

THE SENATE

Minutes: 06 February 2025

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

Present:

Dr Nasir Al Lagtah	Dr Yvonne McLaren-Hankin
Professor Mushtak Al-Atabi	Professor Steve McLaughlin *
Dr Yousef Al-Guamei	Professor Mercedes Maroto-Valer
Dr David Cavallaro *	Dr Thomas Methven
Dr Hassam Chaudhry	Professor Basheer Muhammed
Dr Florence Chiao Mei Choong	Professor Gillian Murray
Professor Malcolm Chrisp	Dr Katie Myhill
Dr Demitrios Cotsovos	Dr Noor Zainab Habib
Dr Ross Curran	Dr Hendrik Nahler
Professor Paul Dalgarno	Dr Shereen Nassar
Dr Louise Delicato	Mr Adrian Nathai
Dr Christopher Dodd	Professor Mehdi Nazarinia
Professor Jo Drugan	Dr Yasemin Nielsen
Dr Taha Elhag	Dr Stefano Padiila
Dr David Ellis *	Ms Rachel Poole
Mr Cameron Fields	Professor Joanne Porter
Professor Igor Guz	Dr Marta Romeo
Dr April Henning	Professor Christian Saemann
Professor Annie Hill	Dr Mohammed Saleh *
Dr Timothy Johnson	Ms Devanshi Sharma
Dr Barbara Keating	Dr Florian Sheuring
Mr Karamjeet Singh	Ms Rhidima Shivkumar
Dr Britta Kalkreuter	Dr Ryad Soobhany
Dr Craig Kennedy	Dr Kathr in Stark
Professor Reza Kouhy	Dr Katerina Strani
Dr Suzanne Lampert	Dr Nazia Talat
Ms Jasmine Low	Dr Hai Chen Tan
Dr Alex MacLaren *	Dr Monica Tamariz
Dr Bill MacPherson	Ms Pearlyn Tee
Ms Holly McAdams	Dr Marta Vallejo
Dr Alistair McConnell	Professor Fiona Waldron
Dr Richard McCracken *	Dr Robin Westacott
Professor Martin McCoustra	Dr Tze Chuen Yap
Dr Ruairadh McIntosh	

* denotes partial attendance

In attendance:

Professor Duncan Hand	Mr Alan Smith [M25/8]
Ms Samantha Kane	Professor Gillian Thomson [M25/7]
Dr Maggie King	Ms Megan Morgan (Clerk)
Ms Ruth Moir	

Apologies:

Mr Mohamed Al Musleh	Mr Andrew Lee
Dr Fiona Armstrong	Professor Sara Lombardo
Professor Lehel Banjai	Professor Angus Laing
Dr Anne Bernassau	Ms Holly McAdams
Professor Martha Caddell	Professor Dame Heather McGregor
Ms Sue Collier	Mr Lee Miles
Dr Neamat El Gayar	Mr Fraser Muir
Professor Anna Fenge	Dr Shameel Muhammed
Ms Jun Fujiwara	Ms Kirsty Scanlan
Dr Yun li Go	Dr Harpreet Seth
Dr Noor Zainab Habib	Ms Ridhima Shivkumar
Dr Daniel Hale	Ms Andrea Sneddon
Ms Angela Justin	Ms Pearlyn Tee
	Dr Humphrey Yiu

Unnotified absence:

Dr Erkal Ersoy	Dr M Shadi Mohamed
Dr Adnan Ilyas	Mr Nader Shouly
Dr Ramon Inglada	Dr George Vasdravellis
Dr Jia Lu	Dr Euan Winton

MINUTE REF		ACTION BY	ACTION DATE
M25/1	WELCOME AND APOLOGIES		
1.1	The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting and noted the apologies as above.		
M25/2	MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: 28 NOVEMBER 2024 (SE-25-1)		
2.1	The Senate received and approved the minutes of the meeting held on 28 November 2024.		
M25/3	MATTERS ARISING AND ACTION LOG (SE-25-2)		
3.1	The Senate received and noted the Action Log. It was agreed that completed actions would now be removed from the Log.		
3.2	The Chair confirmed the Joint Meeting with the Court was scheduled for 12 March 2025. Logistical details would follow; the theme would be Strategy 2035 development. The Senate noted the rescheduled October meeting to 20 October 2025, due to a conflict with the September Semester Consolidation Week.		
M25/4	REPORT FROM THE PRINCIPAL & VICE-CHANCELLOR (SE-25-3)		
4.1	The Senate received and noted the report which outlined the University's key strategic achievements and other developments in the Higher Education Sector.		
4.2	The Chair reported on the evolution of Strategy 2035, the thematic focus areas and the work of the Strategy Review Group. The sprint-based approach included Sprint 1 (Institutional Impact Statement) and Sprint 2 (Growth Directions), with outcomes approved by Court in December 2024. Sprint 3 was underway and focused on the Staff and Student Experience, Learning and Teaching, and Research and Knowledge Exchange, framed through the lens of Employability and Real-World Challenges. The joint meeting of the Court and Senate would assimilate the sprint outcomes to form a strong collective view on the ambition of the size and shape of the University. Senators were advised to engage with the Strategy 2035 Hub Resources .		
4.3	The Chair provided an update on key areas and highlighted: a) The University's current financial position and associated cost control measures. b) Collective action required to improve UK student retention. c) A positive January 2025 student intake, with thanks to all involved. d) The internal student surveys conducted in December 2024 generated an average student satisfaction rating of 83.5% across all Schools and disciplines, albeit with variable response rates. e) The University had improved its sustainability rankings, rising 277 places to 211th globally in the QS Sustainability University Rankings 2025; ranked 6th in Scotland; and 107th in the UK in the People & Planet Rankings 2024-2025. f) Examples of excellence in research development demonstrated across the University. g) Progress made on the Shaping Futures Campaign.		

- 4.4** Senators commented on entry requirements for English language and discussed the potential correlation with student retention. The Deputy Principal (Education & Student Life) outlined ongoing work to track language ability markers and student success. When available, data would be shared with disciplines.

M25/5 GLOBAL STUDENT UPDATE (SE-25-4)

- 5.1** The Senate received and noted the update from the Student Union President (UK).
- 5.2** The Student Union President (UK) reported preliminary findings from the Big 6 Student Union Annual Survey on student experience, conducted globally for the first time. The Senate noted that anonymous survey results indicated that some students felt disconnected from teaching staff. Strongest connections were with class groups. Students had expressed a desire for more connection with teaching staff and students in different year groups. A holistic, intersectional approach was recommended to address barriers and promote a sense of academic belonging.
- 5.3** In discussion, Senators raised the following points:
- a) There was a need to identify best practice and ensure consistency across programmes.
 - b) Strengthening student connections across year groups was essential.
 - c) Historical data was required to track engagement trends and inform future strategies.
 - d) Post-covid, student-staff connections had weakened; the reintroduction of institutional-wide personal tutor meetings was suggested as a potential solution.
 - e) Low attendance may impact student engagement; further analysis was required.
 - f) Academic staff were keen to support engagement but faced low event turnout; increased coordination with Student Union was required.
 - g) Strong student communities, such as within Chemical Engineering, provided useful models for engagement.
- 5.4** The Senate noted that a strategic and collaborative approach to student engagement was required. The Deputy Principal (Education & Student Life) noted that many of these issues were at the heart of recent initiatives. For example, Student Experience Officers and discipline teams would lead efforts to enhance student belonging. Enhanced reporting, at lower levels of granularity, from future Big 6 surveys would be beneficial.

M25/6 ORDINANCES & REGULATIONS COMMITTEE: REPORT OF MEETING ON 31 OCTOBER 2024 AND 27 JANUARY 2025 (SE-25-5)

- 6.1** The Senate received and considered the report presented by the Chair of the Ordinances and Regulations Committee (ORC).
- 6.2** The Senate endorsed to the Court the proposed modifications to Ordinance E1, which allowed students increased flexibility in paying fees, charges, fines, and debts. Senators welcomed the changes and noted that students would no longer face 'Canvas holds' during exam periods, which disrupted learning. Helpful liaison with the Finance office was noted.

6.3 The Senate endorsed to the Court the proposed modifications to Ordinances B2, B3, B10, C1 and L1 to ensure clarity and consistency in the appropriate to electoral ties.

6.4 The Senate approved Regulation A4 (Courses, Programmes and Assessment). Paragraph 214.1 was amended to remove the maximum credit limit for industrial placements, which allowed Schools increased flexibility to allocate 0-120 credits within an academic year.

M25/7 WIDENING ACCESS & SUPPORT: AMPLIFYING AND EMBEDDING STRATEGIC CHANGE (SE-25-6)

7.1 The Senate received and noted the update on initiatives aimed to widen access to higher education, presented by the Associate Principal (Access and Inclusion).

7.2 In discussion, the following points were raised:

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| a) Alternative pathways for widening access should be explored, and collaborations with colleges should be strengthened to address gaps. | Prof Gillian Thomson | Ongoing |
| b) Previous widening participation measures should be evaluated to identify successes and avoid ineffective approaches. A review of past initiatives would be conducted to refine future outreach approaches. | | |
| c) Partnerships with targeted schools could be further strengthened. | | |
| d) Senate commented that the impact of the loss of personal tutors in some areas had led to a sense of disconnect amongst students. The impact of this change would be assessed. Additional support mechanisms, including training for student advisors would be explored. | | |
| e) The Career Ready Programme was commended, which provided disadvantaged Scottish students with paid internships and mentorship. Expanding mentorships within the programme was recommended. | Prof Gillian Thomson | March 2025 |
| f) Staff training on access and inclusion and supporting widening participation students should be rolled out. | | |
| g) Opportunities to strengthen talent pathways in AI, Robotics, Environmental and Marine Sciences would be explored. | All | Ongoing |
| h) Current initiatives for experiential on-campus learning, including laboratory visits and workshops for prospective students should be expanded. | | |

M25/8 GRADUATE OUTCOMES AND EMPLOYABILITY (SE-25-7)

8.1 The Senate received and noted the update, presented by the Head of Careers and Graduate Futures.

8.2 The Head of Careers and Graduate Futures provided an overview of Graduate Outcomes Surveys. The Senate noted the positive outcomes for the undergraduate cohort in the UK HESA Survey, the university ranked 1st in Scotland and 2nd in the UK, despite low response rates. The approach to providing a tailored career plan to the individual students' ambitions was welcomed.

8.3 In discussion, Senators considered the challenges of collecting data across different campuses; the importance of integration data collection; and the impact of small percentage changes on rankings. The ongoing plans to improve career readiness, the need to support international graduates facing employment

difficulties, and the importance of both internal and external surveys in achieving accolades were noted.

**M25/9 UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE FOR RESEARCH & INNOVATION:
REPORT OF MEETING ON 16 JANUARY 2025 (SE-25-8)**

9.1 The Senate received and noted the Researcher Concordat Annual Report without comment.

**M25/10 SENATE COMMITTEE FOR INTERIM BUSINESS &
EFFECTIVENESS: REPORT OF MEETING ON 22 JANUARY
2025 (SE-25-9)**

10.1 The Senate received noted the report without comment.

**M25/11 UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE FOR LEARNING & TEACHING:
REPORT OF MEETING ON 15 JANUARY 2025 (SE-25-10)**

11.1 The Senate received and noted the report.

11.2 The Postgraduate Student Experience Review was highlighted as a valuable report with positive actions. A query was raised regarding the Learning and Teaching Strategy Transformation Report and operational mapping. The impact of continuous transformation, resources and workload implications was discussed.

11.3 Meeting to be held with Deputy Principal (Education & Student Life) to address the points that the individual Senator had raised.

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**M25/12 UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE FOR QUALITY & STANDARDS:
REPORT OF MEETING ON 20 JANUARY 2025 (SE-25-11)**

12.1 The Senate noted the report.

12.2 A query was raised on the use of generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) in assessments and the associated risk of academic misconduct. Senators discussed appropriate assessment design and noted that the Academic Integrity Group had provided relevant resources on [AI in Learning and Teaching](#). It was highlighted that Vivas remained crucial in maintaining academic integrity. AI was recognised as both a challenge and an opportunity, with the MaCS trial of the software *CodeRunner* identified as an effective tool in appropriate assessment design. Senators discussed the importance of adhering to academic procedures to ensure students met the required standards.

12.3 *Post-meeting note:* subsequent to the meeting, the Deputy Principal (Education and Student Life) and the Head of Academic Quality met with the Executive Dean, the Associate Executive Dean (Education and Student Life) and the Associate Executive Dean (Academic Quality) in the School of Social Sciences to discuss the academic integrity issues raised by a Senator during the meeting. It was agreed that the School's Associate Executive Dean (Education and Student Life) and Associate Executive Dean (Academic Quality) would undertake an internal investigation and thereafter discuss findings and actions with the Executive Dean. It was further agreed that any University-wide actions would be taken forward, following the discussion of findings and actions, by the Deputy Principal (Education and Student Life) and the Head of Academic Quality.

M25/13 SENATE FORWARD AGENDA (SEN-25-12)

13.1 The Senate noted the forward agenda without comment.

M25/14 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

14.1 Wednesday 12 March 2025 (Joint Meeting with the Court)
Wednesday 23 April 2025
Thursday 12 June 2025