A draft role descriptor for SDC chairs was welcomed in principle, with further refinement required.	MN	Ongoing
M25/39	SENATE COMMITTEE FOR INTERIM BUSINESS AND EFFECTIVENESS: REPORT OF PREVIOUS MEETING (SE-25-35)		
39.1	The Senate received the report presented by the University Secretary.		
39.2	The Senate approved the updated Senate Attendance Policy. The updated policy simplified language, adjusted the attendance threshold to four out of six meetings (67%) and reduced administrative burden on the Chair of the Senate and University Secretary to undertake fact-finding.		
39.3	The Senate approved the updated Senate and Senate Committee Standing Orders, which focused on simplified language.		
39.4	In discussion, members noted the scheduling of Senate meetings during teaching periods could impact on availability and engagement. Members expressed support for continued in-person engagement and the use of alternative mechanisms for voting. The University Secretary welcomed feedback on Senate effectiveness and agreed to explore these suggestions in further detail, in conjunction with other feedback received via the Senate Effectiveness Survey.	Clerk/RJM	July 2025
M25/40	PROPOSAL FOR FUTURE OF SCHOOL OF TEXTILES AND DESIGN (SE-25-32)		
40.1	The Senate received and noted the paper presented by the Vice Principal and Provost (UK) and Assistant Principal (Borders).		
40.2	The Vice-Principal and Provost (UK) outlined the proposal to integrate the SoTD into SoSS. The aim would be to support the sustainable development of the SoTD's academic activities, in line with Strategy 2035. The Senate noted that a Project Group had been established by the University Executive, convened by Professor John Sawkins, to lead a six-week consultation process. A formal proposal would be presented to the Senate in October 2025.	SMcL	October 2025
40.3	In discussion, members welcomed the proposed consultation process and emphasised the importance of ensuring meaningful engagement with both staff and students. Members sought further clarity on the rationale for integration; the basis of the recommendation; and whether other structural models had been fully explored. The need to preserve SoTD's identity, both within the University and in relation to the local community was highlighted. Members commented on the choice of SoSS as the chosen School; the impact on professional services capacity; and how the student experience would be ensured during the transition. Members noted the importance of transparent communication regarding the influence that stakeholders would have during the process and outlined the importance of clear articulation of the anticipated benefits and long-term vision. A member commented		

that a student representative from the Galashiels campus be included in the Oversight Group.

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| 40.4 | The Vice-Principal and Provost (UK) and Assistant Principal (Borders) noted the feedback and confirmed that the identity of SoTD would be retained, and that staff and students would be fully engaged throughout the consultation process. The proposal would return to Senate in October 2025. | Clerk/SMcL/JS | October 2025 |
| M25/41 UPDATE ON RESEARCH FUTURES HUB (SE-25-36) | | | |
| 41.1 | The Senate received and noted the paper presented by the Global Director of Research Engagement | | |
| 41.2 | The Global Director of Research Engagement reported on the conclusion of the Graduate School Project in January 2025 and the subsequent approval of a two-phase change plan to implement the Research Futures Hub incorporating the Graduate School. Phase one involved a restructure of the Research Engagement Directorate to create a new division. Phase two would deliver the full implementation of the Research Futures Hub, which was built on the recommendations of the Graduate School Project. | | |
| 41.3 | In discussion, members noted the integrated model and two-phase plan. It was confirmed that the change from Graduate School Project to Research Futures Hub aimed to avoid confusion around the intended user, include postdoctoral researchers, and provide a more cohesive structure for early research careers. Members highlighted the importance of clear communication, consistent support from Schools and diverse career pathways beyond academia. | | |
| M25/43 GLOBAL RESEARCH INSTITUTES PERFORMANCE UPDATE (SE-25-37) | | | |
| 43.1 | The Senate received and noted the update presented by the Deputy Principal (Business and Enterprise). | | |
| 43.2 | The Deputy Principal (Business and Enterprise) outlined progress on the development of the University's four Global Research Institutes. Highlights included recent achievements; alignment to Strategy 2035; and next steps in talent development and strategic impact. Video summaries were provided before the meeting from GRI academic leads. | | |
| 43.4 | In discussion, members noted the update and commended the breadth of GRI activity and global reach. The importance of multi-disciplinary approaches and collaborations across campuses was noted. GRI academic leads highlighted recent successes in spinouts; early career researcher engagement; and STEM outreach. | | |
| M25/44 ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE: A WHOLE UNIVERSITY APPROACH (SE-25-38) | | | |
| 44.1 | The item was deferred to the next ordinary meeting. | FM/Clerk | October 2025 |
| M25/45 OUTLINE OF SENATE PLANNING MEETING 26 AUGUST 2025 (SE-25-39) | | | |
| 45.1 | The Senate received and noted the report, presented by University Secretary. | | |

M25/46	UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE FOR RESEARCH & INNOVATION: REPORT OF PREVIOUS MEETING (SE-25-40)		
46.1	The Senate received and noted the Research Grant Awards 6-month performance update. The report of the previous meeting would be issued by correspondence.	GM/Clerk	August 2025
M25/47	UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE FOR LEARNING & TEACHING: REPORT OF PREVIOUS MEETING		
47.1	The Senate noted the verbal update. The report of the previous meeting would be issued by correspondence.	MC/Clerk	August 2025
M25/48	UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE FOR QUALITY & STANDARDS: REPORT OF PREVIOUS MEETING		
48.1	The Senate noted the verbal update. The report of the previous meeting would be issued by correspondence.	FW/Clerk	August 2025
M25/49	SENATE AGENDA PLAN FOR 2024-2025 (SE-25-41)		
49.1	The Senate noted the agenda plan for 2024-2025.		
M25/50	DATE OF NEXT MEETING		
50.1	Tuesday 26 August 2025		