



University
of Exeter

**SENATE
MINUTES AND ACTIONS
12 MARCH 2025 - 14:00-17:00 – APPROVED BY SENATE**

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

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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 & Provost
- c) Professor Tim Quine, Vice-President & Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Education and Student Experience
Professor Richard Follett, Vice-President & Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Global Engagement
Professor Martin Siegert, Vice-President & Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Cornwall
Professor Rajani Naidoo, Vice-President & Deputy Vice-Chancellor, People and Culture
Stuart Brocklehurst, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Business Engagement and Innovation
- d) Professor Beverley Hawkins, Dean for Taught Students
Professor Stacey Hynd, Dean for Postgraduate Research and the Doctoral College
- e) Professor Alex Gerbasi (ESE)
- f) Professor Dave Hosken (ESE)
Professor Konstantinos Chalvatzis (ESE)
Professor Duncan Russel (HASS)
Professor Adam Watt (HASS)
Professor Richard Holland (HLS)
Professor Anni Vanhatalo (HLS)

- g) Clare Wydell, Divisional Director of Education and Academic Services
- h) Professor Mat Collins (ESE)
Professor Loukas Balafoutas (ESE)
Professor Nicola Thomas (ESE)
Professor Tim Harries (ESE)
Professor Ion Sucala (ESE)
Professor Fiona Cox (HASS)
Professor Jane Milling (HASS)
Professor Naomi Sykes (HASS)
Professor Rebecca Langlands (HASS)
Professor Jon Brown (HLS)
Professor James Wakefield (HLS)
Professor Joanne Smith (HLS)
Professor Karen Knapp (HLS)
Professor Clare Hulme (HLS)
Professor Mark Wilson (HLS)
- i) Professor Barrie Cooper (ESE)
Dr Sarah Hodge (ESE)
Professor Tim Naylor (ESE)
Professor Christine Parkin Hughes (ESE)
Dr Edvard Glucksman (ESE)
Dr Raphaëlle Haywood (ESE)
Professor Alison Truelove (ESE)
Professor Ben Zissimos (ESE)
Professor Daniel Fountain (HASS)
Professor David Jones (HASS)
Professor Fabrizio Nevola (HASS)
Dr Alex Fairfax-Cholmley (HASS)
Professor Brian Rappert (HASS)
Professor Laura Salisbury (HASS)
Dr Birgul Yilmaz (HASS)
Dr Maisha Reza (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) Alex Martin, President Students' Guild
Thomas Tran, Communities and Equality Officer, Students' Guild
- m) Connie Chilcott, Falmouth and Exeter Students' Union President Exeter

IN ATTENDANCE:

Totty Brobyn	Committee Secretariat Administrator (Minutes)
Dr Jeremy Diaper	Assistant Director, Governance
Imelda Rogers	Deputy Registrar and Executive Divisional Director of Human Resources
Alison Chambers	CEO, Students' Guild
Dave Stacey	Chief Financial Officer
Sarah Hicks	Deputy Head of Governance Services
Clare Wydell	Divisional Director of Education and Academic Services (<i>for item 9</i>)
Roscoe Hastings	Director of Teaching Excellence and Enhancement (<i>for item 9</i>)

Astrid Wissenburg
Anna Bawden

Director of Research (*for items 12 – 14*)

Business Manager to Vice-President & DVC Research and Impact (*for item 13*)

APOLOGIES:

Marketa Carruthers, Vice-President, Falmouth and Exeter Students' Union

Fina Day, Vice-President, Falmouth and Exeter Students' Union

Professor Ruth Garside (HLS)

Dr Ioanna Kapantai (HLS)

Professor Sallie Lamb (HLS)

Professor Stefano Pascucci (ESE)

Professor Tina Phillips (HASS)

Professor Sue Prince (HASS)

Sebastian Racisz, Education Officer, Students' Guild

Dr Abby Russell (HLS)

Professor Gareth Stansfield (HASS)

Professor Krasi Tsaneva-Atanasova

India Walton-Salmon, Societies and Employability Officer, Students' Guild

ACTIONS

MINUTE	ACTION	LEAD
3.2	To incorporate recent insights from the Exeter Students' Guild 'Survey Superheroes' report on 'AI and Data Privacy' within the forthcoming Senate Deep Dive on AI scheduled for 9 May.	Senior Vice-President and Registrar & Secretary
9.7.4	That a further deep dive session on Curriculum for Change would be held prior to the Senate meeting on 18 June to share progress across Departments and gather further feedback on the growing portfolio of C4C support resources and guidance.	VP and DVC (Education and Student Experience)
10.10	The Vice-President and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience) would review and refine the wording in recommendation B1 in relation to smoothing of assessment across the academic year.	VP and DVC (Education and Student Experience)
14.1	To reschedule the Exe Tech Strategy Update to the subsequent meeting of Senate (19 June 2025)	VP and DVC (Research and Impact)

DECISIONS

MINUTE	DECISION
2	The committee APPROVED the minutes of the meeting held on 13 November 2024.
10.10	Senate ENDORSED the Assessment and Feedback Deep Dives: Key Findings and Recommendations report to Academic Governance, Education and Student Experience Committee (27 March 2025) and Council (29 May 2025).
11.6	Senate ENDORSED the Recommendations from the Corporate Partnerships Review to Research and Innovation Committee (11 April 2025) and Council (28 May 2025).
13.7	Senate ENDORSED the paper on Research and Impact Strategy 2026-2031 Development: Formative Discussions and Input to Research and Innovation Committee (11 April 2025).

1. Chair's introduction and Declarations of Interest

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed Senators to the spring meeting of Senate 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 13 November 2024 (SEN/32/24-25)

- 2.1 The committee **APPROVED** the minutes of the meeting held on 13 November 2024 and noted that the outstanding actions from the November meeting of Senate were either completed or in progress.

3. Senate Action Log 2024-25 (SEN/33/24-25)

- 3.1 Senate noted the action log for the 2024-25 academic year, which had been updated to include actions from the previous meeting in November 2024.
- 3.2 The Communities and Equality Officer (Student's Guild) requested that recent insights from the Exeter Students' Guild 'Survey Superheroes' report on AI and Data Privacy be incorporated into the Senate Deep Dive on AI scheduled for 9 May. The Chair endorsed this proposal and emphasized the importance of including student perspectives within the upcoming session.

ACTION: To incorporate recent insights from the Exeter Students' Guild 'Survey Superheroes' report on 'AI and Data Privacy' within the forthcoming Senate Deep Dive on AI scheduled for 9 May.

4. Senate Business Schedule 2024-25 (SEN/34/24-25)

- 4.1 Senate noted the business schedule for the 2024-25 academic year which was provided for information.

5. Matters Arising

- 5.1 The Senior Vice-President and Registrar & Secretary announced the upcoming elections to find a new Senate Representative on Council to succeed Professor Sue Prince, who would be standing down at the

end of the 2024/25 academic year. The nominations window would open on 17 March and close on 4 April, with the voting window then opening from 9 April to 25 April. The elections 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);

- 5.2 It was affirmed that the University remained committed to equality, diversity and inclusion through the nominations process. Nominations from Senators from all backgrounds and communities were actively encouraged to enable this continued commitment to creating a diverse and inclusive culture within senior committees;
- 5.3 The Senior Vice-President and Registrar & Secretary extended thanks to all Senators who had put themselves forward to serve as representative members on Senate sub-committees;
- 5.4 The Senate Representatives on Education Board were confirmed as follows: Dr Sarah Hodge, Dr Ioanna Kapantai, Professor Rebecca Langlands;
- 5.5 The Senate Representatives on PGR Board were confirmed as follows: Professor Konstantinos Chalvatzis, Professor James Wakefield, Dr Genevieve Williams;
- 5.6 A further call was issued for a Senate representative to join the Health and Safety Committee.

6. Report of the President and Vice-Chancellor (SEN/35/24-25 Confidential)

- 6.1 The Chair presented the report from the President & Vice-Chancellor and provided further updates from across the University and wider Higher Education sector.
 - i) The Chief Executive of the Russell Group visited the University in early March 2025 to gain further insight into the University's research, education and business engagement activity. Particular thanks were extended to colleagues in Health and Life Sciences who had provided an excellent showcase of research across biomedical sciences, genomic sequencing and sports science;
 - ii) Professor Malcolm Press (Vice Chancellor of Manchester Metropolitan University) had been appointed as the next President of Universities UK (UUK);
 - iii) Professor Edward Peck (outgoing Vice-Chancellor of Nottingham Trent University) had been announced as the new Chair of the Office for Students (OfS). It was noted that this was a pivotal appointment in the current HE landscape, and the selection of a former Vice-Chancellor with a strong track record in student-focused leadership and student mental health was a positive development for the sector;
 - iv) Professor Sir Ian Chapman had been announced as the incoming Chief Executive of UKRI (UK Research and Innovation) and would be taking up the position in the summer of 2025. Currently the UK Atomic Energy Authority Chief Executive, Professor Chapman would be leading a refreshed mission for UKRI focusing on economic growth and the role of universities in enabling research and development within the UK's industrial strategy 'Invest 2035';
- 6.2 The President and Vice-Chancellor drew attention to recently released reports offering key insights and developments within the sector:
 - i) The UUK Report on Graduate Skills had emphasized the increasing demand for graduate level skills and the importance of Higher Education and universities in skills creation and regional economic growth;
 - ii) The UKRI report into research and grant spend in the 2023-24 financial year noted that UKRI had spent more of their funding outside of the greater South East (£4.61 billion) than within the South East (£4.5

billion) for the first time. The South West had seen a steady growth of Research and Development (R&D) funding over the previous three years and the third highest award rates on research income in 2023-24;

- 6.3 A student sabbatical officer queried the work being undertaken by Russell Group universities in promoting UK HE education to help attract international students. At a national level, it was noted that UUK continued to be lobbying government to remove restrictions imposed on the graduate visa. UUK were also actively engaged in conversations around the HE sector's value proposition to the government and how additional funding for universities and associated support mechanisms could further enhance contributions to regional development, economic growth and skills. The President and Vice-Chancellor also noted that ongoing discussions had been taking place at the University Executive Board to identify further opportunities to enhance the environment for international students, address any potential areas for improvement in the student experience, and enable enhanced diversification in international student recruitment;
- 6.4 A Senate member raised the UUK transformation and efficiency task force in light of its focus on exploring the possibility of shared services and collaboration between institutions. More information was requested on the ongoing discussions and what specific outputs and sector-wide developments could be expected going forwards;
- 6.5 The Senior Vice-President and Provost stated that the taskforce had focused on the significant financial challenges faced by the sector and was aiming to support the efforts of institutions in achieving enhanced efficiency, identifying opportunities for collective action and increasing collaboration. There were a number of elements being considered as part of the focus on transformation, including:
 - i) Developing a shared understanding of key challenges and the conditions and actions needed to support greater efficiency and transformation across the sector;
 - ii) Considering the sector transformations that had been proposed in the past and identifying which elements had been successful or unsuccessful to help build collective momentum in progressing specific areas of activity;
 - iii) Identifying leadership good practice and recommendations, including commentary on the current legislative, regulatory, policy and funding environment.
- 6.6 The Senior Vice-President and Registrar & Secretary noted that the university was recognised as a sector leader in shared services through the FX Plus model in Falmouth, and would be sharing best practice with the task force. There were also clear opportunities to leverage digital solutions to enhance procurement strategies and the University would continue to explore new opportunities to support ongoing collaboration and sector improvement. The first report of the Transformation and Efficiency Taskforce was scheduled to be published between April – June 2025, with subsequent reports anticipated to be published later in the year. There would be an opportunity for further discussion at Senate and consideration of initial insights would be discussed at the forthcoming Joint Senate and Council meeting on 29 May 2025;

7. Education and PGR Board Reports (Verbal Updates)

- 7.1 The Dean for Taught Students and the Dean for Postgraduate Research and the Doctoral College provided verbal updates on the latest issues from their respective areas.
- 7.2 Professor Stacey Hynd (Dean for Postgraduate Research and the Doctoral College) noted the following updates from the PGR Board:
 - i) Admissions for post-graduates was at 91% of home target and 73% of international target;

- ii) The Doctoral College Strategy was continuing with deep dives held on cost efficiency, disabled and international student experience, revamping Doctoral College website, new working groups to improve collaboration, and extended researcher development training;
- iii) This year's quality review process had been launched with a focus on employability;
- iv) There was continued collaboration to help develop appropriate guidance on use of Generative AI in research;
- v) The Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) launched and would remain open until 28 April 2025;
- vi) A Senate member highlighted the work going into strategically targeting the wide range of studentships and would welcome support from other departments. The Dean for Postgraduate Research and the Doctoral College noted the work being undertaken to improve the guidance to help staff apply for doctoral training entities to ensure greater collaboration and improve the strength of applications.

7.3 Professor Beverley Hawkins (Dean for Taught Students) noted the following updates from the Education Board. An overview of recent business was provided including:

- i) The Taught Degree Classifications report had been received, approved and recommended for progression to Senate;
- ii) Accessible Teaching and Learning Policy had been received and discussed and was due to be finalised in April in time for it to be embedded into Curriculum for Change programme. The policy would supplement the principles related to inclusion and would be templated to minimize additional workload for colleagues;
- iii) Education Policy Priorities for 2024/25 had been discussed and approved;
- iv) The External Examiner Task and Finish Group had approved its Terms of Reference and membership;
- v) Disaggregation of forms from TQA and the proposal to relocate forms from within the TQA to alternative local areas (e.g. PAAFs) had been approved;
- vi) Transnational Education (TNE) and Global Partnerships papers were received;
- vii) In Year TQA Change and amendment to the Special Provisions for Degree Apprenticeships had been approved;
- viii) On Campus Examinations report had been received and discussed;
- ix) Large scale TNE Quality and Standards Assurance principles were endorsed.

8. Student President Reports (SEN/36/24-25 Open) and (SEN/37/24-25 Open)

8.1 The President of the Students' Guild presented their report to Senate and highlighted the following points:

- i) There was ongoing work to enhance inclusion, student belonging and the transition to University;
- ii) Key findings from the representation review and data from the 'Your Say, Your Way' report was being embedded into approaches to enhance localised student representation.

8.2 The President and Vice-Chancellor congratulated the Guild on the 'Your Say, Your Way' report which highlighted the needs of the student community;

8.3 The Exeter President of the Falmouth and Exeter Students' Union drew attention to the following points in their report:

- i) A funded pilot for a PGR officer would run until December 2025. The new position of PGR officer in the Students' Union had been created to enhance the representation and levels of support for students;
- ii) The recent elections had resulted in Izzy Brinkley being elected as President Exeter. The incoming President Exeter was particularly focused on addressing the cost of living for students along with enhancing employability, career opportunities, and removing barriers to access these.

9. Update on Curriculum for Change Programme (SEN/38/24-25 Confidential)

9.1 Senate received an update presentation on the Curriculum for Change (C4C) programme which was introduced by the Vice-President and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience) and included updates from the Dean for Taught Students, the President Exeter of the Falmouth and Exeter Students' Union, President of the Exeter Student's Guild, and Senior Vice-President and Provost;

9.2 The Vice-President and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience) emphasized that the C4C programme was focused on both enhancement and efficiency and that the success of the programme required the University to align both elements to successfully re-design and refresh the education portfolio to ensure a sustainable teaching model. Key areas of focus included:

- i) Enhancing graduate outcomes;
- ii) Reducing awarding gaps for students from underrepresented or under-resourced backgrounds;
- iii) Articulating how the University of Exeter was different to competitor institutions;

9.3 Senators noted the importance of the following in discussion:

- i) Maintaining ongoing dialogue and engagement with the Higher Education and Further Education sector to ensure the University's curriculum was future-proofed and enabled the continued development of employability skills for the next generation of students;
- ii) Embracing the strategic vision for Curriculum for Change and the clear opportunities that the programme presented for the University to gain an advantage over peer institutions;
- iii) Recognising that there would be further opportunities to adapt and refine the Curriculum for Change programme in the process of development and that it presented a creative opportunity to enable innovative educational delivery for the benefits to students and staff;
- iv) Maximising the wider benefits and implications of the C4C programme for professional education, international partnerships and experiential learning;
- v) Ensuring clearer articulation of the alignment of the programme with the Curriculum Management System (CMS);
- vi) Undertaking further analysis and modelling on timetabling to provide more detailed understanding of the interdependencies between the C4C programme and the supply and demand of teaching and learning spaces;
- vii) Recognising that as the C4C principles would have a more significant impact on the required redesign of programmes in some areas of the University than others there would be a need to develop clear guidance for the areas most likely to be impacted;

- viii) Developing a more detailed understanding of modules that have specific infrastructure requirements and any associated lab space constraints (including associated costs) to inform careful analysis around potential exceptions to student number caps;
- ix) Recording the student representatives' feedback on the Curriculum for Change programme to help ensure widespread understanding and awareness of key issues currently facing students and to highlight their strong support and enthusiasm for the C4C principles;
- x) Continuing to discuss the Curriculum for Change Skills principles with prospective students at post offer open days to highlight the focus on employability and unique educational offering that would be provided by the University;
- xi) Incorporating proactive marketing and communications surrounding Curriculum for Change during summer open days and current offer holder applicant days;
- xii) Building a collective sense of excitement across the University surrounding the Curriculum for Change programme to ensure it was as innovative, creative and far-reaching as possible;
- xiii) Recognising the wider benefit of the humanities in developing employability skills, including effective writing, critical analysis and understanding of different communities and cultures;
- xiv) Socialising more widely across Departments and Faculties the decision to postpone a final decision on the specific approach to the Academic Year pending further consultation and engagement;
- xv) Enhancing understanding and awareness of the broader benefits of the programme, including:
 - a) Freeing up academic staff time to engage in research;
 - b) Improved positioning for executive and professional education provision;
 - c) Creating wider opportunities for internal and external collaboration, including global partnership opportunities;
 - d) Enhancing student engagement and attendance in Term 3.
- xvi) Exploring further challenges/opportunities in relation to particular types of 'hub-and-spoke' + flipped classroom provision;
- xvii) Maintaining proactive dialogue and engagement with Senate and continuing to elicit feedback to help shape the development of a sector leading programme;
- xviii) Reflecting on further opportunities to engage Senate in consultation and debate through 'deep dive' discussions;

9.4 Senate particularly welcomed hearing directly from student representatives and highlighted the value of sharing the emerging student feedback that had been provided as part of the ongoing series of focus groups. The following was noted in relation to student feedback:

9.4.1 The President of the Students' Guild presented outcomes from student focus groups and highlighted three main points:

- a) In relation to the future-career minors and skills mapping, students felt that this would provide an opportunity to ensure acknowledgement of the relevance of their degrees to the modern

workplace and would help ensure they stood out to future employers. It would however be important to ensure there was sufficient choice and variety of minors;

- b) Students were positive about the skills framework, but additional support with mapping skills would be required to ensure they could maximise the benefits from this;
- c) That there had been positive feedback in relation to enabling accessibility, inclusivity and a stronger sense of student belonging within the University community.

- 9.4.2 The Exeter President of the Falmouth and Exeter Students' Union reaffirmed that the focus groups had been extremely productive and there had been strong levels of engagement and enthusiasm for co-creation of the programme, with particular interest in enhancing employability through internships and experiential learning;
- 9.4.3 Students had appreciated their views being considered. Smoothing of assessments was particularly valued alongside improved timetabling to assist students with managing their other commitments and to address issues related to accessibility;
- 9.4.4 Initial concerns about the value of term 3 had been addressed and it was affirmed that from a student perspective it would enhance the overall sense of belonging alongside improving wellbeing for students who work outside of term time;
- 9.4.5 The embedding of accessibility within the design principles demonstrated to students an institutional commitment on this issue and it would be important to retain inclusivity and accessibility as a core element of Curriculum for Change;
- 9.4.6 Initial feedback from international students had been that they valued the idea of having assessment in term time as it provided more opportunity to travel home over the winter/spring breaks, offered more flexibility for inbound international students to do an 'exchange' term, and would help enhance global mobility for both home and international students;
- 9.4.7 The importance of the Curriculum for Change Programme had also been highlighted by recent feedback received from a number of students that they were having to miss lectures/classes due to working multiple jobs, going to interviews or skipping meals as a result of the cost of living crisis;
- 9.4.8 It was also noted that a 'Grand Challenge' connected to C4C would be run over the summer to provide where students can input further;
- 9.4.9 That the specific mechanism of obtaining student feedback should be communicated more widely as the sortition process had effectively ensured strong engagement from a wide representation of our student demographics, years, and departments;
- 9.5 A number of concerns were raised by Senators in relation to the Curriculum for Change programme and timeframes for delivery as detailed below:

- 9.5.1 Notwithstanding some of the enthusiasm, excitement and support for the opportunities presented by the Curriculum for Change programme across the University, there nevertheless still remained some significant concerns expressed by colleagues in a number of areas (including Classics, Ancient History, Religion and Theology; Languages, Cultures and Visual Studies; The Language Centre), particularly in relation to the Academic Year, the model for term 1 and student number caps; staff wellbeing and recruitment; and constraints on the allocation of modules to terms;
- 9.5.2 Whilst there were elements of support for the broad vision, principles and key ideas behind C4C, there had been concerns expressed by colleagues in HASS surrounding a lack of clarity, guidance and detail regarding pedagogical implications for proposed changes to student number caps and concerns about the expedited timeframes for delivery of the Curriculum for Change programme;
- 9.5.3 Although there had been a high level of constructive discussion and engagement, several Senate members expressed some concern about potentially confusing messaging being reported within certain Departments. Senate members were encouraged to remind colleagues to actively participate through all the engagements opportunities on offer. The Dean for Taught Students indicated they had frequently attended Faculty and Departmental meetings to support stronger engagement and understanding, but indicated they would be happy to attend additional meetings to help provide further clarification within Departments;
- 9.5.4 Whilst an overarching approach had been proposed for the smoother accumulation of credit and redistribution of assessment windows within the Academic Year, it had been agreed following previous feedback that more consultation, discussion and modelling would need to be undertaken over the spring before a decision on the specific approach was finalized;
- 9.6 In relation to wider University engagement and incorporating feedback within the Curriculum for Change Programme:
- 9.6.1 The Dean for Taught Students extended thanks to Senators for their constructive engagement in discussions on Curriculum for Change and the commitment to enhancing the quality of student experience. It was affirmed that all feedback would be actively reviewed and considered to help develop an exciting programme that ensured a sustainable educational portfolio. It was recognised that discussion was increasingly focusing on detailed elements of C4C implementation and delivery;
- 9.6.2 That there was a need to continue to enhance levels of guidance and support provided to academic staff in relation to the Curriculum for Change programme and that successful implementation would necessitate a continued process of cultural change and institution-wide buy-in of the strategic vision and ethos;
- 9.6.3 The Teaching Excellence Monitoring Meetings (TEMs) would provide further opportunities to glean cross-Departmental insights into the opportunities and challenges surrounding the design principles and to develop an innovative approach as an institutional community;
- 9.6.4 There remained a strong sense of excitement and positivity surrounding the piloting of a minor on 'Sustainable Solutions' in Geography this year and next, which had been designed to help resolve infrastructure constraints surrounding large modules;

- 9.6.5 Following feedback the core immersive module would no longer be a standalone module. Belonging and immersion would be embedded within core year 1 modules instead;
- 9.6.6 Whilst the approach to future-career minors were still being finalised it was recognised there were opportunities to explore more humanities based minors in areas of strategic growth aligned to future skills gaps, including Creative Humanities;
- 9.6.7 The Senior Vice-President and Provost noted that the upcoming Teaching Excellence Monitoring (TEM) meetings will provide the next opportunity to review and assess impact on individual departments. Key actions and discussions from the TEM meetings alongside departmental feedback, would continue to inform the implementation of the C4C programme;
- 9.7 In relation to recent roundtable discussions with employers and Further Education and Secondary School leaders:
- 9.7.1 Schools and Further Education establishments were strongly supportive of the proposed direction of travel of the C4C programme and affirmed that aligned with the view of their current students who were increasingly focused about future employability. In particular, the focus on key skills had been valued, along with the elements of the programme designed to enhance student health and wellbeing and levels of support for students transitioning to University;
- 9.7.2 Employers welcomed the focus on embedding the development of the student community and sense of belonging within the core delivery, alongside the development of skills relating to workplace behaviours, collaboration, digital, and entrepreneurial thinking;
- 9.7.3 Employers considered that the embedding of skills portfolio into the programme of study would benefit students and that a focus on soft skills and resilience would be two important areas for further consideration;
- 9.7.4 The feedback from Further Education and Schools had highlighted the need for an extended and structured transition period at the start of students commencing university.

AGREED: That a further deep dive session on Curriculum for Change would be held prior to the Senate meeting on 18 June to share progress across Departments and gather further feedback on the growing portfolio of C4C support resources and guidance.

10. Assessment and Feedback Deep Dives: Key Findings and Recommendations (SEN/39/24-25 Confidential)

- 10.1 The Vice-President and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience) presented the report on the Assessment and Feedback Deep Dives: Findings and Recommendations;
- 10.2 Three Deep Dives exploring Assessment and Feedback were conducted during the Autumn Term (2024) chaired by Sir Richard Atkins and drawing academic, student, and professional services engagement from across the University. The Deep Dives reviewed existing policy and best practise from across the sector, and the University, to diagnose the current issues and recommend how these might be resolved;
- 10.3 Four key themes have been identified for immediate action:
- 10.3.1 Improved monitoring and implementation of current policy and practice;

10.3.2 Embedding best-practice assessment design and efficiency in the delivery of Curriculum for Change;

10.3.3 Ensuring systems supporting assessment are fit for purpose;

10.3.4 Enabling focus on improved communication.

10.4 Senate recognised that sustained attention and heightened focus was required to drive meaningful improvement in Assessment and Feedback across the institution. It was noted that Assessment and Feedback remained a critical factor in both National Student Survey (NSS) and Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) metrics and outcomes, with improvements in performance required to avoid putting the University's Gold TEF status at risk;

10.5 The issue resonated deeply with the student community as many felt overwhelmed by assessments and perceived a lack of consistency and quality in the feedback provided across the University. UEB had discussed the findings of the Assessment and Feedback deep dives and recognized that significant attention and focus were necessary to drive meaningful change and that a cultural shift was required;

10.6 The three deep dives conducted had highlighted some exemplary work across the institution. However, it was crucial that across the University assessments were designed in such a way that they could be marked and returned within the established three-week deadline. This approach would help maintain consistency and meet student expectations, whilst also supporting the broader goals of the institution.

10.7 The importance of the following raised by individual Senators within discussion:

10.7.1 Minimizing the impact of inefficient administrative procedural processes on Assessment and Feedback sign-off and turnaround times;

10.7.2 Exploring the opportunities and challenges presented by AI, including reassessment redesign, implications for academic integrity, and need for enhanced staff training and peer-to-peer support networks;

10.7.3 The need for the University to prepare students to enter a workforce where fluency in AI is essential;

10.7.4 Ensuring the proposed move to teaching larger cohorts as part of the Curriculum for Change programme did not impact on Assessment and Feedback scores;

10.7.5 Identifying lessons learned in teaching larger cohorts across the sector and drawing upon elements of best practice across the institution to consistently deliver high-quality assessment and feedback;

10.7.6 Undertaking a thorough review of the mitigation policy in consultation and engagement with the student representatives to ensure the student community continued to be able to receive appropriate levels of support as required and were not negatively impeded by being unable to access NHS resources. The VP DVC ESE explained that the mitigation policies, initially introduced during the Covid-19 pandemic, were designed to support students during an exceptionally challenging period. While some of these policies have been phased out, it was acknowledged that some difficulties had persisted, particularly for students struggling to keep up with the assessment schedule;

10.8 A Senate member expressed concerns about endorsing B1 as a recommendation, particularly in reference to the reinforcement of the proposals in the C4C Course and Assessment Design Principles, which were in the process of being finalized;

10.9 In response to a concern highlighted surrounding the potential impact of moving away from mid-module assessments and reduction in feedback opportunities it was affirmed that there was no intention to

remove mid-module assessments;

10.10 Regarding large module teaching and assessment, it was noted that this was currently under review by the Dean of Taught Students, who had established a working group focused on identifying and implementing best practices for large module teaching to ensure sufficient feedback opportunities for students;

ACTION: The Vice-President and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience) would review and refine the wording in recommendation B1 in relation to smoothing of assessment across the academic year.

Senate **ENDORSED** the Assessment and Feedback Deep Dives: Key Findings and Recommendations report to Academic Governance, Education and Student Experience Committee (27 March 2025) and Council (29 May 2025).

11 Implementing the Recommendations from the Corporate Partnerships Review (SEN/40/24-25 Confidential)

11.1 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Business and Innovation) presented the update on the implementation of the recommendations from the Corporate Partnerships Review.

11.2 Key recommendations from the review, included:

11.2.1 A refined strategic partner portfolio;

11.2.2 Implementation of a tiered model for partnership;

11.2.3 Consistent Strategic Partnership Management and Guidance

11.2.4 A formalized Strategic Partnership agreement, appointment and review process;

11.2.5 A Strategic Partner Offer;

11.3 The Corporate Partner Income portfolio had surpassed the 2023/24 target by 20% and leveraged a further £14.3m in collaborative research awards (where a partner contributed in-kind or direct support to research funded project);

11.4 It was noted that approximately 1/3rd of income was generated from Education (CPD and Degree Apprenticeships), with an additional 2/3rds of income generated via consultancy, collaborative and contract research;

11.5 1/3rd of the University's Degree Apprenticeships were delivered with large corporate partners;

11.6 The University's corporate partnerships continued to be hugely impactful in enabling the University to deliver its strategic objectives to create a sustainable, healthy and socially just future. Recent highlights included the official opening of Centre for Resilience in Environment, Water and Waste (CREWW) with South West Water; continued academic partnership with the Met Office; the £10m RENEW project delivered with National Trust; and launch of the NIHR Biomedical Research Centre in October 2023 led by the University in partnership with Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust.

Senate **ENDORSED** the Recommendations from the Corporate Partnerships Review to Research and Innovation Committee (11 April 2025) and Council (28 May 2025).

12 Strategic Approach to Prioritised Research Funder Relationships (SEN/41/24-25 Confidential)

- 12.1 The Divisional Director of Research presented the report which highlighted the strategic approach to prioritized research funder relationships and outlined how this would enable increased research income generation and successful alignment with strategic opportunities;
- 12.2 The revised strategic approach of focusing on a group of strategic priority 1 funders, which would be reviewed on an annual basis as part of the review cycle to deliver enhanced impact in our funder relationships; increase our influence with key funders; and enable proactive response to emerging strategic intelligence. This would also provide enhanced support to internal processes such as demand management, looking at opportunities and risks and delivery plan analysis;
- 12.3 Three prioritized research funders had been selected for this year and a task and finish group will review the partnerships annually:
- Economic and Social Research Council (**ESRC**)
 - Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (**BBSRC**)
 - Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (**EPSRC**)
- 12.4 Applications to all other funders not within priority 1 and 2 would continue to receive support on an individual project basis;
- 12.5 The importance of the following was noted in discussion: continuing to raise awareness of institutional areas of excellence with key funders; developing cross-Faculty and Departmental dialogue to enhance the institutional approach to successfully influencing research funder policy and identifying opportunities for collaboration; reviewing the approach to peer review of research funder applications to ensure sufficiently robust oversight, quality assurance and selection process for submission;
- 12.6 A Senate member queried the internal selection procedures for grants that go forward, particularly in terms of the timescale on which the funders demand results which raises EDI issues. It was noted that the inclusion of an additional section on EDI in the funding selection appendix would be beneficial. The Vice-President and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (People and Culture) advised that they were working with the Vice-President and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Impact) on research culture, EDI and research quality in relation what the funders require from applicants;
- 12.7 The Divisional Director of Research clarified the purpose of tier one funders in relation to tier two, noting that the focus would be on enhancing strategic engagement either because the University was underperforming or because there were upcoming opportunities to influence the funder agenda. It was recognized the specific ways of addressing this would differ from according to the research council. Detailed action plans would be developed as part of the enhanced strategic approach to funder engagement.

13 Research and Impact Strategy 2026-2031 Development: Formative Discussions and Input (SEN/42/24-25 Confidential)

- 13.1 The Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Impact from the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences presented Senate with the Research and Impact Strategy 2026-2031;
- 13.2 The new research and impact strategy 2026-2031 was in the early stages of development and Senate were invited to provide feedback on the identified enablers and potential major future strategic research areas for Exeter in 2030 and beyond;
- 13.3 The new strategy would seek to identify major strategic research areas for 2030 and beyond where Exeter

had a unique research contribution to make. It would also build on the research priorities in Strategy 2030 and enable the University to respond to evolving sector priorities. Research Quality and Financial Sustainability had been identified as foundational themes which all related strategy activities must enable;

- 13.4 A student sabbatical officer stated that it would be helpful to define 'fairer' in clearer terminology. The President and Vice-Chancellor noted that this would be captured at a university level within the overall University Strategy 2030.
- 13.5 A Senate member noted the discussion theme of "enabling colleagues to create conditions for success" and, in light of the recent disbandment of funder advisory networks, raised a query regarding how this process would be managed ahead of the implementation of the new strategy. In response, the Divisional Director of Research confirmed that an institutional peer review panel would be established, and that Faculties would have increased autonomy in managing the process moving forward. It was noted that more detail on this element would be presented in a subsequent Senate discussion on the draft version of the Research and Impact Strategy 2026-31;
- 13.6 A Senate member noted the importance of providing sufficient time and capacity for colleagues to undertake their research and noted the importance of highlighting more clearly the alignment between the Education and Research ecosystems, especially in relation to the focus on importance of efficiencies in the curriculum for change programme. The Associate PVC for Research noted that the University had appointed academic and Professional Services leads for the research interfaces to free up time to drive forward research quality.
- 13.7 A Senate member queried where Research Institutes and Networks would fit in the strategy. The Director of Research responded that they would fall under the heading of 'Partnership and Collaboration' which included both external partnerships and internal collaboration. The first draft of the strategy would draw out the role of Research Institutes and Networks in further detail;

Senate **ENDORSED** the paper on Research and Impact Strategy 2026-2031 Development: Formative Discussions and Input to Research and Innovation Committee (11 April 2025).

14 Exe-Tech Strategy Update (including Technicians Commitment Action Plan) (SEN/43/24-25)

The Chair agreed with Senate that the Exe-Tech Strategy Update would be postponed to the meeting in June to enable sufficient time for discussion.

15. Items Brought Forward from Part II (SEN/45/24-25)

- 15.1 The University Terms and Academic Calendar (SEN/46/24-25) was endorsed, subject to final circulation of committee dates to Council via email for the Academic Year 2025-26.

16. Chair's Closing Remarks

- 16.1 The Chair noted the feedback received from Senate members around holding meetings in person. It was noted that work would be undertaken to identify suitable rooms to enable one in-person meeting of Senate to be held in the Academic Year 2025-26. It was affirmed that the Joint Senate and Council meeting would also continue to be held in person to provide an opportunity for networking.
- 16.2 The Chair noted the upcoming meeting of the Joint Council and Senate meeting taking place on 28 May which would include items on Graduate Outcomes and Employability, an update on the HE Sector and UUK Transformation and Efficiency Taskforce, and Digital Strategy Delivery.
- 16.3 The Chair thanked all Senate members for their input and engagement.

Part II - Papers to Note

Senate Appeals Report (**SEN/44/24-25**)

Council Minutes: October 2024 (**SEN/47/24-25**)

December 2024 (**SEN/48/24-25**)

Education Board Minutes (**SEN/49/24-25**)

Postgraduate Research Board Minutes (**SEN/50/24-25**)

Health and Safety Committee Minutes (**SEN/51/24-25**)

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 2024/25

28 May 2025 – Joint Council and Senate Meeting

18 June 2025