



SENATE

MINUTES AND ACTIONS – APPROVED BY SENATE

11 March 2026 - 14:00-17:00 – Microsoft Teams

NB text in BLACK is for publication; text in BLUE has been redacted for publication.

CONTENTS

1. CHAIR’S WELCOME, INTRODUCTION AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
2. MINUTES FROM THE MEETING OF 5 November 2025 (SEN/36/25-26)
3. SENATE ACTION LOG 2025-26 (SEN/37/25-26)
4. SENATE BUSINESS SCHEDULE 2025-26 (SEN/38/25-26)
5. CHAIR’S BUSINESS AND MATTERS ARISING
 - 5.1. NOTIFICATION OF HEALTH, WELLBEING AND SUPPORT FOR STUDY PROCEDURES LEVEL 3 OUTCOME
 - 5.2. REQUEST FOR ACCESS TO FACULTY EDUCATION AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE (FESEC) MINUTES AND PAPERS
 - 5.3. UPDATE ON SENATE ELECTIONS
 - 5.4. UPDATE ON SENATE SUB-COMMITTEE REPRESENTATION
6. PRESIDENT AND VICE-CHANCELLOR’S REPORT (SEN/39/25-26)
7. DEAN FOR TAUGHT STUDENTS AND DEAN OF POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH REPORTS
 - 7.1. DEAN OF POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH AND THE EXETER DOCTORAL COLLEGE’S REPORT (SEN/40/25-26)
 - 7.2. DEAN FOR TAUGHT STUDENTS REPORT (SEN/41/25-26)
8. STUDENT SABBATICAL OFFICERS UPDATES (SEN/42/25-26 AND SEN/43/25-26)
9. ADMISSIONS UPDATE: STAGE 2 (LATE ACQUISITION AND EARLY CONVERSION) (SEN/44/25-26)
10. CURRICULUM FOR CHANGE TERMLY UPDATE (SEN/45/25-26)
11. TEACHING EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK (TEF) AND OFS FUTURE APPROACH TO QUALITY (SEN/46/25-26)
12. TAUGHT DEGREE CLASSIFICATIONS REPORT 2024/25 (SEN/47/25-26)
13. OFS BACHELOR’S DEGREE CLASSIFICATIONS ALGORITHMS (SEN/48/25-26)
14. POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH EXPERIENCE SURVEY (PRES) (SEN/49/25-26)
15. TNE STRATEGY, PROJECTS AND PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT (SEN/50/25-26)
16. TNE ACADEMIC ASSURANCE (SEN/51/25-26)
17. FINAL RESEARCH AND INNOVATION STRATEGY (2026-2031) (SEN/52/25-26)
18. REF PROGRESS REPORT (SEN/53/25-26)
19. REF 2029 CODE OF PRACTICE (POST CONSULTATION) (SEN/54/25-26)
20. ITEMS BROUGHT FORWARD FROM PART II (SEN/55/25-26)
21. CHAIR’S CLOSING REMARKS

ATTENDEES *(listed according to the membership as detailed in [Ordinance 20](#))*

- a) **Chair: Professor Lisa Roberts, President & Vice-Chancellor**
- b) Professor Dan Charman, Senior Vice-President and Provost
- c) Professor Liz Jones, Vice-President & Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Education and Student Experience
Professor Rajani Naidoo, Vice-President & Deputy Vice-Chancellor, People and Culture
Professor Krasimira Tsaneva-Atanasova, Vice-President & Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research and Impact
Professor Richard Follett, Vice-President & Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Global Engagement
Professor Martin Siegert, Vice-President & Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Cornwall

- Stuart Brocklehurst, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Business Engagement and Innovation
- d) Professor Beverley Hawkins, Dean for Taught Students
 - e) Professor Alex Gerbasi (ESE)
 - f) Professor Dave Hosken (ESE)
 - Professor Konstantinos Chalvatzis (ESE)
 - Professor Duncan Russel (HASS)
 - Professor Richard Holland (HLS)
 - g) Clare Wydell, Divisional Director of Education and Academic Services
 - h) Professor Loukas Balafoutas (ESE)
 - Professor Nicola Thomas (ESE)
 - Professor Francesca Palombo (ESE)
 - Professor Ion Sucala (ESE)
 - Professor Fiona Cox (HASS)
 - Professor Harry Pitts (HASS)
 - Professor Lindsay Hetherington (HASS)
 - Professor Naomi Sykes (HASS)
 - Professor Rebecca Langlands (HASS)
 - Professor Karen Knapp (HLS)
 - Professor Emma Pitchforth (HLS)
 - Professor Jon Brown (HLS)
 - Professor Mark Wilson (HLS)
 - i) Professor Barrie Cooper (ESE)
 - Dr Sarah Hodge (ESE)
 - Professor Tim Naylor (ESE)
 - Dr Edvard Glucksman (ESE)
 - Professor Alison Truelove (ESE)
 - Professor Ben Zissimos (ESE)
 - Professor Daniel Fountain (HASS)
 - Dr Alex Fairfax-Cholmley (HASS)
 - Professor Brian Rappert (HASS)
 - Professor Laura Salisbury (HASS)
 - Dr Birgul Yilmaz (HASS)
 - Professor Ruth Garside (HLS)
 - Professor Maisha Reza (HLS)
 - Dr Abby Russell (HLS)
 - Dr Hope Gangata (HLS)
 - Professor Katie Lunnon (HLS)
 - Dr Genevieve Williams (HLS)
 - Dr Dominic Wiredu-Boakye (HLS)
 - j) Mike Shore-Nye, Senior Vice President and Registrar & Secretary
 - k) Caroline Chipperfield, Academic Director, INTO
 - l) Sebastian Racisz, President Students' Guild, Exeter
 - Francis Steptoe, Education Officer, Students' Guild, Exeter
 - Gemma Veal, Societies and Employability Officer, Students' Guild, Exeter
 - Rose Arhin, Communities and Equality Office, Students' Guild, Exeter
 - m) Izzy Brinkley, President, Falmouth and Exeter Students' Union

IN ATTENDANCE:

Dr Jeremy Diaper	Director of Governance Services
Sarah Hicks	Deputy Head of Governance Services (minutes)
Roscoe Hastings	Director of Teaching Excellence and Enhancement (<i>items 11-16</i>)
Andy Jones	Assistant Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research Quality and Impact (<i>items 18-19</i>)

APOLOGIES:

Avery Bailey, Vice-President, Falmouth and Exeter Students' Union Professor Ioanna Kapantai (HLS)
 Alison Chambers, CEO, Students' Guild
 Professor Mat Collins (ESE)
 Professor Ivana Gudelj (HLS)
 Dr Raphaelle Haywood (ESE)
 Professor Stacey Hynd, Dean for Postgraduate Research and the Doctoral College
 Professor Sallie Lamb (HLS)
 Professor Jane Milling (HASS)
 Professor Fabrizio Nevola (HASS)
 Professor Christine Parkin-Hughes (ESE)
 Professor Stefano Pascucci (ESE)
 Professor Sue Prince (HASS)
 Imelda Rogers, Deputy Registrar and Executive Divisional Director of Human Resources
 Professor Joanne Smith (HLS)
 Dave Stacey, Chief Financial Officer
 Professor Gareth Stansfield (HASS)
 Professor Anni Vanhatalo (HLS)
 Professor Adam Watt (HASS)

ACTIONS

MINUTE	ACTION	LEAD
8.3.2	AGREED: To evaluate the impact of bystander training for society committees following introduction of the training during the summer term 2026.	Mike Shore-Nye / Liz Jones
9.9.7	AGREED: To enhance the format of future admissions reports to show trend data for Departmental admissions over multiple years to enable clearer oversight of emerging trends and opportunities in relation to student demand.	Richard Follett
13.4	AGREED: To conduct a review of the University's 'borderline zone' and 'preponderance rules' in light of the OfS Report on Bachelor's Degree Classifications Algorithms.	Liz Jones
14.4.5	AGREED: To schedule a Senate Deep Dive on PRES / PTES in the academic year 2026-27.	Liz Jones / Krasimira Tsaneva-Atanasova

16.6	AGREED: To review and consider the approach for offshore students representation and membership of the Students' Guild or Students' Union.	Richard Follett
16.6	AGREED: To consider further opportunities for student engagement as TNE projects progressed.	Richard Follett

DECISIONS

MINUTE	DECISION	PAPER
2.1	APPROVED the minutes of the meeting held on 5 November 2025.	SEN/36/25-26
10.3.3	ENDORSED: The Curriculum for Change termly update for onward consideration by Academic Governance, Education and Student Experience Committee (26 March 2026) and Council (30 April 2026, part II).	SEN/45/25-26
11.8	ENDORSED: The TEF Update and OfS Future Approach to Quality paper for onward consideration by Academic Governance, Education and Student Experience Committee (26 March 2026) and Council (30 April 2026).	SEN/46/25-26
12.5.3	ENDORSED: The Taught Degree Classifications Report 2024-25 for onward consideration by Academic Governance, Education and Student Experience Committee (26 March 2026) and Council (30 April 2026, Part II).	SEN/47/25-26
13.4	ENDORSED: The OfS Bachelors' Degree Classifications Algorithms report, overview paper and proposal for onward consideration by Academic Governance, Education and Student Experience Committee (26 March 2026) and approval by Council (30 April 2026, Part II) in accordance with the stated timeline.	SEN/48/25-26
14.4.5	ENDORSED: The Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) for onward consideration by Academic Governance, Education and Student Experience Committee (26 March 2026) and Council (30 April 2026).	SEN/49/25-26

16.6	ENDORSED: The TNE Academic Assurance paper for onward consideration by Academic Governance, Education and Student Experience Committee (26 March 2026) and Council (30 April 2026).	SEN/51/25-26
17.7	ENDORSED: The Research and Innovation Strategy (2026-2031) for onward consideration by Research and Innovation Committee (10 April 2026) and Council (30 April 2026).	SEN/52/25-26
18.5	ENDORSED: The REF 2029 Update for onward consideration by Research and Innovation Committee (10 April 2026) and Council (30 April 2026).	SEN/53/25-26
19.5	APPROVED: The REF 2029 Code of Practice for submission to Research England.	SEN/54/25-26

1. Chair's Welcome, Introduction and Declarations of Interest

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed Senators to the second meeting of Senate for the academic year 2025-26 and noted the apologies received in advance of the meeting.
- 1.2 The Chair invited any declarations of interest. There were no new declarations of interest in relation to the agenda items.

2. Minutes from the meeting of 5 November 2025 (SEN/36/25-26 Confidential)

- 2.1 Senate **APPROVED** the minutes of the meeting held on 5 November 2025.

3. Senate Action Log 2025/26 (SEN/37/25-26 Strictly Confidential)

- 3.1 Senate noted the action log for the 2025-26 academic year, which had been updated to include actions from the previous meeting in November 2025. It was noted that the outstanding actions from the previous meetings of Senate were either completed or in progress.

4. Senate Business Schedule 2025-26 (SEN/38/25-26 Strictly Confidential)

- 4.1 Senate noted the business schedule for the 2025-26 academic year which was provided for information.

5. Chair's Business and Matters Arising

a) Notification of Health, Wellbeing and Support for Study Procedures Level 3 Outcome

Closed Minute – Strictly Confidential

b) Request for access to Faculty Education and Student Experience Committee (FESEC) minutes and papers

- 5.1 Senate was notified that a request for access to the papers, minutes, presentations and associated materials for Faculty Education and Student Experience Committees (FESECs) had been received from a Senate member outside of the meeting. It was affirmed that Senate members had been advised in June 2025 they could be provided with access to Education Board papers (as a formally constituted Senate sub-committee) via the dedicated SharePoint site in line with standard governance practice across the sector. A meeting had been scheduled between the Senior Vice-President and Provost and Senior Vice-

President and Registrar & Secretary with the Senate member that initiated the request to discuss the request in further detail.

c) Update on Senate elections

- 5.2 The Senior Vice-President and Registrar & Secretary provided an update on the forthcoming Senate elections. The election to find four elected members from each Faculty would be launched on 16 March 2026. The new members would each serve four-year terms from August 2026 until July 2030. Key dates in the election process were provided, including nominations opening on 16 March 2026 and closing on 27 March 2026. Voting for nominated candidates would open on 31 March 2026 and close on 28 April 2026.
- 5.3 The election would be run in accordance with the University of Exeter's Procedural Guidelines for Elections to Council and Senate as previously endorsed by Senate (13 March 2024) and approved by Council (18 April 2024).
- 5.4 It was reaffirmed that the University encouraged nominations from Senators from all backgrounds and communities to ensure a continued commitment to create a diverse and inclusive culture within senior governance committees.
- 5.5 Two current Senate Council representatives (Dr Sarah Hodge and Professor Maisha Reiza) would run for re-election on Senate to provide them with an opportunity to complete their full term of office as Senate Council Representatives.
- 5.6 In addition to Faculty elections, a Senate Council member election would also be held to replace Professor Karen Knapp, whose three-year term of office on Council would conclude on 31st July 2026. The successful Senate-elected Council member would commence a three year-term of office from 1st August 2026. Key dates for the election process were provided, including: nominations opening on 4 May 2026 and closing on 13 May 2026. Voting for nominated candidates would open on 15 May 2026 and close on 26 May 2026.

d) Update on Senate sub-committee representation

- 5.7 Thanks were extended to Senate members that had put themselves forward as representative members on Senate sub-committees. Expressions of interest were invited for forthcoming vacancies on Education Board and PGR Board for 2026-27. It was anticipated that membership would be confirmed at the June 2026 Senate meeting to enable newly appointed members to attend the first meeting of the new academic year in the autumn term.
- 5.8 It was noted that a new representative may be required to Chair the External Examiner Task and Finish Group to replace Dr Sarah Hodge from September 2026.

[Secretary's note: Following the meeting, it was confirmed that the Task and Finish Group was expected to complete its work during the summer term and therefore a replacement representative would no longer be required.]

- 5.9 It was noted that a vacancy for a Senate member remained on the Health and Safety Committee. Senate members were reminded they could offer an invaluable cross-institutional perspective, and engagement from a Senate member would be warmly welcomed. Senate members were encouraged to contact the Senior Vice-President and Registrar & Secretary or Governance Services for further information ahead of the final Committee meeting of the academic year scheduled for 18 June 2026.

6. President and Vice-Chancellor's Report (SEN/39/25-26 Confidential)

- 6.1 The Chair presented the report from the President & Vice-Chancellor, Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellors, including further updates from across the University and wider Higher Education sector.
- 6.2 The Chair drew attention to several recent updates that had been published since the written report had been circulated:
 - 6.2.1 The government had launched its new social cohesion plan on 10 March 2026. This included a dedicated higher education section that promised 'stronger protections' against extremism on campus.
 - 6.2.2 The OfS was set to become a recognised whistleblowing body for staff. This covered Prevent compliance, new guidance on external speakers and events, and a 'Campus Cohesion Charter' that would be co-designed with students'.
 - 6.2.3 The DfE would be able to use powers within Section 30 of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 to enforce action on universities that had failed in their Prevent duty. This was an enforcement route that bypassed OfS and had not previously been used within the sector.
 - 6.2.4 The OfS had published its intention to develop a statement of expectations that related to student disability. It would include expectations that relate to mental health as a disability. OfS had indicated that it wished to see faster and more consistent improvements to ensure all disabled students had a positive experience of higher education. A plan had been set out to work in collaboration with the sector on these expectations and more information was anticipated in the coming months.
 - 6.2.5 The Home Office had announced student visas for nationals of Afghanistan, Cameroon, Myanmar and Sudan would be suspended as these presented some of the highest proportions of asylum claims to visas issued. Asylum applications by students from these countries had grown by over 470% between 2021 and 2025. The 'emergency brake' on visas would come into effect on 26 March 2026 and apply to new visas made outside of the UK. It would be reviewed after 18 months with a plan to look at the impact on student numbers and tuition fees. Further bans may be possible in the future.
- 6.3 UKRI had released modelling of how its budget for the current financial year mapped across to the new 'bucket' allocations method in future years. UKRI had sought to provide reassurance that curiosity-driven research would be protected overall. The modelling provided an indicative illustration of how 2025-26 funding lines translated into the new framework. It had, however, not been possible to map new allocations to previous allocations and as a result it had proved difficult to fully understand the implications.
- 6.4 Senate was advised that UKRI funding had been divided across 4 buckets, this covered both competitive funding and institutional block grants. UKRI investment was planned as: Block 1 (curiosity driven research) £14.5bn, Bucket 2 (strategic government and societal priorities) £8.3bn, Bucket 3 (supporting innovative companies) £7.4bn, and Bucket 4 (enabling and strengthening UK R&D) £8.4bn. Buckets 2 and 3 would focus on the Industrial Strategy and UKRI wider priorities. Spending on curiosity-driven research at UKRI would remain flat from 2026-2030, effectively resulting in a real-terms decrease over time.

Closed Minute - Confidential

- 6.5 Senate noted an additional announcement had been made in connection to the restructure of capital funding (primarily bucket 4) that impacted on Research Capital Investment Fund (RCIF) allocations. It would mean that from 2026-27 RCIF would only be provided to sustain current facilities. More specific

details had not yet been made available.

- 6.6 In response to a comment on the potential impact of changes to RCIF allocations, Senate was advised that the University awaited additional information. It was expected that funding would be reduced by £50m by 2029-30 and that institutions would be expected to place an even greater emphasis on collaboration to maximise funding available. Further discussion and consideration by the GW4 Alliance was expected.

7. Education and PGR Board Reports (SEN/40/25-26 Open) and (SEN/41/25-26 Open)

- 7.1 Following circulation of written reports in advance of the meeting, the Dean for Taught Students and the Dean for Postgraduate Research and the Doctoral College provided brief updates on the latest issues from their respective areas.
- 7.2 In the absence of the Dean for Postgraduate Research and the Doctoral College, a brief summary was provided in the meeting chat on their behalf. The following points were noted:

Closed Minute - Confidential

- 7.2.1 For PGRs with disability and chronic illness, the Task and Finish Group final report had identified key areas for improvement around accessibility of support, supervision, ILPs and research culture. Areas identified for improvement had been incorporated into the Doctoral College Action Plan for 2025-26 and 2026-27 alongside International PGR Task and Finish Group recommendations. This had also considered work around Disabled Student Commitment and the University Mental Health Charter mark;
- 7.2.2 The new Doctoral College Policy PGR Interns projects included: International PGR Wellbeing, Penryn PGR Research Community, AI in PGR Research, Continuations and Extensions Policies. It was noted the Interns had undertaken fantastic work that foregrounded PGR needs and perspectives.
- 7.3 The Dean for Taught Students provided the following verbal update:
- 7.3.1 Early feedback on the updated Feedback Turnaround Policy introduced in 2025-26 had been constructive. A review of the changes would be considered by Education Board in April 2026, and a full review of the policy would take place over summer 2026. This would assess its effects on its effects on timeliness, student engagement with marks and feedback, and both staff and student wellbeing;
- 7.3.2 Work had continued on the strategic and responsible use of AI in education through the AI in Assessment Working Group, Education Board and the Learning Futures Steering Group. Recent progress since the previous meeting of Senate in November 2025, included: pilots of personalised learning tools, and the development of draft guidance to support consistent, ethical and transparent use of AI-assisted marking and feedback tools.

8. Student President Reports (SEN/42/25-26 Open) and (SEN/43/25-26 Open)

- 8.1 The President of the Exeter Students' Guild presented their report to Senate and highlighted the following points:
- 8.1.1 The What Matters Most (Annual Priorities) Survey had produced valuable feedback that had been used to inform future Guild projects and provide student leaders with data to enable them to advocate for their communities.
- 8.1.2 Bystander training would become mandatory training for all society committees in recognition that safety continued to be one of the largest issues faced by the student community.

- 8.1.3 The latest Data insights demonstrated that student opinion on AI varied greatly despite high AI usage by students. A Student Assembly had been arranged for 13 March 2026 which would provide the opportunity for students to examine and inform AI work in the future.
- 8.1.4 A gap had been identified in the offer for careers in creative industries and the graduate outcomes data had shown a drop in confidence for creative students. There would be a Creative Industries week in Autumn 2026 to address this.
- 8.1.5 As an extension of engagement with the Curriculum for Change programme, work continued with the skills and employability workstreams to ensure student needs would be effectively represented.
- 8.1.6 2 new officers had been elected to the Officer Team following the recent Guild leadership elections, including: Mia Taylor-Seal (Education and Employability Officer) and Edie Ruston (Student Life and Communities Officer).
- 8.1.7 Academic representation and student voice work continued, with the aim of students being a strategic partner in every University department.
- 8.2 The Exeter President of the Falmouth and Exeter Students' Union (SU) drew attention to the following points in their report:
- 8.2.1 The SU had continued to monitor the situation since Go Cornwall had taken over bus routes following the withdrawal of First Bus in February 2026. Concern remained that some students had experienced difficulty with the frequency of buses alongside ticket pricing. Commuter students had been particularly affected, and the Students' Union Sabbatical Officers had met with local MPs to raise these concerns.
- 8.2.2 Multiple LGBTQ+ events had been hosted to celebrate LGBTQ+ History Month in February 2026. Student accounts of discrimination and transphobia within the local community had also been discussed with MPs with the aim to create actively inclusive policies and business practices within the local community.
- 8.2.3 The Exeter President of the Falmouth and Exeter Students' Union had filmed a video with the Vice-President & Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience) in support of continued engagement on Curriculum for Change.
- 8.2.4 A Student Representative Town Hall focused on Gen AI would take place during the week commencing 16 March 2026.
- 8.2.5 With reference to the report provided at the previous Senate meeting in November 2025, it was noted that 37% of students that had sought advice from the Students' Union were University of Exeter Cornwall campus students, a figure that was in proportion to the ratio of Exeter students on campus. This had equated to 117 cases overall, the majority of which had been complex cases, often related to student fees or student finance. The SU's Advice Service, which delivered free, confidential, impartial advice, was noted as critical to maintaining student engagement. In addition, it was noted there could be further opportunity to ensure clarity in relation to the mitigation and appeals process which had also been a subject that students had sought advice on.
- 8.2.6 A new President Exeter (Toby Hawkins) had been elected for the 2026-27 academic year. There had been a 21% turnout in the recent Sabbatical Officer Team elections, which was higher than in recent years.
- 8.3 Senate members raised the following comments:
- 8.3.1 It was noted that concerns related to commuting were often raised during open days, particularly across the PGT community, and other universities had implemented timetable restrictions to support commuter students. Senate members welcomed the focus in this area and noted it was an increasingly important

issue as recent reports had indicated an increase in the number of students that had opted to live at home and commute in response to the ongoing cost of living crisis. Further work would be required with local bus companies and timetabling teams to continue to advocate for change. It was noted that further work could also include a review of commuter-friendly spaces on campus.

- 8.3.2 That it was positive to see the introduction of bystander training for societies from the summer term onwards. It was noted that impact of the training would be useful to evaluate.

AGREED: To evaluate the impact of bystander training for society committees following introduction of the training during the summer term 2026.

9. Admissions Update: Stage 2 (Late Acquisition and Early Conversion) (SEN/44/25-26 Confidential)

- 9.1 Senate was provided with an update on the latest admissions data available.

Closed Minute - Confidential

AGREED: To enhance the format of future admissions reports to show trend data for Departmental admissions over multiple years to enable clearer oversight of emerging trends and opportunities in relation to student demand.

10. Curriculum for Change Termly Update (SEN/45/25-26 Strictly Confidential)

- 10.1 Senate noted that Curriculum for Change (C4C) was an institution-wide transformation programme designed to deliver a distinctive, sustainable and cohesive curriculum that would ensure that Exeter remained at the forefront of an innovative, inclusive and future-focused education and produce high-skilled and resilient graduates Progress had been made against all workstreams of C4C during Term 2 of the 2025-26 academic year.
- 10.2 The Vice-President & Deputy Vice-Chancellor(Education and Student Experience) extended thanks to all Senators for their involvement in the impressive progress that had been made to date. The following points were highlighted:
- 10.2.1 Since the previous Termly report in November 2025, academic departments and Faculties had made significant progress in the redesign of their programme to embed C4C principles.
- 10.2.2 Following feedback on changes to the academic year, it had been agreed that a phased approach would be adopted, with changes to the academic year structure planned to be introduced in 2028-29. This approach would ensure the changes would be manageable alongside other workstreams.
- 10.2.3 8 minors (Future Skills Pathways) had been approved and online module selection would launch in March 2026. A launch event had been arranged to take place in The Forum on 18 March 2026. Senate noted that the Future Skills Pathways offered an opportunity for students to personalise their degree.
- 10.2.4 The Skills to Thrive framework (previously referred to as Exeter Skills Framework) had proved popular and a new capability to be launched in 2026-27 would enable students to map 'Skills to Thrive' throughout their portfolios.
- 10.2.5 Belonging and transition pilots had been delivered in 7 departments and feedback from the pilots would be integrated into the development of resources on belonging and transition.
- 10.3 A Senate member raised the following points:
- 10.3.1 Feedback collated from successful pilots of the Minors (Future Skills Pathways) had been incorporated

into the presentations shared on offer holder days. Positive feedback had been received from prospective students and parents at a recent offer holder day and the benefit that Future Skills Pathways could bring to enhancing employability had been clearly recognised.

10.3.2 A number of colleagues had also recognised the benefit surrounding the Future Skills Pathways and gained confidence in the opportunities created as a result of the positive engagement by prospective students and parents.

10.3.3 Senate was encouraged to use offer holder days and open days as an opportunity to actively promote the benefits of the Future Skills Pathways for prospective students.

ENDORSED: The Curriculum for Change termly update for onward consideration by Academic Governance, Education and Student Experience Committee (26 March 2026) and Council (30 April 2026, part II).

11. Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) Update and OfS Future Approach to Quality (SEN/46/25-26 Open)

The Chair invited Roscoe Hastings (Director of Teaching Excellence and Student Experience) to the meeting. The Chair also noted that from June 2026 he would be invited to attend all Senate meetings moving forward as a standing attendee

11.1 Senate was provided with an overview of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) Update and the OfS future approach to quality.

11.2 It was noted that the OfS had proposed changes to the way the quality of higher education was regulated and assessed. The aim of the revised approach was to reduce burden on the sector with the introduction of an integrated quality framework. The consultation had launched in Autumn 2025 and it was anticipated the outcome would be published in May-June 2026 with a further technical consultation planned for Autumn 2026.

11.3 The aim of the revised approach was to reduce burden on the sector with the introduction of an integrated quality framework. TEF was expected to continue to rate two core aspects of an institution's performance: Student Experience and Student Outcomes. It was also anticipated that TEF would give one overall rating for an institution, but the OfS had proposed capping the overall rating at the lower of the two aspect ratings which was a significant change from the 'best fit' model previously used in 2030 and had elicited strong sector-wide concern.

11.4 TEF would change to a cyclical approach with rolling assessment for all providers. It was anticipated that medal ratings, Gold, Silver and Bronze would be retained, with student experience and student outcome ratings being published.

11.5 OfS had indicated that Post Graduate Taught and Transnational Education (TNE) would be included in future frameworks, but would not be included in the next TEF cycle which was anticipated between 2027-28 and 2029-30.

Closed Minute - Confidential

11.6 Senate was reminded to encourage students to complete the PTES survey. The survey had previously received low response rates and there would be benefit in a higher response rate that would improve the quality of the data.

ENDORSED: The TEF Update and OfS Future Approach to Quality paper for onward consideration by Academic Governance, Education and Student Experience Committee (26 March 2026) and Council (30 April 2026).

12. Taught Degree Classifications Report 2024-25 (SEN/47/25-26 Open)

- 12.1 Senate was provided with an overview of the Taught Degree Classifications Report for 2024-25. Senate members were thanked for their attendance at the recent Deep Dive on Awarding Gaps that had taken place on 4 February 2026 which had resulted in constructive conversations and discussions.
- 12.2 Senate noted the Taught Degree Classifications Report provided assurance for Senate on the OfS B Conditions of Registration.
- 12.3 Data demonstrated the award of first-class undergraduate degrees had increased by 1% between 2023-24 and 2024-25. This brought the proportion of first-class degrees awarded to 31%, in line with the 2018-19 pre-COVID-19 pandemic level which was also 31%.
- 12.4 There had been no change in the award of distinctions at postgraduate taught level between 2023-24 and 2024-25.
- 12.5 The following comments were raised in discussion:
 - 12.5.1 It was noted the data demonstrated an increased gap in the award of undergraduate first-class degrees between international and UK-domiciled students. The awarding gap had widened between 2023-24 and 2024-25 from 14 percentage points to 18 percentage points. It was affirmed that discussions had taken place with students in relation to their specific experiences and expectations, and further work had been undertaken to demystify variance in assessment awarding gaps for students from diverse backgrounds. It was anticipated this would enable further data insight at departmental level and enable further analysis of institutional trends.
 - 12.5.2 Senate members were encouraged to access the awarding gap data available on the MI Hub. It was acknowledged that not all departmental level data was available widely to all colleagues at this stage, however, a project was underway to ensure increased access to relevant education data.
 - 12.5.3 In response to a question from a student representative about how the actions from the Deep Dive would be followed up, Senate was assured a copy of the Padlet had been shared with all Senate members as part of the meeting pack. Further assurance was provided that actions captured in the Padlet had been reviewed and would be triangulated with relevant colleagues across departments. In addition, work was underway to ensure actions had been incorporated into the Success for All Strategy workstream and through Teaching Excellence Monitoring (TEMS) meetings.

ENDORSED: The Taught Degree Classifications Report 2024-25 for onward consideration by Academic Governance, Education and Student Experience Committee (26 March 2026) and Council (30 April 2026, Part II).

13. OfS Bachelors' Degree Classifications Algorithms (SEN/48/25-26 Open)

- 13.1 Senate was provided with an overview of the OfS Bachelors' Degree Classifications Algorithms Report that provided a response to the OfS Report on Bachelors' Degree Classifications Algorithms published on 6 November 2025. The purpose of the OfS report had been to help providers recognise and manage areas of risk related to Bachelors' degree classification algorithms.
- 13.2 Senate was assured the University's Bachelors' degree classification algorithm had not employed the design highlighted within the OfS report. However, it was noted that a review of the University's 'borderline zone' and 'preponderance rules' would be advisable.
- 13.3 Senate welcomed the review of the University's 'borderline zone' and 'preponderance rules'.

- 13.4 Senate was advised that the University's approach to exit awards and provision of alternative qualifications granted to students that leave a degree programme before completion of the full course (for example, when an integrated masters student leaves with an undergraduate honours degree) was consistent with OfS expectations. It was nevertheless affirmed that a further check would be undertaken to provide academic assurance.

[Secretary's note: As detailed in the report, further assurance was subsequently provided offline by the Director of Teaching Excellence and Student Experience that the current institutional approach to exit awards and provision of alternative qualifications was consistent with OfS expectations and that Senate could be confident that the University's approach was compliant.]

AGREED: To conduct a review of the University's 'borderline zone' and 'preponderance rules' in light of the OfS Report on Bachelor's Degree Classifications Algorithms.

ENDORSED: The OfS Bachelor's Degree Classifications Algorithms report, overview paper and proposal for onward consideration by Academic Governance, Education and Student Experience Committee (26 March 2026) and approval by Council (30 April 2026, Part II) in accordance with the stated timeline.

14. Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) 2025 (SEN/49/25-26 Open)

- 14.1 Senate was provided with a summary of the results of the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) 2025. Senate welcomed this first assurance report on PRES outcomes.
- 14.2 It was noted that Exeter's response rate had increased from 53% to 58% and was higher than the average Russell Group response rate of 31%. Exeter's response rate was the highest response rate recorded by Advance HE across the sector and provided assurance that the outcomes were a reliable representation of views across different University cohorts.
- 14.3 The survey highlighted two areas of focus: i) campus resources, and ii) progress and assessment where satisfaction scores had been recorded slightly lower than the sector average.
- 14.4 The following points were noted in discussion:
- 14.4.1 That satisfaction scores for research culture (65.1%) and community (63.3%) were lower than other satisfaction scores. Senate was assured that satisfaction scores for both of these areas had improved significantly since the previous survey in which scores had been markedly lower. As a result of improvements in satisfaction, Exeter was now ranked in the top quartile for research culture and above average for community. Further improvements were expected as a result of planned and implemented actions;
- 14.4.2 A Research Culture Forum was in the process of being established and work was underway to look at early Career Researcher support to further enhance research culture and community;
- 14.4.3 One further idea that had been considered was the introduction of a Postgraduate Research Festival, which was a popular event utilised across other institutions in the sector;
- 14.4.4 Individual departments had introduced a range of innovative practice to develop research culture and a sense of community, however there had been limited opportunity to broaden the impact of this work across the institution to foster the sense of belonging, and this was a current area of focus for development;
- 14.4.5 It was noted this was the first assurance report to Senate on PRES and it was agreed it would be beneficial for an additional Senate deep dive to be held on PRES and PTES.

AGREED: To schedule a Senate Deep Dive on PRES / PTES in the academic year 2026-27.

ENDORSED: The Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) for onward consideration by Academic Governance, Education and Student Experience Committee (26 March 2026) and Council (30 April 2026).

15. TNE Strategy, Projects and Programme Development (SEN/50/25-26 Strictly Confidential)

15.1 Senate received an update on the University's TNE portfolio in line with the TNE strategy approved by Council in October 2025 to establish 3-5 Tier 1 (large-scale institutional) TNE projects and 3 Tier 2 (mid-scale Faculty-driven) projects by 2030. Senate noted that University colleagues had worked at pace on TNE projects over the previous 18-24 months and projects were on track to contribute to the ambitious strategic approach to TNE that would allow Exeter to make a rapid step-change in provision.

Closed Minute – Strictly Confidential

15.1.1 Senate was assured that lessons had been learned as each project progressed and the lessons learned had been used to further enhance the approach for other TNE projects.

16. TNE Academic Assurance (SEN/51/25-26 Open)

16.1 Senate received an update on the current regulatory environment in which the University operated alongside the management of risks associated with TNE.

16.2 Senate noted that the updated provided academic assurance in relation to TNE projects and that Education Board had approved a set of baseline principles that would be adopted. Education Board had approved a set of joint Regulations for ZJUT which was due to launch in September 2026. Thanks were extended to colleagues within the Education Policy Team for their support in the development of the institutional approach to the management of quality and standards in an international context.

16.3 Assurance was provided that Education Board would retain close oversight as TNE projects progressed.

16.4 The following was noted in discussion:

16.4.1 Detailed consideration would be given to the governance arrangements for each TNE project and the reports that Senate would receive. This would take into consideration, terms of reference, regulations, reporting requirements, including the reports that would be provided to Senate such as Student Cases reports that covered students attending offshore;

16.4.2 It was noted that TNE projects provided a unique opportunity to shape the education curriculum, learning environment and best practice overseas, and that the design of new learning spaces could help facilitate further enhancement to the student experience.

16.5 The following was noted in response to questions raised by student representatives:

16.5.1 Senate was provided with assurance that the local curriculum had been given careful consideration. Furthermore, relevant staff training and conversations with TNE partners would continue to be an important part of curriculum design and development to ensure cultural differences were carefully considered;

16.5.2 Senate was assured that module design would consider cultural differences and be mindful of specific cultural sensitivities whilst a distinctive Exeter approach would be maintained. Staff would receive the relevant training to support this approach;

- 16.5.3 There was particular excitement and enthusiasm in relation to the potential for wider cross cultural exchange across campuses and the global mobility opportunities presented;
- 16.5.4 Exeter Students' Guild and Falmouth and Exeter Students' Union representation had been included on all TNE project working groups and contributed to the approval process for the University's TNE strategy. It was acknowledged there could be opportunity for further engagement with the Students' Union and Students' Guild as TNE projects progressed;
- 16.5.5 Senate noted that Exeter's approach to TNE was to be a transnational university and all students would be considered University of Exeter students. TNE represented an exciting opportunity for students (and staff) in relation to learning, mobility and cultural development;
- 16.5.6 It was recognised that in a number of universities in China, whilst there was not an equivalent of a Guild of Students, there would be other mechanisms to provide advice and support. Further consideration would be given to whether students attending offshore would be part of the Exeter Students' Guild due to the variance in international practice.
- 16.6 It was affirmed that the government focus in the new international strategy encouraged TNE in place of international recruitment to the UK.

AGREED: To review and consider the approach for offshore students representation and membership of the Students' Guild or Students' Union.

AGREED: To consider further opportunities for student engagement as TNE projects progressed.

ENDORSED: The TNE Academic Assurance paper for onward consideration by Academic Governance, Education and Student Experience Committee (26 March 2026) and Council (30 April 2026).

The Chair thanked Roscoe Hastings (Director of Teaching Excellence and Student Experience) for their contribution and invited them to leave the meeting.

17. Final Research and Innovation Strategy (2026-2031) (SEN/52/25-26 Confidential)

- 17.1 Senate received the final draft of the Research and Innovation Strategy that incorporated feedback received from the University community and senior governance committees.
- 17.2 In response to rapid changes in the external and funding landscape the Strategy had been designed to offer a targeted approach that emphasised areas of established and emerging excellence aligned with national priorities.
- 17.3 Contributions from Research Services and Exeter Innovation colleagues were acknowledged and it was noted that the final version of the Research and Innovation Strategy had been a result of extensive collaboration from colleagues across the University community.
- 17.4 The Research and Innovation Strategy was underpinned by three core strategic priorities: Research Quality, Financial Sustainability, and Influence and Reputation. It had been designed to provide stability and agility at a time when significant change in funding practice was expected.
- 17.5 Senate was referred to the KPIs detailed in Appendix 1 (SEN/52/25-26). It was further noted that the Research and Innovation Strategy had been designed to support performance in REF and enhance QS world rankings through a focus on academic reputation and increased citations.
- 17.6 Senate noted that the portfolio of activity must be balanced and cost recovery was an important

consideration.

- 17.7 Colleagues were commended for the hard work and extensive consultation and engagement that had enabled the development and finalisation of the Research and Innovation Strategy.

ENDORSED: The Research and Innovation Strategy (2026-2031) for onward consideration by Research and Innovation Committee (10 April 2026) and Council (30 April 2026).

18. REF 2029 Progress Update (SEN/53/25-26 Confidential)

The Chair invited Andy Jones (Assistant Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research Quality and Impact) to join the meeting to introduce the REF Progress Update.

- 18.1 Senate was updated on the progress that had been undertaken in preparation for the REF 2029 submission. Preparation had commenced in 2021. REF performance would inform the allocation of Quality Related (QR) funding by the UK funding Councils and it would influence reputation of the University.
- 18.2 The update set out REF readiness against the 3 component elements of the REF 2029 assessment areas: Contribution of knowledge and understanding (55%), Engagement and impact (25%), and Strategy, people and research environment (20%).

Closed Minute - Confidential

- 18.3 Senate noted the significant work that had taken place and were reminded to nominate relevant work.
- 18.4 One Senate member congratulated the team on the extensive REF 2029 preparation work and stated that colleagues had reported the system had worked well without the sense of pressure or unease that had been experienced in previous submissions.

ENDORSED: The REF 2029 Progress Update for onward consideration by Research and Innovation Committee (10 April 2026) and Council (30 April 2026).

19. REF 2029 Code of Practice (post consultation) (SEN/54/25-26 Open)

- 19.1 Senate received an updated version of the Code of Practice for approval prior to submission to Research England. This included a summary of feedback following consultation with all staff across the University in January 2026.
- 19.2 Senate noted that universities require an approved REF 2029 Code of Practice to participate in REF 2029. The Code of Practice must cover how the University planned to uphold REF principles of robustness, transparency and equity and diversity. Feedback received from the consultation in January 2026 had been used to inform the final version of the Code of Practice.
- 19.3 Some of the feedback received reflected a lack of familiarity with the wider REF 2029 context within which the Code of Practice sits. This would be addressed through improved signposting to the Code of Practice guidance or amended wording to improve clarity. Where feedback had not directly related to the policies or processes within the Code of Practice, additional information would be added to the REF 2029 SharePoint site.
- 19.4 It was noted the Code of Practice must be submitted to Research England for approval in May 2026.

- 19.5 It was noted that completion of the Code of Practice represented a significant milestone in preparation for REF 2029.

APPROVED: The REF 2029 Code of Practice for submission to Research England.

The Chair thanked Andy Jones (Assistant Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research Quality and Impact) for their contribution and invited them to leave the meeting.

20. Items Brought Forward from Part II (SEN/55/25-26)

- 20.1 There had been no request for items to be brought forward from Part II.

21. Chair's Closing Remarks

- 21.1 The Chair thanked all Senate members for their input and engagement and noted the dates of upcoming meetings. The Joint Senate and Council meeting would be taking place on 29 April 2026 and an email invitation (including the date, time and location) would be circulated offline to Senate members following the meeting. The final Senate meeting of the academic year would take place on 17 June 2026.

Part II - Papers to Endorse

Academic Governance

Education Act 1994: Code of Practice (Falmouth and Exeter Students' Union) (SEN/56/25-26)

Constitution Review: Falmouth and Exeter Students' Union (SEN/57/25-26)

Governance

Final University Terms and Academic Calendar 2026-27 (SEN/58/25-26)

Part II - Papers to Note

Senate Election Process (SEN/59/25-26)

Senate Appeals Report (SEN/60/25-26)

Health and Safety Committee: Minutes (SEN/61/25-26)

Council Minutes: October and December 2025 (SEN/62/25-26)

Education Board: Minutes (SEN/63/25-26)

Postgraduate Research Board Minutes (SEN/64/25-26)

Awards of Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates and Conferment of Degrees in Absentia: The award lists, approved by the Vice-Chancellor on behalf of Senate, since the last meeting may be inspected by contacting Student Records.

Dates of meetings for 2025/26

29 April 2026 (Joint Senate and Council meeting)

17 June 2026