

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 Scott Arthur Professor Lynne Baillie Professor Mark Biggs Dr Euan Brown Dr Keith Brown Dr Jim Buckman Dr David Cavallaro Dr Antonin Chapoy Professor Malcolm Chrisp Ms Elaine Collinson Professor Susan Dewar Professor Dugald Duncan Dr Ahmed Elsheikh Dr Tom Farrington Dr Alan Forster Dr Shumei Gao Professor Alan Gow Dr Fadi Ghaith Dr Hagir Hakim Dr Amos Haniff Mr Alexander Hedlund Professor Gillian Hogg Dr Paul Hopkinson Dr Dave Jenkins Professor Ammar Kaka 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 Dr Kathryn Waite 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 Professor Martha Caddell Ms Kathy McCabe Dr Maggie King	Dr Tony Weir (to M20/67) Mr Richard Claughton (for M20/68) Mr Kieran Robson Renner (for M20/69) Mr John McDermott (Clerk)
Observer:	Mr Grant Innes (Chair of Court)	
Apologies:	Dr Jim Cameron Ms Sue Collier	Professor Jemina Napier Mr Paul Travill

MINUTE REF

ACTION BY

ACTION DATE

M20/63**WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Principal welcomed the Senators and others participating in the meeting, making special mention of Mr Grant Innes, Chair of Court, who was observing the meeting, and Dr Tony Weir, who was present to assist with the REF Preparedness discussions.

The apologies for absence were noted.

The Senate marked the recent passing of Professor Emeritus Alex Scott and Professor Emeritus Colin Davidson. Professor Scott had been

Director of Learning and Teaching in Edinburgh Business School from its very early days until 2016. As one of the founders of the Edinburgh Business School MBA, Professor Scott had made a significant academic and personal contribution to life at Heriot-Watt over many years. Professor Davidson had joined Heriot-Watt in 1966, and apart from a year on leave of absence spent teaching in Bangkok, had remained at Heriot-Watt for the rest of his career, being appointed twice as Head of Department of Electrical Engineering and twice as the Dean of the Faculty of Engineering.

The Senate expressed condolences to the families and friends of the distinguished retired colleagues Professor Emeritus Alex Scott and Professor Emeritus Colin Davidson.

M20/64 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Received The minutes of the meeting held on 3 September 2020.

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

M20/65 ACTION LOG [Paper: SEN/20/37] 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.

M20/66 REPORT FROM THE PRINCIPAL AND VICE-CHANCELLOR [Paper: SEN/20/38]

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 matters highlighted included to inform the Senate that recommendations to the Court on the change programme would be considered by the Court at its upcoming meeting and communicated promptly to the University community thereafter. An additional 'rest day' was being planned for staff to take around the Christmas break, this was to recognise the intensity that all colleagues were experiencing in endeavouring to deliver their duties and all other responsibilities in the face of the strictures of the Covid-19 pandemic. Local arrangements would be in place for colleagues based at the different campuses. The Principal expressed thanks to colleagues for their hard work in continuing to deliver such high-quality work under such difficult circumstances.

Further topics shared in the report included the ongoing uncertainty over the guidance for the large-scale return of students to the campuses. Support would continue to be provided to those students who had remained on campus throughout, and needs would be assessed to ensure that the main body of students would be supported once the overall return had happened. There remained many variable factors until that event. It was noted that in Dubai, staff and students had been operating very effectively in the interim campus, with a move to the new campus now to occur in April 2021. Staff and Students would be kept informed accordingly. The Principal again commended the extraordinary efforts of staff to minimise the disruption to students.

The Senate noted the comments of the Principal regarding the publication of Phase 1 of the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) review of tertiary education. The Senate welcomed the recognition by the SFC that the Sector as a whole is experiencing a number of 'emergency years' whilst dealing with the Covid-19 emergency and endeavouring to

maintain provision. Another welcome theme was that institutions served as national assets and anchor institutions for communities. There was also recognition that Scotland remained a world leader for education and research and that institutions would play a very important role in the economic recovery for the nation. Other aspects included the need to recognise that research should be funded at full cost, and the importance of the Graduate Apprentice programme. It was noted that further dialogue would shape a second report in early 2021, and that the Senate would have the opportunity to consider that and to shape advice for the future.

In discussion, it was noted that an external-led review had been conducted of the Department of Languages and Intercultural Studies (LINCS) within the School of Social Sciences. The report of this review would shortly be considered by the University Executive and would then be made available to colleagues within LINCS and the campus trade unions. The report would inform decision making early in 2021 which was intended to be inclusive of colleagues in LINCS.

In further discussion it was noted that it was hoped to be able to share soon the academic workload model that had been under development in recent months. It was noted that this was even more necessary under the current circumstances where staff had been working beyond capacity for some time. A common experience was reported to be research activity being squeezed in order for staff to deliver on more immediate teaching requirements. The importance of maintaining liaison with line managers was emphasised, as was the expectation that research commitments would be firmly in the PDR process.

It was noted that the Deputy Principal (Research and Innovation) would pick up with the SU Postgraduate Research Officer a particular point regarding the workload of PhD students. The particular requirements of postgraduate students on the Orkney campus would also be picked up outwith the meeting.

GP / EL Nov 20

JP / LE Nov 20

M20/67 REF PREPAREDNESS

Received Under the Strategic Theme: Excellence in Research and Enterprise, the Senate received and considered a presentation, led by the Deputy Principal (Research and Innovation), and supported by the Head of Research Policy, Strategy and Impact, on the progress of preparations for the 2021 Research Excellence Framework (REF) exercise.

Noted The timetable for preparing for the final submission date of March 2021 was noted. Also noted were the changes in the process to take account of the impact of Covid-19. The Senate noted appreciation of all colleagues who had worked on the REF preparations over the recent months under such difficult circumstances. The Senate commended the Head of Research Policy, Strategy and Impact for his secondment to the UK REF Team.

The Senate recognised the importance of a strong performance in the REF, from both a reputational perspective and the access it provided to funding with which to conduct further high-quality research. It was noted that a huge amount of work had already been undertaken to assess draft submissions, and that work was still underway to optimise the impact assessments and other elements. It was intended to complete that work by the end of December. A particular workstream was underway to fine-tune the institutional environment statement.

The Senate recognised the inspiring work of those colleagues involved, and thanked the Head of Research Policy, Strategy and Impact, and the

Deputy Principal (Research and Innovation) and all other colleagues who had contributed to the immense efforts, which were still ongoing, to prepare for a successful submission to REF 2021.

M20/68 ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE STAFF PULSE SURVEYS

Received

Under the Strategic Theme: Building Flourishing Communities, the Senate received and considered a presentation, introduced by the Deputy Principal (Engagement and Staff Development) and supported by the Global Director of Human Resources, on the findings of, and actions deriving from, the two Staff Pulse Surveys undertaken in May and August 2020. Staff across all campuses had responded.

Noted

The first survey had looked at staff wellbeing under the restrictions forced by Covid-19. For the most part staff reported their well-being to be average or above, however a significant minority reported that lockdown was impacting their wellbeing. Specific aspects of working life under lockdown were tested, and the responses informed a series of actions, with some specific focus on actions to assist line managers, as well as general actions appropriate for all staff, including transport to and from the campuses.

The second survey had dealt with the return to campus and preparedness for semester one, as well as further consideration of line-management, communications, and Strategy 2025. The actions included extensive communications regarding support for mental health, anxiety and the resources on offer from the University and externally; monthly all staff briefings with presentations on key topics including finances, and Strategy 2025; and further consideration of the workload associated with implementing Responsive Blended Learning (RBL). The extraordinary efforts being made by staff to keep the University's operations going were recognised.

The Senate recorded its thanks to the Deputy Principal (Engagement and Staff Development) and the Global Director of Human Resources for leading on this work, and to all colleagues who had contributed towards the work underpinning the surveys and the actions that were being put in place as a consequence.

M20/69 ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE STUDENTS PULSE SURVEYS

Received

Under the Strategic Theme: Building Flourishing Communities, the Senate received and considered a presentation, introduced by the Deputy Principal (Education and Student Life), and led by the Quality Enhancement Officer (Student Learning Experience), on the findings of, and actions deriving from, the two Student Pulse Surveys undertaken following Weeks 1 and 4 in Semester One of Session 2020/21. Students across all campuses had responded.

Noted

The Senate noted the feedback reported from both surveys, with several lessons to be learnt around physical and mental wellbeing and support, student life, learning and teaching (with the experiences of, and reaction to, Responsive Blended Learning (RBL) commanding a significant portion of responses). The surveys had captured concerns as well as positive comments, and these responses had informed actions and approaches as the semester had progressed, including those actions underway to help students feel part of a community. Consistent and clear communication was identified as key, as was the need to close the feedback loop. The Student Life 'Olive Branch' initiative was noted with interest. A Teams site contained a dashboard to monitor and help to prioritise the tasks. The work was overseen by the Learning and

Teaching AY2020/21 Group (the L+TAY Group), which had been established to help mitigate the ongoing impact of COVID-19 on the University and its student body. The work of the Group was commended, and it was noted that the interaction with the student representative bodies continued to be highly positive and productive.

In discussion, some particular matters were raised in relation to the responses received from particular areas, and it was anticipated that subsequent actions would be evident in the responses to future Pulse Surveys. Enhanced support in relation to student mental health was particularly welcomed. It was also commented that the experience of RBL to date would be useful in informing future actions in response to potential further consequences of the pandemic.

In further discussion the importance was recognised of the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). The prospective transfer of the VLE provider from Blackboard to Canvas was raised as a potential matter of concern for many staff, who anticipated considerable additional workload in mid-2021 to facilitate the move of learning and other materials. It was agreed that this matter would be returned to in order that the Senate could have a greater appreciation of the rationale for the move and the support that would be provided to staff to help make the move as simple as possible for staff, recognising the extremely difficult several months that colleagues have experienced.

JWS /
KMcC Feb
 2021

The Senate recognised the value of the Pulse surveys, and the rich information they provided to help different elements of the University provide for the educational, social and wellbeing needs of the students across all campuses. The Senate commended the efforts of all concerned in this matter.

M20/70 ACADEMIC ARCHITECTURE AND THREE-YEAR HONOURS DEGREES [PAPER: SEN/20/39]

Received The Senate received, considered, and after discussion, endorsed an approach proposed by the Deputy Principal (Education and Student Life) and the Head of Academic Quality, to restart of the discussions on Academic Architecture and to open discussion at Senate, from an academic perspective, on three-year Honours degrees.

Noted The Senate noted that the previous discussions on Academic Architecture had, of necessity, been put aside to permit focus on the preparations for the QAA ELIR visit and then to respond to the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic. It was recognised that the Senate was the correct forum to consider the academic principles, and that the Senate would devote time in future to considering the different aspects of this matter, including through the use of workshops.

The Senate noted that the environment had changed since the initial discussions on this in 2019, and that one aspect was the need to look at how the University could contribute to supporting local and national recoveries following the Covid-19 pandemic. Another aspect was that the choices available to prospective students across the globe would continue to grow, and that Heriot-Watt needed to be able to be nimble and flexible and to enable access to programmes. One such approach was to offer, more widely, three-year Honours degrees.

The essence and principle of three-year Honours degrees was explained. It was noted that students joining in year two already completed their honours degree in three years, the model was the norm in Malaysia, and it also currently worked well in Dubai. The principle was emphasised that the new suite of three-year Honours degrees would be developed from scratch but within the existing parameters and

academic framework. It was noted that academically it was better to have a degree designed at the outset to be taken over three years and not 'cut and pasted' from a four-year model. The Senate was content to affirm that principle.

In discussion it was noted that the Senate might have to review the Regulations to make sure that the provision was permissible. It was further noted that the three-year degree would be delivered over the current two semesters and would not require teaching over the UK 'summer'. The initiative was welcomed from the student perspective with benefits identified such as helping to provide for students from diverse backgrounds and assisting those students who wished to commence their careers earlier. The broader availability of three-year degrees would also help to further bolster the provision on the Malaysia and Dubai campuses, and their particular competitive environments. It was noted that there would continue to be a coherent offer worldwide.

The Senate noted the benefits of the four-year honours degree and received reassurance that this would continue to be offered as well as the expanded three-year provision. Further discussion noted the need to gain a stronger and deeper perspective of what would be required in terms of developing three-year programmes, as well as ensuring that the entry requirements would be made clear – with the three-year programme requiring a higher level of entry than for an equivalent award studies over four years. Benchmarking against the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) would also be required. Practical concerns were also raised, and it was suggested that these could be teased out and addressed in future discussions, including workshops to enable close consideration of detail. Another issue to be considered was noted to be possible implication for student funding.

Endorsed

After the overall discussion and consideration of the key points stated in the paper, the Senate was content to endorse the approach that a three-year honours degree could be offered as well as the 'traditional' four-year honours degree, recognising that:

- the programme learning outcomes would be the same between the two variants
- the entry requirements to the three-year honours degree would be higher than the four-year programme, reflecting the challenge and rigour associated with completing an Honours degree within three years;
- the three-year honours degree was able to be accommodated within the requirements of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) (as with all awards of the University);
- In making its awards within the requirements of the SCQF, the University adheres to the following:
 - all Honours degrees are rated at SCQF Level 102;
 - SCQF levels descriptors are used in the development of awards (and the relevant QAA Subject Benchmark Statements);
 - All awards are made in line with the stipulated total minimum number of credit points, eg 360 for an Ordinary degree; 480 for an Honours degree; 600 for a UG Integrated Masters
- the three-year Honours degree would be awarded 480 credits on student transcripts, recognising the level of prior learning attained.

The Senate thanked the Deputy Principal (Education and Student Life) and the Head of Academic Quality for bringing this matter back to the Senate and it was reaffirmed that there would be plenty of opportunity for future discussion on the topic.

JWS / MK 2021

M20/71 SENATE COMMITTEE FOR INTERIM BUSINESS AND EFFECTIVNESS (SCIBE): REPORT OF MEETING ON 28 OCTOBER 2020 AND MATTERS DEALT WITH BY CORRESPONDENCE [PAPER: SEN/20/40]

Received The Senate received and noted the report, as presented by the Principal, the Chair of the Committee, of business that SCIBE had conducted since the previous meeting of the Senate.

Noted In considering the report the Senate noted in particular three matters that had been conducted on its behalf or under delegated authority:

- a. To help deal with the challenges of COVID-19, the SCIBE had agreed to extend the extraordinary measures for assessments that are currently in place to also cover all assessment diets in 2020/21. This had been dealt with as a matter of urgency in order to provide certainty at the earliest opportunity to Students and Staff.
- b. An agreement to recommend to the Court that Professor Duncan Hand, the current Deputy Head of School of EPS, be appointed as Acting Head of School from 1 January to 31 July 2021 (or earlier if the new appointee is able to take up the post before then). This is to ensure continuity of academic leadership during the period following the stepping down of Professor Steve McLaughlin as Head of School of EPS from 31 December 2020, and the appointment of a successor. A recruitment process was underway to find a successor to Professor McLaughlin, and EPS colleagues would have received an invitation to comment on this to the Dean engaged in this process – Professor Scott Arthur – by the end of November.
- c. The conferral of an Emeritus Professorship on Professor Patrick Corbett, and the conferral of a Visiting Professorship on Professor Toby Peters.

A Survey of Senate Effectiveness had been considered by the SCIBE and this would shortly be issued for Senators to complete online, all Senate members and attendees were encouraged to complete the survey to help shape future enhancements to how Senate conducts its business and the related processes and procedures.

Clerk / All participants Dec 2020

The Senate further noted that elections would shortly be opened to fill the positions of Deans of the University for the 'Pan University constituency' and the 'Science and Engineering' constituency. The Deans currently in post, Dr Ghaith and Dr Haniff were noted to be close to completing their first term of office and thus were eligible to stand again for election. If more than one candidate came forward for either position an election contest would be held. The successful candidates would take office from 1 January 2021 for a three-year term.

Clerk Dec 2020

It was noted that the wording of the Ordinance meant that staff engaged on foundation programmes, and others who were not attached to a specific School, would not automatically be included in the electorate for the Science and Engineering constituency. The Secretary undertook to explore a short-term accommodation to resolve this as well as bringing forward a longer-term solution to a future meeting.

Secretary Dec 2020 / Mar 2021

M20/72 UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE FOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION: MINUTES OF MEETINGS HELD 28 MAY 2020 AND 27 AUGUST 2020 [PAPER: SEN/20/41]

Received 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.

Approved The Senate approved a minor change to the UCRI Terms of Reference.

**M20/73 UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE FOR LEARNING AND TEACHING:
MINUTES OF MEETINGS HELD 10 JUNE 2020 AND 26 AUGUST
2020 [PAPER: SEN/20/42]**

Received The Senate received and noted the report of business conducted at the
Noted meetings held on 10 June and 26 August 2020 as presented by the
Chair of the Committee. All items in the report were presented for
information. The Senate recognised in particular the extensive work that
was continuing across the Schools and in the Professional Services to
assist Responsive Blended Learning and other initiatives.

**M20/74 UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE FOR QUALITY AND STANDARDS:
MINUTES OF MEETING HELD 23 SEPTEMBER 2020 [PAPER:
SEN/20/43]**

Received The Senate received and noted the report of business conducted at the
Noted meeting held on 23 September 2020 as presented by the Chair of the
Committee. All items in the report were presented for information.

M20/75 VALEDICTIONS

Received The Senate expressed sincere gratitude to two long-serving members
Noted for whom this would be the final meeting of Senate:

Professor Gill Hogg, who would retire in January 2021 after seven
years serving as Deputy Principal (Engagement and Staff
Development), including a period in 2015 in which she had acted as
Vice-Principal, supporting Professor Julian Jones in his role as then
Acting Principal. Professor Hogg previously had served as Head of
the then School of Management and Languages.

Professor Steve McLaughlin, who would demit office as Head of
School of Engineering and Physical Sciences from 31 December
2020. It was noted that Professor McLaughlin would stay in the
School and would continue his academic career, with especial focus
on his research interests.

M20/76 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

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

Wednesday 3 February 2021;

Thursday 22 April 2021;

Wednesday 16 June 2021.

Signed by the Chair Date