Present: The Acting Vice-Chancellor (Chair)
Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching, Learning & Students), Professor J Robinson
Pro-Vice-Chancellor (International), Professor M Smith
Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching, Learning & Students), Professor T Lightfoot
Dean (Arts and Humanities), Professor J Buchanan
Dean (Social Sciences), Professor S Bell
Dean (Sciences) Professor B Fulton
Dean (Graduate Research School), Professor T Stoneham
The Director of Corporate and Information Services, Mrs H Fraser-Krauss

Professor T Andrews
Professor K Atkin
Ms J Baston (GSA)
Professor Y Birks
Mr J Bone
Professor D Brown
Professor D Bruce
Dr T Cantrell
Professor N Carter
Ms C Chamberlain (GSA)
Dr J Gibbons
Professor K Gibbon
Professor M Goddard
Professor M Hodson

In attendance: Registrar & Secretary, Ms J Horsburgh (Secretary)
Academic Registrar, Dr W Campbell
University Governance Officer, Dr P Evans (Assistant Secretary)
Governance Administrator, Ms B Carter Ellis

Apologies for absence were received from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research), Dr R Aitken, Professor L Black, Professor M Burton, Professor M Freeman, Professor J Hudson, Professor C Hunter, Ms F Maiden (Undergraduate Faculty Rep for Sciences), Ms Z Majer (Undergraduate Faculty Rep for Social Sciences), Dr S King, Professor N Milner, Ms C Pederiva (Undergraduate Faculty Rep for Arts and Humanities), Professor A Sheil, Professor S Velani and Ms H Weatherly.
Membership

On behalf of Senate, the Acting Vice-Chancellor thanked those members who were attending their last meeting.

Chair of University Council

The Acting Vice-Chancellor introduced the Chair of the University Council, Denise Jagger, who was attending the meeting as an observer.

Mrs Jagger noted that she was attending as part of her ongoing induction into the role of Chair of Council, a position she had assumed in December 2018. Mrs Jagger further observed that it was important for Senate and Council to work together in their respective governance roles (academic and corporate respectively), especially as regards seeking assurance in respect of matters of academic quality and standards. It was also reported that the University Council had embarked on a programme of visits to academic and support departments to enhance its understanding of the institution and thereby improve its effectiveness as the governing body.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 May 2019 (S.18-19/45) were approved, subject to the following minor corrections to the attendance/apologies listing:

- Dr Tamar Keren-Portnoy to be added to attendance listing;
- substitute ‘Dr M Roodhouse’ for ‘Professor M Roodhouse’.

In response to a query in respect of the start-date for application of the new criteria for first-class degrees with distinction (M18-19/38 refers), the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching, Learning & Students) clarified that for the majority of Boards of Studies the new rules could be implemented from the start of the 2019/20 academic year (i.e. for students graduating in 2020) as they were consistent with current practice and simply provided clarification on processes and consistency for marks calculation. It was however noted that for some departments application of the new rules would involve a modification to their current criteria and that in such cases they should apply to all students beginning their second year of study in 2019/20 (i.e. to graduating cohorts from summer 2021 for bachelors students and summer 2022 for integrated masters).

Policy on Lecture Capture

Further to M17-18/68 (Policy on Lecture Capture) from the meeting held on 10 July 2018, Senate considered a review report on the first year of operation of the new policy (S.18-19/46).

Attending the meeting to present the report, Dr Richard Walker (Head of E-Learning Development) highlighted the following aspects:
- soft launch of the policy from the start of 2019/20, with full launch across all departments from start of Spring Term 2019;
- significant increase (72%) in lectures being captured and in viewership by students (ca. 14 hours of viewership for every 1 hour of recording);
- nuanced and uncertain findings in respect of effect on student attendance at lectures (as full attendance monitoring data was not currently available);
- feedback from students on visibility of the policy and the need for standardisation of departmental recording statements;
- the intention for recordings to supplement (not replace) live lectures as a learning resource;
- incorporation of feedback from the University Teaching Committee (UTC) into the review report.

During discussion the following points were noted:

(a) Some departments expressed the view that it was likely to be the same students viewing the recordings as had actually attended the lecture, and that there had been a clear drop-off in attendance as it could be argued that the policy effectively legitimised absence. While such a correlation could not be verified from the available data, it was clear from the qualitative data (i.e. surveys and focus groups with course reps) that students were making effective use of the recordings in their learning. It was however suggested that as course reps tended to be the most highly engaged students, they might not be the best source of information on aspects of student disengagement.

(b) It was suggested that the reported 14 hours viewership for every 1 hour of recording was actually rather low, with some students still failing to access the lecture material by any means at all. The transition from more directive secondary education to the requirements of higher education (e.g. in respect of self-discipline and independence) was acknowledged as a factor here.

(c) As regards the possible loss of creativity and interactivity that could be provided in live lectures, it was noted that this had been previously discussed by Senate in terms of different modes of engagement and active learning. It was also noted that under the new policy it was possible to temporarily pause recording for the more interactive elements of the lecture.

(d) It was reported that the Enterprise Systems Strategy Group was considering an appropriate software solution for student attendance monitoring which would be piloted during 2019/20 and linked to further monitoring of the lecture capture policy.

(e) As regards the proposal that the release of recorded material might usefully be extended beyond the current maximum of three working days, it was suggested that this would detrimentally affect student follow-up and note-taking. It was also noted that departments could devise their own release model within the
parameters of the policy and where approval was given for a teaching encounter not be recorded the lecturer or module convener should provide an alternative and equivalent learning resource.

Following discussion Senate approved the recommendations in the report that the following be provided:

i. publication of a summarised version of the policy on the Student Gateway (with details of the recording policy also referenced in departmental publications to students);
ii. standardisation of departmental recording statements to capture recording provision and schedules going forward;
iii. provision by departments of guidance to students on how to make use of recordings (embedding this within their existing academic skills support).

18-19/54 Acting Vice-Chancellor’s Report

Senate received a report from the Acting Vice-Chancellor (S.18-19/47) who drew particular attention to the following matters:

- Recent publication of the National Student Survey (NSS) 2019 outcome had confirmed the University’s score for Overall Satisfaction as having risen from 84.6% to 88.6%, placing it top in the Russell Group. There remained, however, considerable variation across departments and disappointing scores in some areas that would be subject to further analysis and action-planning.

- The piloting of subject-level TEF had also generated a positive outcome, with all departments achieving a rating consistent with the hypothesis for their performance and 11 departments achieving the Gold rating. It was however noted that the whole TEF process was currently subject to review at national level by Dame Shirley Pearce and that the recommendations from this review would be considered before implementation of subject-level TEF. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (TLS) reminded members that the subject-level results were currently confidential within the institution.

- As a report commissioned by the outgoing Prime Minister, it remained to be seen whether the findings of the Augar Review would have political traction in the current unstable political environment. It was possible that certain elements would eventually be implemented, especially as regards improving the funding environment for Further Education.

- It was reported that Chair’s Action had been taken to discontinue the current Foundation Degree (FD) award title and replace it with three new awards titles: Foundation Degree in Science (FdSc), Foundation Degree in Arts (FdA) and Foundation Degree in Engineering (FdEng).

During discussion the following points were noted:
(a) External advertisement for vacant Pro-Vice-Chancellor positions was confirmed as HR practice in recent years.

(b) As regards analysis of the University’s decline in recent league table rankings and identification of possible remedial measures, it was generally agreed that this process should involve all relevant stakeholders, including Senate, in order to ensure the active engagement of staff. It was noted that some of the input factors were non-academic (e.g. spend/resourcing in different categories) and consideration would be given to how such factors might be optimised in University data returns. It was also noted that the University’s improved NSS position was likely to have a positive impact on the next league table release in September 2019 (The Times/Sunday Times Good University Guide 2020).

(c) With regard to the ‘good degrees’ component of league table rankings, it was important to distinguish between artificial grade inflation and planned improvements in student outcomes arising from a host of different factors (e.g. investment in additional staff, improved teaching facilities and pedagogical innovation).

18-19/55 Undergraduate/Postgraduate Taught Degree Outcomes 2017/18

Senate considered the annual statistical reports on undergraduate and taught postgraduate outcomes (5.18-19/48).

Attending the meeting to present the report, Karen Payne (Business Intelligence Unit) highlighted the following aspects:

- 0.1% decrease in the percentage of good (i.e. first and upper second) undergraduate degrees awarded (from 80.6% to 80.5%);
- continuation of the general upward trend among Russell Group institutions (from 85% to 86.1%);
- considerable variation (35.4%) across the different departments;
- 4.4% decrease in proportion of PGT students ‘qualifying with award at intended level’ (cf. 0.3% decrease in the Russell Group).

Senate noted the following points in discussion:

(a) While the departmental data showed significant volatility over the five-year period 2011/12 - 2017/18, the aggregated figures for the whole University (Chart 1-1 refers) confirmed a relatively stable position relative to the Russell Group and former 1994 Group comparators. This position was open to two possible interpretations, which had been discussed by UTC: either the University was maintaining consistency, equity and academic standards or the University was disadvantaging its graduates against those from competitor institutions by not consistently increasing the proportion of good degrees awarded.

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(b) The Office for Students (OfS) had recently published a critical report in respect of grade inflation across the sector, which had specifically identified the University in the final year of the study in question (interpreting the recent decline in its entry tariff as inflation).

(c) The institutional outcome for PGT students was acknowledged to be disproportionately affected by the outcome for the large cohort in one department (Management), which had made considerable effort in the current year with interventions to improve the completion rate.

(d) With clear evidence of the correlation between student engagement/attendance and degree results, it was suggested that the most effective driver of improved outcomes would be to mandate lecture attendance. It was also suggested that the number of assessment points during the year might be an influential factor, although to date this had never been modelled with other inputs such as entry tariff.

(e) The GSA representative expressed some concern at the proportion of PGT students leaving with no award (an increase of 1.9% to 11.9%) and offered the Association’s support to the University in addressing this matter.

(f) It was acknowledged that a wide number of inter-linked factors in the areas of student admissions, prior academic achievement, student engagement and the broader student experience came together in consideration of final outcomes, aspects of which were routinely analysed by the BIU in collaboration with Student Recruitment and Admission to identify barriers to attainment/progression and inform appropriate interventions. It was noted that such analytical work had also been a key element in the development of the University’s Access and Participation Plan (a required element of registration with the OfS).

(g) It was suggested that another potential factor influencing student outcomes might be the more formulaic calculation of final results in a modular system, which had to some degree replaced the more context-driven consideration of individual borderline students by external examiners and Exam Boards.

18-19/56 Code of Conduct on Research Student/Supervisor Relations

Senate considered a proposed Code of Conduct on research student/supervisor relations (S.18-19/49).

Presenting the Code as Chair of the Graduate Research School Board, Professor Tom Stoneham highlighted the following aspects:

- the fundamental principle that sexual activity between a supervisor and their research student was never appropriate;
- the new responsibility on supervisors to make a choice and report appropriately;
the responsibility on Heads of Department to appoint a suitable person to speak to both parties involved and to terminate the supervisory relationship as soon as the personal relationship was reported;

- establishment of clear boundaries to support both staff and students;

- basis of the proposed Code drawn from the ‘Principles for Respectful Supervisory Relationships’ published by Universities Australia.

During discussion the following points were noted:

(a) In response to a query on the policy arrangements in this area for other (i.e. non-PGR) students, it was noted that this was covered by the University’s existing Policy on Personal Relationships, which had been developed in the context of the unequal power relations between individuals (including between members of staff).

(b) The Chair of the GRSB observed that PGR students faced specific issues in the case of personal relationships with supervisors due to the greater impact such supervisors tended to have on their academic progress and subsequent employability.

(c) It was suggested that the proposed Code might usefully clarify that the PGR student in question should also be permitted to disclose the relationship (i.e. that this was not the sole responsibility of the supervisor), although it was noted that there was already a reporting procedure for any issues with supervisors in the PGR handbook.

(d) Certain specificities relating to PGR students notwithstanding, a query was raised as to the need for a separate PGR policy when it might be more appropriate simply to amend/update the University’s existing Policy on Personal Relationships.

(e) Despite potential issues of expertise and supervisory fit, it was not uncommon for supervisors to be changed for a variety of reasons.

(f) In terms of a responsibility on third parties to report an inappropriate sexual relationship, it was noted that this was covered by the University’s existing Speak Up (Public Interest Disclosure) Policy, which had been subject to considerable internal consultation, including with the campus trade unions.

(g) The Chair of the GRSB observed that having such a separate policy in place for PGR students was likely to be well received by external research funders as they took an interest in the broader research environment.

Following discussion, the Acting Vice-Chancellor commented that although Senate was generally supportive of the underlying principles and intention of the proposed Code, there needed to be clear linkage to the University’s existing Policy on Personal Relationships. It was therefore decided to ask the Graduate Research Schools Board…
to consider this matter further in collaboration with the HR Department and to report back to the next meeting regarding the potential risks and difficulties associated with having two separate policies in this area.

18-19/57  Business from Committees

Senate noted and approved business from the following committee meetings (S.18-19/50):

- Teaching Committee: 16 May and 20 June 2019
- Research Committee: 1 May and 19 June 2019
- Planning Committee: 24 April, 30 April and 5 June 2019
- Student Life Committee: 13 June 2019 (including approval of revised Student Complaints Procedure and Support to Study Policy)
- International Committee: 13 June 2019
- HYMS Joint Senate Committee: 1 May 2019
- Sciences Faculty Board: 20 May 2019

18-19/58  Appointments to Committees

Further to M18-19/41 (Forthcoming Committee Vacancies), Senate approved the following appointments to committees (S.18-19/51):

**University Teaching Committee**
- Dr Ed Braman (TFTI) [re-appointment]
- Dr Barry Lee (Philosophy) [re-appointment]
- Professor Dave Smith (Chemistry) [re-appointment]
- Dr Mark Nicholson (Computer Science)
- Dr Sam Cobb (HYMS/Archaeology)

**Health, Safety and Welfare Committee**
- Dr James Fox (Biology)

**Special Cases Committee**
- Professor Tracy Lightfoot (Assistant Pro-Vice-Chancellor/TLS) [re-appointment]
- Dr Philip Cox (HYMS/Archaeology) [re-appointment]

**International Committee**
- Professor Karl Atkin (Head of Department of Health Sciences)

[All appointments for a period of three years from 1 August 2019 until 31 July 2022]

Senate also noted that forthcoming vacancies remained on the following committees:

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- **University Court** (nine members of Senate, appointments co-terminous with Senate membership)
- **Nominations Committee** (three academic members)
- **Special Cases Committee** (three academic members: two social sciences, one any faculty)

Senate decided to delegate authority to the Acting Vice-Chancellor to make appointments to these remaining vacancies.

### 18-19/59 Amendments to University Regulations

Senate noted that the Acting Vice-Chancellor had taken Chair’s Action to approve minor amendments to University Regulation 7 [Student Discipline] for implementation with immediate effect in the current academic year (S.18-19/36).

Senate approved proposed amendments to the following Regulations for implementation from the 2019/20 academic year:

- Regulations 2.8 and 6.7 [Academic Appeals]
- Regulation 11 [Using University Information]

### 18-19/60 Policy on Research Degrees

Senate approved proposed amendments to the Policy on Research Degrees (S.18-19/53).

### 18-19/61 Research Integrity

Senate approved the annual statement on research integrity required by the Universities UK Concordat to Support Research Integrity (S.18-19/54).

### 18-19/62 Periodic Review Reports

Senate received for information periodic review reports in respect of the Departments of Archaeology, Management, Education and Psychology (S.18-19/55).

### 18-19/63 Provision of International Pathway College

Senate received for information the report of the Three-Year Review of the provision of the International Pathway College (S.18-19/56).

### 18-19/64 REF 2021 Code of Practice

Senate received for information the University’s REF 2021 Code of Practice (S.18-19/57).
18-19/65 Annual Statement from the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education

Senate received for information the Annual Statement from the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (S.18-19/58).

18-19/66 Election of Members

Senate received for information the result of the election of new members to serve for three years from 1 August 2019 (S.18-19/59).

18-19/67 Dates of Meetings in 2019/20

The dates of Senate meetings in 2019/20 were noted as follows:

- Tuesday 22 October 2019
- Tuesday 28 January 2020
- Tuesday 5 May 2020
- Tuesday 7 July 2020

(all 2.15pm, Bowland Auditorium, Berrick Saul Building)