

In the Chair:	Professor Richard A Williams, Principal and Vice-Chancellor	
Members also Present:	Mr Soehl Abraham Professor Mushtak Al-Atabi Dr Nasir Al Lagtah Professor Lynne Baillie Professor Mark Biggs Dr Euan Brown Dr Keith Brown Dr Jim Buckman Dr Jim Cameron Dr David Cavallaro Professor Antonin Chapoy Professor Malcolm Crisp Ms Elaine Collinson Professor Susan Dewar Dr Ahmed Elsheikh Dr Tom Farrington Dr Alan Forster Dr Shumei Gao Dr Fadi Ghaith Dr Hagir Hakim Dr Amos Haniff Mr Alexander Hedlund Professor Gillian Hogg Dr Paul Hopkinson Dr Dave Jenkins Dr Ruhul Khandaker Ms Emily Lucy King Ms Elizabeth Lau Dr Aude Le Guennec Mr Carlos Augustine Lim Zhen Yang Professor Robert MacIntosh	Professor Steve McLaughlin Dr Bill MacPherson Mr Lee Miles Dr Gillian Murray Dr Marlene Muller Dr Mehdi Nazarinia Ms Vanessa Northway Dr Mutasim Nour Mr Larry O'Brien Mr Mark Parker Dr Sandhya Patidar Professor Beatrice Pelloni Professor Garry Pender Dr Joanne Porter Dr Hani RagabHassen Mr Peter Ridges Dr Rabee Rustum Professor John Sawkins Professor Mathini Sellathurai Dr Katerina Strani Ms Lara Stroudinsky Professor Vicki Stone Ms Rachel Sutherland Professor Nick Taylor Professor Gillian Thomson Professor Fiona Waldron Professor Robert Weston Dr Anke Wiese Dr Marion Winters Dr Airil Yasreen Mohd Yassin Dr Daniil Yurchenko
In Attendance:	Ms Ruth Moir Ms Em Bailey Professor Martha Caddell Ms Kathy McCabe	Dr Maggie King Professor Bryn Jones (to M20/57) Professor Dennis Wong (to M20/57) Mr John McDermott (Clerk)
Observer:	Mr Grant Innes (Chair of Court)	
Apologies:	Professor Scott Arthur Ms Sue Collier Professor Dugald Duncan Professor Alan Gow	Professor Ammar Kaka Professor Jemina Napier Mr Paul Travill Dr Kathryn Waite

## MINUTE REF

ACTION  
BYACTION  
DATE**M20/53****WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Principal welcomed everyone participating in the meeting, making special mention of Mr Innes, who had assumed office as the Chair of Court on 1 August 2020, and who was observing the meeting, and Professor Biggs, who had taken office on 1 August as Vice-Principal and Provost. At the invitation of the Principal, Professor Biggs introduced himself to the Senate, gave a flavour of his top priorities for the coming year, and thanked colleagues for the warm welcome he had received to the University.

Congratulations and a warm welcome were also offered to the Staff members who recently had been elected to Senate from Schools: Ms Collinson, Dr Farrington, Dr Muller, Professor Sellathurai, Professor Baillie, Dr RagabHassen, Mr Ridges, Dr Wiese, Dr Yassin, Dr Rustum, Dr Cavallaro, Dr Jenkins, Dr Cameron, and Dr Nazarinia.

The Principal also welcomed to the meeting Professor Wong, Deputy Provost at the Malaysia Campus, and Professor Jones, Deputy Provost at the Dubai Campus, who were present to help inform the discussion on the delivery of Responsive Blended Learning across all Campuses.

The apologies for absence were noted.

**M20/54 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

**Received** The minutes of the meeting held on 17 June 2020.

**Approved** The Senate **approved** the minutes as a correct record.

**M20/55 ACTION LOG [Paper: SEN/20/31] AND MATTERS ARISING**

**Noted** The Senate received and **noted** the Action Log that had been updated since the previous meeting. No Matters Arising were reported.

**M20/56 REPORT FROM THE PRINCIPAL AND VICE-CHANCELLOR [Paper: SEN/20/32]**

**Received** The Senate considered a report from the Principal, which gave the Senate a summary of the University's progress and achievements according to key strategic themes as well as details of other developments made in the wider Higher Education sector.

**Noted** The Principal again welcomed Senators to the new session of Senate and looked forward to working together towards the collective purpose to enliven and guide the critical academic activities of the University to fulfil the agreed University Mission and Strategy. The Principal expressed thanks to colleagues for their hard work from home in the graduation ceremonies, re-sits, recruitment, and preparing for the start of the new Session.

The Principal highlighted and gave the Senate his perspective on the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) Review of University and College Provision. The first phase would be to synthesise submissions made to the Review around the structure, purpose, and priorities of the whole HE Sector. It was anticipated that partnerships between Universities and between Universities and Colleges were likely to feature in the Review, but not mergers of institutions. The second phase of the Review would seek to work up from frameworks for the flagged topics, which would include suggestions for the future funding model. Regardless of the model, it was clear that the financial circumstances of the sector would continue to be challenging. It was likely that the third phase would be delayed until after the elections to the Scottish Parliament in May 2021.

The Principal referred to the change proposals currently under consultation across the University and to the all-staff meetings where details have been promulgated and discussed. The Principal reinforced the necessity to reduce costs, including staff costs, to ensure the university is sustainable in its offerings and finances. In respect of severance, the intention was emphasised to move forward wherever possible on a voluntary basis. Should the results of that consultation and associated change proposals result in significant matters of academic change, Senate's view would be sought on the consequences and would be conveyed to the Court, which has responsibility for approving any closure of academic activity.

Looking ahead, the Principal highlighted some clear milestones and priorities for the new academic year focused on delivering the Strategy. During coming weeks, the 2020/21 Strategy priorities were to be discussed further at Senate and in Schools and Services. Many of these have been designed and formulated through the University Research Innovation and University Learning and Teaching Committees in which many Senators participate. It was noted that the staff survey was also informing priorities. Some communications about these priorities would be issued soon – including that the planning and resources processes in Schools and in Services would be adopting a more transparent style that will seek to enable colleagues to see the working out of the Strategy and its ownership at a local level.

The Principal updated Senate on the status of some University wide appointments. Senate's views were to be asked in coming days on the appointment of a Secretary to the Senate and University following a recent selection process. The views of Senate would be conveyed to the next Court meeting, which would be invited to approve an appointment. It was noted that the post of Secretary was prescribed in the Charter, with some specific duties specified in the Statutes, including to ensure support to the Court and the Senate. It was emphasised that the job role had been modified from that undertaken by the previous Secretary of the University.

Regarding other positions, candidates for the role of Pro Chancellor (in Dubai), and Pro Chancellor (in Malaysia) were being invited to participate in a selection process. These posts are honorary un-remunerated positions of high esteem at the campuses. It is intended the incumbents will assist in graduation processes and in wider representation of the University in those countries as the Bicentennial Year is embarked upon in 2021. The invitation of a Chancellor for the University was also being worked on, however progress was inhibited by the COVID restrictions, and it was not anticipated that an appointment could be made for a while. It was emphasised that appointments to these honorary positions were sensitive and required care.

The Principal gave a brief update on the necessary move to temporary campus accommodation in Dubai, ahead of the move to the new campus in the New Year. The extraordinary efforts of staff to minimise the disruption to students were commended.

**M20/57      DISCUSSION ON STARTING THE NEW ACADEMIC YEAR: DELIVERY OF RESPONSIVE BLENDED LEARNING ACROSS ALL CAMPUSES**

**Received**      The Senate received and considered a presentation led by the Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching) and the Director of the Learning and Teaching Academy on the extensive preparations for, and introduction of, Responsive Blended Learning in time for the start of academic year 2020/21. Contributions to the presentation were also made by the Student Union President, and the Deputy Provosts at the Malaysia and Dubai Campuses.

**Noted**      Thanks were expressed again to all colleagues who had worked to ensure that the last academic year could successfully be concluded and had also put in tremendous efforts to prepare for the 2020/21 academic year. The exceptionally difficult backdrop affecting all campuses was recognised. The Responsive Blended Learning (RBL) model had been adopted to ensure that a quality provision could still be offered to Students despite the challenges posed by COVID-19. RBL had been pioneered by the Learning and Teaching Academy (LTA) with the support and contribution from a great many staff in the Schools and the Professional Services, as well as from the Student officers. The efforts, commitment, and time was greatly appreciated.

It was noted that a rapid review had been undertaken of policies and procedures, and that considerable liaison had been undertaken with partners

and legislative and regulatory bodies. Online systems had been tested at scale and adapted to the demands of the RBL model.

Senate noted that RBL would provide confidence that the Session could be started in the expectation that studies can be completed against all events. It was emphasised that wellbeing was at the heart of the approach.

The development and introduction of RBL had been marked by sharing of advice, resources, and creative practice, both within the University and with other institutions. Although being taken in adversity, the steps were helping Heriot-Watt to become a truly global university. The fundamental changes being progressed would bring benefits in the future. There was much to learn from and to help enhance processes and practices in future. The Directors of Learning and Teaching in each School had been key to the process, and the shared purpose across the institution had reinforced commitment.

The on-campus element was also described to the Senate, with different provisions in each jurisdiction and all requiring physically distanced space. An emphasis had been put on ensuring that the maximum benefit could be gained from actual contact time. The needs and experiences of students would regularly be assessed against the changing environments. It was noted that RBL had commenced in July in Malaysia for the Foundation courses. The experience of that Campus was shared with Senate. Similarly, the preparations in Dubai were shared, with the details provided of a typical day on campus. It was noted that the pandemic has brought plenty of downsides but strengthening the global sense of community across locations had been a very real upside.

The student representatives were noted to be hugely appreciative of the tremendous work being done, and for being kept engaged in the process. It was particularly appreciated that the wellbeing of students and staff were at the heart of the work. The involvement of students was recognised as central to ensuring the enhancement of the student experience. The student leaders were thanked for their significant efforts to shape the academic year.

It was noted that the experience of preparing for the new academic year offered much to reflect upon, and that there had been difficulties as well as tremendous positives. Not least the continuing situation in dealing with the pandemic and juggling competing demands. A pragmatic approach was still required, and it suggested that it may be necessary as the year unfolds to continue to take rapid decisions to meet short and long-term challenges. Keeping student success and wellbeing at the core would be key.

Looking forward, it was noted that digital learning would continue to form a significant part of the experience of students on taught programmes, and that the curriculum would require review accordingly, as would processes and practices. It would be important to continue to build the global activity. It was noted that the Digital Learning Forum provided a platform for sharing of good practice and problem solving around learning technology. Other fora might also be helpful.

Other discussion centred on regular feedback being sought from students rather than solely a year-end questionnaire. Mention was made of considering how staff/student liaison committees, course feedback, student officers and representatives engage with staff to provide a rounded view of what works / does not work so well. It was noted that some students were not receptive of the approaches and therefore there was benefit in sharing good practice. Difficulties with online tools also hindered the acceptance of the new practices. It was suggested to be important to relay poor experiences as well as positive ones, and that robust responses were required to be able to support new ways of working

In discussion it was noted that co-ordinating live sessions between Scotland, Dubai and Malaysia was difficult due to time zones and other constraints. Senate was informed that at an early stage it had been agreed to not extend the working day at any campus to fit with another, and to maintain the status quo of only having four days in common. It was noted, however, that some sharing was feasible.

Further discussion centred on the support in place for staff who were under intense pressure and feeling the effects of long hours and not taking holiday. It was noted that the introduction of Care First support would provide some assistance, and that a consolidation week in Week 6 of both semesters was intended to enable Students to consolidate and permit staff to pause and attend to their own wellbeing. Colleagues could also help each other by avoiding loading unnecessary pressure on each other and fostering a caring environment. Reducing email was suggested to be a good tactic. A commitment was stated to keep learning how colleagues could support each other and students throughout the year.

The Senate recognised the inspiring work of those colleagues involved, and thanked the Director of the Learning and Teaching Academy, the Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching), all the presenters and all other colleagues who had contributed to the immense efforts, which were still ongoing, to prepare for a successful academic year ahead.

**M20/58 SFC ELIR REPORT [PAPER: SEN/20/33]**

**Received** The Senate received and considered a paper from the Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching) and the Head of Academic Quality seeking final comments on the annual submission to the Scottish Funding Council, which the Court would be invited to approve at its meeting on 25 September.

**Noted** The Senate noted that the submission was one of the University's compulsory returns and would also form part of conversations with the Quality Assurance Agency. The detailed document had been prepared by the Academic Quality Team under the auspices of the University Committee for Learning and Teaching. Part of the submission was to report how the University had addressed the challenge of COVID-19 in 2019/20, what plans were in place for 2020-21. This would also be a key document to inform the resumed ELIR visit, which now would be conducted in November 2020.

The Senate expressed thanks to the Academic Quality team for leading this work. Members were invited to provide any specific comments on points of detail to the Head of Academic Quality outwith the meeting.

All Sept  
2020

**Agreed** The Senate was content to **endorse** for onward recommendation to the Court, subject to any minor amendments, the proposed annual submission to the Scottish Funding Council.

Chair Sept  
2020

**M20/59 ORDINANCES AND REGULATIONS COMMITTEE: REPORT OF MEETING HELD ON 26 AUGUST 2020 [PAPER: SEN/20/34]**

**Received** The Senate received and considered the report of the business conducted at the meeting held on 26 August 2020, as presented by the Chair of the Committee.

**Noted** The Senate noted details of modifications proposed to be made to Ordinance A2, *Members of the University*, which the Court would be invited to approve at its meeting on 25 September. The intended changes were to ensure consistency between the definitions in Ordinance A2 and the expanded Emeritus and Visiting Titles now permitted by Ordinances F4 and F7 (as

discussed at the previous meeting and approved by the Court in June). There was also a change to introduce gender neutral terminology.

The Senate noted that it was invited to approve a minor revision Regulation 42 *Formation of New Companies*. This was required to ensure flexibility for future negotiations on agreeing the equity share of spin-out companies. The amendment would permit the University to have a holding of up to, but no more than, 24%.

It was explained that a new Policy for Intellectual Policy was being prepared, and that this would inform a review of the overall contents of the Regulation. The opportunity would be taken to convert the Regulation to an Ordinance (as that is the more appropriate governance approach). A more detailed proposal would therefore be brought back to the Senate at a future date. Reference was made in discussion to a recent report for the Scottish Government on spin out companies and their promotion. It was noted that this report would inform the development of the new Policy, which would underpin a fundamental area of the University's business.

The Senate noted that a comprehensive new Regulation (on Admissions) was at an advanced stage of preparation and would come to a future meeting of the Senate as part of a significant review of the Regulations. A proposed suite of new Regulations would be brought to Senate in due course in order that they would come into effect for the start of Session 2021/22

<b>Agreed</b>	The Senate was content to <b>endorse</b> for onward recommendation to the Court the proposed revisions to Ordinance A2, <i>Members of the University</i> .	Chair	Sept 2020
---------------	--	-------	-----------

<b>Approved</b>	The Senate was content to <b>approve</b> a minor revision to paragraph 4.1 of Regulation 42 <i>Formation of New Companies</i> .		
-----------------	---	--	--

<b>M20/60</b>	<b>SENATE COMMITTEE FOR INTERIM BUSINESS AND EFFECTIVNESS (SCIBE): REPORT OF MATTERS DEALT WITH BY CORRESPONDENCE SINCE JUNE 2020 [PAPER: SEN/20/35]</b>		
---------------	--	--	--

<b>Received Noted</b>	The Senate received and noted the report, as presented by the Principal, the Chair of the Committee, of business that SCIBE had conducted by correspondence since the previous meeting of the Senate.		
---------------------------	---	--	--

The matters that the SCIBE had conducted on behalf of the Senate were noted as: approving awards to be awarded in June and July 2020; approving an [Interim policy on the use of recording for teaching and learning purposes](#); conferring Emeritus Professorships on Professor Ian Galbraith (EPS) and Professor Rob Pooley (MACS); conferring the title Visiting Research Fellow on Dr Christopher Munn (SoSS), as well as more than sixty Honorary titles, a table of which were appended to the paper. It was noted that the SCIBE had yet to consider the appointments to the committees of Senate, for which nominations were sought from Senators in August, however this was intended to be progressed soon.

<b>M20/61</b>	<b>UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE FOR QUALITY AND STANDARDS: MINUTES OF MEETINGS HELD 1 JULY AND 30 JULY 2020 [PAPER: SEN/20/36]</b>		
---------------	--	--	--

<b>Received Noted</b>	The Senate received and noted the report of business conducted at the meetings held on 1 July and 30 July 2020 as presented by the Chair of the Committee.		
---------------------------	--	--	--

All items in the report were presented for information. The Senate noted in particular that the robust Quality and Standards processes of the University, and the success with which virtual work was already taking place across the University, had assisted the rapid adaptation to working remotely, including the review activities that were now successfully being conducted virtually.

The Senate further recognised the extensive work that was continuing, under the auspices of the UCQS, to prepare a suite of consolidated Academic

Regulations. The output of the work of this Academic Regulations Review Project would be presented to the Senate in due course.

**M20/62**

**DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

**Noted**

The dates of the further meetings of the Senate in Session 2020/21 were noted as:

- Thursday 5 November 2020;
- Wednesday 3 February 2021;
- Thursday 29 April 2021;
- Wednesday 16 June 2021.

Signed by the Chair ..... Date .....