



SENATE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 6 DECEMBER 2023
2PM VIA MS TEAMS

Members	Professor Karen Stanton Professor Scott Fleming Dr Stephanie Gilluly Dr Robert Boast Dr Nick Gee Dr Sacha Mason Dr Caroline Horton Dr Andrew Jackson Connor Short Emily Allden MJ Sykes	Interim Vice-Chancellor (Chair) Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs) Registrar and University Secretary Pro Vice-Chancellor (Students) Dean of Faculty Academic Staff Member of University Council and Head of Programmes: Education, Health and Lifelong Learning Professoriate/Reader Representative Head of Research & Knowledge Exchange Students' Union President, 2023/24 Students' Union Vice President, Education 2023/24 Undergraduate Student Representative
	<u>Faculty Representation</u> Dr Matt Dunn Dr Clare Wheat-Gooing Janet Atkinson Stefan Fusenich	Head of Programmes: Initial Teacher Education Member of Academic Staff from the Faculty Member of Academic Staff from the Faculty Member of Academic Staff from the Faculty
Minutes	Leanne Chancellor	Secretariat, Graduation & Governance Manager

The Chair thanked members for their attendance for the first Senate meeting of the academic year 2023/24, due to the meeting in October 2023 being cancelled.

The Chair NOTED that Senate was the most senior academic committee of the University and reports directly to the University Council for matters of academic governance.

1. Apologies

1.1 Apologies were received from:

- Tom Dannatt, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Operations).
- Dr Jack Cunningham, Professoriate/Reader Representative.

The Chair welcomed the following new member to their first Senate meeting:

- MJ Sykes, Undergraduate Student Representative.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

2.1 Senate – 19 July 2023

The minutes of the Senate meeting held on 19 July 2023 were CONFIRMED as a fair and accurate record, and the Chair was authorised to sign them.

3. Matters Arising

3.1 Action Table – 19 July 2023

Senate RECEIVED an updated action table from the meeting on 19 July 2023 and NOTED the following:

3.1.1 Update on Portfolio Review (refers to minute 3.2.1)

An update on the portfolio review had been included in item 10 of the agenda.

It was NOTED that an update had also been provided to the University Executive Group on 23 October 2023, University Council’s Academic Assurance Committee on 1 November 2023 and the Staff Forum on 23 November 2023.

3.1.2 Record of Decision (refers to minute 11.15) and Chair’s Actions to be taken over the summer (refers to minute 12.1) relating to The Language Gallery (TLG).

The Registrar and University Secretary (R&US) NOTED that the Record of Decision for the institutional approval for TLG and the Cert HE Business and Leadership programme for TLG were due for approval and sign off during the week commencing 11 December 2023, for recruitment to commence January 2024.

3.2 Any Other Matters

3.2.1 There were no other matters to be discussed.

4. Review Terms of Reference and Membership for 2023/24

4.1 Members RECEIVED and NOTED the Senate membership and Terms of Reference (ToR) for 2023/24.

4.2 The Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic Affairs) (DVC) NOTED that sub-committees of Academic Enhancement Committee include a Deputy Chair chosen from the membership and who deputises for the Chair in their absence. It was RECOMMENDED that Senate adopts the same approach.

- The Chair AGREED with the recommendation and will identify an appropriate Deputy Chair from the membership.

4.3 The Chair NOTED that she would expect to see explicit oversight of the University’s strategy and mission for Senate – it is embedded within the ToRs but requires clearer wording.

4.4 Members NOTED that it would be useful to have included in the ToRs the duration of membership for members who are not *ex-officio*.

4.5 Senate was CONTENT to APPROVE the membership and ToR for 2023/24.

Chair

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5. Chair's Update

5.1 The Chair UPDATED Senate on the following achievements during the academic year to date:

- Commend the NSS results that BGU achieved for 2023.
- BGU's award of the silver TEF for both student outcomes and student experience.
- Good Graduate Outcomes results of 90% of students in further study, 77% in highly skilled roles.
- KEF3 results, which gave us a sustained profile compared to the 18 other institutions which comprise our benchmark group.
- BGU was in the top quartile for local growth and regeneration as a university.
- The positive outcome from the recent Ofsted inspection on BGU's apprenticeship provision.
- The significant amount of work that has been completed in the Faculty and Professional Support Services, around the Annual Monitoring process.
- BGU has established a Critical Path Plan which included seven workstreams, focussed on the university's future sustainability. The seven workstreams were NOTED:

1. University Purpose/Vision, including Social Purpose;
2. Financial Framework;
3. Marketing/Brand and Name;
4. Recruitment/Admissions Plan;
5. Organisational Structure, to deliver our purpose and key functions;
6. Portfolio, based on our purpose; and
7. Estate Asset Strategy and Utilisation.

5.2 The Chair INFORMED members on the recent Office for Students (OfS) bid, which had been submitted by the DVC and the Partnership, Apprenticeship and Skills Development Manager, to increase BGU's apprenticeship offer for the Youth Worker and Project Manager standards.

5.3 It was also NOTED that the Master's Apprenticeship in Archaeology Specialism was also going through the validation process.

5.4 The Chair UPDATED Senate on the following external matters for noting:

- Whilst there were no specific announcements in either the King's Speech or the Government's Autumn Statement relating to Higher Education, it was NOTED that we have been aware of an announcement via the Home Secretary with regards to immigration reforms, which will impact on international student recruitment, including a review of the graduate route and an increase in salary thresholds for both work and family visas. It was NOTED that Universities UK is monitoring the ToR for that review.
- The sector groups of which the Chair is a member continue to note the challenges facing the sector as a whole. It was NOTED that there was a focus on financial sustainability.
- There were two proposal initiatives from the Government to note, which will have an impact on the University:
 1. The removal of funding for Level 7 Senior Leadership Apprenticeships; and
 2. The introduction of a new fee cap of £5,760 for all Foundation Year students.

- It was NOTED that the Lifelong Learning Bill, which became law in September 2023, represents a radical shift in the delivery of the administration of higher education funding, i.e. student loans will no longer exist and will be replaced by a Lifelong Learning Entitlement from academic year 2025/26.
- REF development – there has been a recent consultation on the ‘people, culture and environment’ component of the REF for 2028.
 - The Chair gave thanks to the Head of Research for completing a return on behalf of BGU.
- The publication from the OfS of their first Quality Assessment Visit Framework.

6. To Note – Key Decisions from University Council

6.1 The Academic Staff Member of University Council, noted the following key items were received at:

- 6.1.1
- the University Council meeting held on 28 September 2023:
 - Council approved the 2023/2024 budget and endorsed the five-year financial framework 2023-2028.
- 6.1.2
- the University Council Strategy Day held on 16 October 2023:
 - Council had a Strategy Day hosted by Andrew Hargreaves from DrewWorks which included:
 - Current and future thinking for the Critical Path Plan.
 - Upcoming BGU brand work with PS London.
- 6.1.3
- The University Council meeting held on 28 November 2023:
 - Council received an update on the Critical Path Plan.
 - Council approved the Prevent accountability and Data Return 2022/23 for submission to the OfS.
 - Council received the BG (Lincoln) Ltd accounts for 2022/23.
 - Council received the Audit Committees Annual Report 2022/23.
 - Council received approved the University Annual Report, Accounts for 2022/23, Statements of Corporate Governance and Internal Controls.
 - Council received the Remuneration Annual Report for 2022/2023.
 - Council approved the Staff and Students Relationship Policy and the Student Disciplinary Policy.
 - Council received an update from the Students’ Union President.

7. Annual Health of the Institution Report (AHIR) and Timeline for Completion

7.1 The DVC NOTED that production of the timeline of the AHIR had changed in 2020/21 and 2021/22 with the report produced in the spring, but this year (for the 2022/23 reports) it has been brought forward.

7.2 The DVC NOTED the massive amount of work that had been produced by the Faculty and Professional Support Services areas and gave thanks to all those staff involved in producing the AMRs.

7.3 The DVC NOTED that the intention was to have a draft AHIR prepared by the end of December 2023.

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- 7.4 The DVC NOTED that the AHIR will be presented to the Academic Enhancement Committee on 28 February 2024 and the University Council's Academic Assurance Committee on 13 March 2024 for formal sign off, and recommendation to University Council for approval.
- 8. Degree Outcome Statement (DOS) Update**
- 8.1 The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Students) (PVC) provided an update on the DOS, which all universities are required to provide on their websites.
- 8.2 The PVC NOTED that the DOS is a short public document that review trends of undergraduate degrees over several years, and bring together regulations and policies that protect degree standards.
- 8.3 The PVC HIGHLIGHTED the following main headlines of the DOS from 2022/23:
- Undergraduate students graduating in 2022/23 had two years of on-campus, in-person delivery with only Level 4 experiencing blended and full online learning necessitated by COVID measures in 2022/21 (also, for those completing a 4-year programme, their Foundation Year was delivered fully online for most of semester two in 2019/20).
 - The proportion of upper degrees (2.1s + 1sts) increased from 60% to 69%, comparable with the pre-COVID performance in 2018/19. Both 1sts and 2.1s increased to 21% and 48% respectively, to be comparable with the 2018/19 figures.
 - In contrast, the proportion of 2.2s decreased by 7% and thirds by 1%, but the number of pass awards remained the same and is still 4 times higher than in 2018/19.
 - The positive readjustment in awarding upper degrees is welcome and should reduce the difference between BGU and the sector average.
 - Attention needs to focus on reducing the proportion of students who do not complete 360 credits and are awarded a pass degree.
 - There is variation in the proportion of upper-degrees by subject and from year-to-year. Not surprisingly, subjects with small cohort numbers show the greatest inter-year variance. However, some of the large subject cohorts show a 30% range.
 - On average, joint honour programmes award a lower proportion of upper degrees compared to single honours. It will be seen whether the new curriculum in 2025/26, which requires joint honours students to do just one capstone project rather than one in each subject currently, will reduce this difference with single honours subjects.
 - Analysis of APP groups with their comparator groups shows that for POLARQ1, IMDQ1 and Males, there is a substantially lower (>5%) proportion of upper degrees awarded. For first class awards the proportion is substantially lower for ethnic minority students, IMDQ1 and Male students. This will be considered for action as part of the development of the new Access and Participation Plan.
- 8.4 The PVC NOTED that the new Credit Framework will see the impact of the curriculum change for joint honours over the two years, as well as the algorithm change (40:60 with an exit velocity).

9. Ofsted Inspection Feedback (Apprenticeship Provision)

9.1 The PVC NOTED that Ofsted completed their four-day inspection (with five inspectors) for the apprenticeship provision on 21 to 24 November 2023.

9.2 The PVC NOTED that the result is embargoed until the University has fed back on the draft report and the final report is confirmed, but he was able to feedback that the visit was positive.

9.3 The PVC HIGHLIGHTED the following from the inspection:

- BGU currently has 108 apprentices studying with us and the inspectors met with eight students from each of the apprenticeship programmes (a total of 24 case study students).
- The inspectors reviewed the employer and learner questionnaires that they sent out, which were positive.
- The team providing inspectors with 700 employment files and conducted calls with the employers from the case study students.
- The inspectors had formal meetings with Senior Leaders, Curriculum Leads, tutors, apprenticeship support officers and Professional Support Services.
- The inspectors completed teaching observations – in person, on-line and recorded resources.
- The inspectors reviewed our regulations, policies, and safeguarding processes.

9.4 The PVC NOTED that the inspectors picked up on three key improvement areas to work on:

1. To try and encourage more employers to attend tripartite meetings, to enable them to support their apprentices in the workplace better.
2. To try and raise the first-time pass rate of apprentice students passing their functional skills tests.
3. To join up better the tools and mechanisms that we use to ensure standards and enhancement, and to do it in a timely fashion.

9.5 It was NOTED that the draft Ofsted Report had been received on 8 December 2023, and the University has five working days to report any factual inaccuracies. Once this has been received, Ofsted will send the final report within seven working days and then published early in the new year.

9.6 The Chair, on behalf of Senate, thanked both the academic and Professional Services colleagues who worked hard throughout the inspection week and also establishing the provision and delivering it.

10. Programme Closures (recommended by the Portfolio Management Group (PMG) at its meeting on 23 November 2023)

10.1 Members RECEIVED and NOTED the proposal form to close the following programmes:

- BA (Hons) Music & Musicianship/ BA (Hons) Music & Musicianship with Foundation Year / BA (Hons) Music & SENDI / BA (Hons) Music & SENDI with Foundation Year.

- BA (Hons) Mathematics, Computing and Data Science / BA (Hons) Mathematics, Computing and Data Science with Foundation Year, including BA (Hons) Education Studies & Mathematics / BA (Hons) Education Studies & Mathematics with Foundation Year; and BSc (Hons) Sport & Mathematics / BSc (Hons) Sport & Mathematics with Foundation Year.

10.2 The DVC (as Chair of PMG) NOTED that the recommendation for closure was based on the work of the Portfolio Review which incorporated a metrics-based analysis of programme performance for the most current data sets in early summer 2023, a 'deep dive' into the background and context of programme performance and an update of student recruitment for 2023/24. The recommendations were predicated primarily on economic non-viability based on student recruitment.

10.3 The DVC NOTED that PMG had received a clear proposal for these closures from the Faculty based on:

- Support from the Faculty Executive Group, as the viability of the programmes had been in question over a sustained period and recruitment remained low in 2023/24.
- Both Programme Leaders were aware of the proposal to close the programmes.
- There were no students currently enrolled on the Foundation Year programmes, and none enrolled on Level 4 of the BA (Hons) Music & Musicianship programme.
- A watching brief would be kept on Music as a subject within the PGCE programme with regard to the potential for future changes in bursary allocations by the Department for Education (DfE).

10.4 The R&US REQUESTED for the Dean of Faculty to complete a final check with admissions regarding applications/offers for Maths and Music following their proposed closure by Senate.

Post Meeting Update:

The Dean of Faculty provided the following update:

- *Mathematics: for all variants of Maths, BGU has received three applications and no offers have been made. Applicants will be made alternative course offers and/or called to discuss options depending upon their original course choice. The courses are no longer on UCAS.*
- *Music and Musicianship: for all variants of Music, BGU has received three applications and no offers have been made. Applicants will be made alternative course offers and/or called to discuss options depending upon their original course choice. The courses are no longer on UCAS.*

10.5 Senate APPROVED the CLOSURES of the above two programmes.

10.6 The Chair NOTED to all colleagues that had been involved in the delivery of the Music and Maths programmes that they had a significant history within BGU and although it has been a difficult decision to make to close these programmes, we acknowledge and give thanks for the fantastic work that has been completed within these programmes, and the continued commitment to those students who remain on the programmes until they are taught out.

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(see post
mtg update)

11. To Note Senate Chair's Actions and Revised Validation Process

11.1 Chair's Actions:

Members NOTED and ACKNOWLEDGED the following Chair's Actions that had been taken outside of the meeting:

11.1.1 Record of Decision Approvals – taken on 18 October 2023:

- BA (Hons) Primary Education.
- PGCE Primary with QTS – 18 Oct 2023.

11.1.2 Approval of the following Codes of Practices and Policies – taken on 18 October 2023:

- Code of Practice for the Admission of Students.
- Admissions Complaints Procedure.
- Code of Practice for the Recognition of Prior Learning.
- Policy in respect of the admission and welfare of students who are under the age of 18 at entry.
- Code of Practice Health and Physical Capacity to Teach.
- Code of Practice for the Assessment of Students.
- Code of Practice for Academic Misconduct.
- Student Attendance, Engagement and Absence Procedure.
- Code of Practice for the Conduct of Boards of Examiners.
- Code of Practice for Extenuating Circumstances.
- Student Route Compliance Policy.
- English Language Entry Requirement.

11.1.3 Programme Suspensions of the following programmes – taken on 20 October 2023:

- BA (Hons) Applied Health and Wellbeing and BA (Hons) Applied Health and Wellbeing (with Foundation Year).
- BA (Hons) Childhood, Youth and Community Studies and BA (Hons) Childhood, Youth and Community Studies (with Foundation Year)

11.1.4 Record of Decision Approvals – taken on 20 November 2023:

- MA Education Studies
- MA Education Studies (ICON College)

11.2 To Receive and Note the New Validation Process

11.2.1 Members RECEIVED and NOTED the document highlighting the proposed changes to the process of validating new programmes that seek to address that imperative without compromising rigour, quality and standards.

11.2.2 The R&US NOTED that the proposed changes to the process for the management and development of new programmes addresses the following:

- an explicit focus on strategic portfolio development replacing the piecemeal approach that had emerged over time;
- fewer milestone events;
- engagement of Senate at an early strategic stage; and
- a programme development phase that empowers the Faculty.

11.2.3 The R&US also NOTED that the proposed changes remove:

- a 'Stage One' event (and a significant administrative burden for the Quality Team); and
- a recommendation to Senate from AEC (which involves considerable duplication of effort because of the constituents of both).

11.2.4 Members ASKED the following questions:

- What would happen with Desk-top Reviews and what would be the process?
 - The R&US NOTED that the Desk-top Reviews should come out of the AHIR through the AMR, or proposed as part of the overall reshape of the portfolio and then they would follow the original process of the Faculty preparing the paperwork for proposal and consideration at the Quality Assurance Committee for academic assurance.
 - The R&US NOTED that she would add a clarification point within the new validation process paperwork to make that clear, and also to clarify panel membership. It was NOTED that this information would also be included in the revised Code of Practice.

12. Minutes of Meetings of Subcommittees of Senate

12.1 Academic Enhancement Committees held on 27 September and 22 November 2023

Senate RECEIVED and NOTED the minutes from the Academic Enhancement Committee meetings held on 27 September and 22 November 2023.

The DVC highlighted the discussions in the minutes regarding:

- The amount of work that had gone into completing all the Codes of Practice, Regulations and Policies to align them with current practice.
- The amount of work that had gone into completing the Annual Monitoring Reports (AMR) – the DVC NOTED that this year's AMRs were detailed and impressive.

Members also RECEIVED and NOTED the final ToRs for the Academic Enhancement Committee.

12.2 People and Inclusion Committee

Senate NOTED that a meeting of the People and Inclusion Committee had not been held since the last meeting on 6 June 2023.

It was NOTED that the next scheduled meeting was on 6 February 2024.

12.3 Access and Participation Committee held on 22 June 2023

Senate RECEIVED and NOTED the minutes from the Access and Participation Committee meeting held on 22 June 2023.

It was NOTED that the next scheduled meeting was on 7 December 2023.

13. Any Other Business

13.1 To Note the Call for Honorary Doctorate and Fellowship Awards – for Graduation 2024

The Chair INFORMED members the call for recommendations for Honorary Doctorates and Fellowships Awards for 2023/24 had been announced with the deadline for nominations on 5 January 2024.

13.2 Farewell to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs), Professor Scott Fleming

The Chair gave thanks to Professor Scott Fleming for all his work and support he has given to BGU over his five years' service, since joining BGU in 2018.

The Chair, on behalf of Senate and the University community, thanked Professor Scott Fleming and expressed our immense debt of gratitude for his service and wished him a healthy and happy semi-retirement.

14. Suggested Agenda Items for Next Meeting

14.1 The following agenda items were SUGGESTED for the next Senate meeting:

- Research Regulations and University of Leicester partnership update.
- Update on Access and Participation.
- ITE Portfolio Committee Report Update.

15. Dates of Next Meeting

- 15.1
- Wednesday 20 March 2024

The Chair gave thanks to Senate for their attendance and discussion and wished members a very relaxing Christmas break.

Signed by the Chair:



Professor Karen Stanton

Date

