

SENATE – SPECIAL MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held at 14:00 on 20 MAY 2019, at the Main Hall, International Politics building.

Voting members: Prof Elizabeth Treasure, Vice-Chancellor; Professor Neil Glasser, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Faculty of Earth and Life Sciences); Professor Qiang Shen, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Faculty of Business and Physical Sciences); Professor Tim Woods, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning, Teaching and Student Experience); Dr Gordon Allison; Dr Guy Baron; Dr Hazel Davey; Dr Gwion Evans; Mr Nigel Hardy; Ms Megan Hatfield, AberSU Academic Affairs Officer; Ms Anna Wyn Jones, UMCA President; Dr Ffion Jones, Dr Louise Marshall; Mr John Morgan; Dr Ola Olusanya; Dr Maria Plotnikova; Prof Eleri Pryse; Prof Phillipp Schofield; Dr Victoria Wright; Mr Bruce Wight, AberSU President; and Prof Reyer Zwiggelaar, Head of the Graduate School.

Non-voting members: Dr Sarah Davies; Prof Andrew Evans; Dr Thomas Jansen; and Dr Anoush Simon.

In attendance: Mr Geraint Pugh, University Secretary; Dr Cathryn Charnell-White; Prof Colin McInnes, Director of Research, Impact and Excellence; Prof Milja Kurki; Dr Gareth Norris; and Ms Hannah Payne, REF and Research Monitoring Manager.

Apologies for absence had been received from Professor Richard Beardsworth; Mr Tim Davies; Prof Iain Donnison; Dr Sarah Higgins; Prof Nigel Holt; Ms Louise Jagger; Dr Cerys Jones, Chair of the AU Branch of the CCC; and Prof Chris Thomas, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research, Knowledge Exchange and Innovation).

43. MATTERS RAISED BY THE CHAIR

1. Welcome

Several individuals were attending in place of their academic department's main representative, either as elected alternate members, or as observers at the request of the relevant Head of Department. All were welcomed to the Special Meeting of Senate.

44. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No conflicts of interest were declared in relation to the business to be transacted during the meeting.

45. REF 2021: CODE OF PRACTICE

RECEIVED

Draft Code of Practice for the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021 (SEN1819-061).

NOTED

1. The University was required to agree and submit to the REF Team at Research England by 07 June 2019 a Code of Practice for REF2021. Since the next scheduled Senate meeting would be on 12 June, this Special Meeting had been called to enable the academic governing body to consider and formally approve the required Code of Practice prior to the submission deadline.

2. While an initial draft of the Code of Practice had been shared with Senate last year, more detailed guidance had since been issued by the funding councils. The current iteration of the University's proposed Code of Practice therefore drew on this guidance to best meet the funding councils' requirements.
3. Senate had appointed three of its elected members – one from each Faculty – to advise the group which had been tasked with developing the draft Code of Practice. The Senate representatives who engaged in this element of the process were: Dr Gordon Allison (Faculty of Earth and Life Sciences), Dr Ola Olusanya (Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences), and Dr Maria Plotnikova (Faculty of Business and Physical Sciences).
4. The proposed Code of Practice included five key sections, with each in turn discussed in detail by Senate members. These were:
 1. Identifying Independent Researchers;
 2. Identifying Staff with Significant Responsibility for Research;
 3. Selecting outputs for submission to REF2021;
 4. Supporting Staff with Individual Circumstances; and
 5. The Independent Circumstances Panel.
5. During the related discussions, the following were highlighted:
 1. The assumption would be that all staff on research, or teaching and research contracts would be submitted to REF 2021, unless they make the case to the REF Submission Group (RSG) for their exclusion.
 2. The RSG would take the final decision on the Unit of Assessment (UoA) to which an individual would be submitted. An individual could be a member of one UoA, but cross-referenced into another UoA.
 3. It was recognised that there would be many reasons why some individuals had fewer outputs for submission than others. The approach proposed in the Code of Practice was designed to enable the University to construct the best REF submission, and that this consequently would result in some individuals submitting more outputs than others in a UoA's 'output pool'. It was confirmed that the number of items submitted in the REF would not affect the individual's position at the University.
 4. That the Head of Department may not necessarily be an individual's line manager, and that the Head or their nominee should only be aware of that individual's 'needs' and any support required, and not specific 'circumstances'.
 5. Appeals could only be made on the grounds of process, and not as a result of a disagreement with the decision reached. Individuals would be able to lodge any appeals and have them considered through the medium of Welsh should they wish.
 6. The Expert Advisory Group had been constructed from the responses received following an earlier call for expressions of interest. Members expressed disappointed with the diversity of the proposed membership.

RESOLVED

6. That the selection of outputs for submission to REF 2021 be fully separated from the Effective Contribution Scheme, academic promotions, capability and other processes.
7. That the outputs produced by former members of staff during their employment at the University be eligible for inclusion in the University's submission.
8. That a further call be issued for individuals to serve on the Expert Advisory Group, with a particular request for expressions of interest from under-represented groups (**ACTION:** Director of Research, Impact and Excellence; and REF and Research Monitoring Manager).
9. That the draft Code of Practice be submitted to the REF Team at Research England, subject to the revisions required to reflect the understandings reached during this Special Meeting of Senate, and any other minor corrections identified (**ACTION:** Director of Research, Impact and Excellence; and REF and Research Monitoring Manager).