



SENATE

Minutes of the meeting held at 15:00 on 24 APRIL 2024, in the Main Hall, International Politics Building.

Voting members: Professor Jon Timmis, Vice-Chancellor; Dr Otar Akanyeti; Dr Stephen Atherton; Mr Tom Bates; Dr Hanna Binks; Professor Hazel Davey; Dr Sarah Davies; Professor Iain Donnison; Dr Patrick Finney; Mr Jonathan Fry, Chair of AU Branch of the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol; Professor Angela Hatton, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research, Knowledge Exchange and Innovation); Professor Mererid Hopwood; Dr Aloysius Igboekwu; Professor Anwen Jones, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences); Dr Ffion Jones; Dr Alex Mangold; Professor Louise Marshall; Dr Julie Mathias; Ms Jen Phipps; Dr Alexander Pitchford; Professor Phillipp Schofield; Miss Anna Simpkins, AberSU Academic Affairs Officer; Professor Tim Woods, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning, Teaching and Student Experience).

Non-voting members: Professor Iain Barber; Professor Simon Cox; Dr Thomas Jansen; Dr Anoush Simon; Dr Steve Thompson; and Dr Lucy Trotter.

In attendance: Mr Trevor Pearce, Interim Academic Registrar; Dr Gethin Rhys, Deputy Registrar; Dr Gwawr Taylor, University Secretary.

Apologies for absence had been received from Professor Andrew Evans; Professor Nigel Holt; Ms Jackie Sayce; Professor Neil Glasser, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Faculty of Earth and Life Sciences); Dr Kim Knowles; Professor Qiang Chen, Mr Bayanda Vundamina, SU President. Miss Elaine Gwynedd, UMCA President; Professor Helen Roberts, Director of Research Excellence and Impact.

27. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

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

28. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS

RECEIVED

Minutes of the meeting held on 15 November 2023 (SEN2223-033).

RESOLVED

That the minutes be confirmed as a correct record.

29. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

RECEIVED

A log setting out the progress made in taking forward decisions and actions agreed at the most recent Senate meeting, and outstanding actions from previous meetings (SEN2324-034).

NOTED

The updates provided in the decisions log.

1. Aberystwyth Chair in International Politics: the Wilson Panel would convene to confirm the renaming and would report to the next meeting of Senate.
2. Micro-credentials: it was noted that new initiatives would be paused until further notice, and the action was closed.

30. VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REPORT

RECEIVED

Vice-Chancellor's Report (SEN2324-035)

NOTED

1. The report consisted of three key parts: a highlight report; a planning and student recruitment report; and a communications report.
2. The non-reaccreditation of ITE provision, and the actions underway to work with current students, applicants, and partner schools.
3. The challenging recruitment situation, particularly in relation to international students and postgraduate-taught, and the expectation of a highly competitive clearing process for 2024/25.
4. The University continued to operate in a very difficult financial position following several adverse movements and cost pressures. The Executive would be continuing to monitor the situation and to manage the budget to the levels agreed by Council.
6. During February, a delegation from the University had accepted the Queen's Anniversary Prize for excellence, innovation and outstanding work that delivered benefits to the wider world. The Prize recognised the unique research and expertise of a team of agricultural and biological parasitologists led by Professor Karl Hoffman in the Department of Life Sciences.
7. The anticipated change in Welsh Government regulations change for 2024/25 which would increase the cap on tuition fees to £9,250. Confirmation of Aberystwyth University fee levels for 2024/25 would follow.
8. Following its establishment in September 2023 as the new regulatory body, CETR would become fully operational from 1 August 2024. The expanded remit of the new body would help inform the University's strategic thinking, in alignment with the Welsh Government's Statement of Priorities.

31. RESEARCH AND INNOVATION COMMITTEE

RECEIVED

1. Report by Lisa Fisher, Research Ethics and Integrity Officer (SEN2324-036)

NOTED

2. The quarterly results on research funding, representing an increase in volume, value and recovery rate on research grants.
3. Senate's congratulations to Professor Qiang Shen, set to receive the 2024 Fuzzy Systems Pioneer Award at the IEEE Computational Intelligence Society's World Congress in July.

32. ACADEMIC BOARD

32.1 Report from Academic Board

RECEIVED

1. Report by Kim Bradick, Deputy Registrar (SEN2324-037).

NOTED

2. The schedule for QER, with a QAA visit to Aberystwyth expected in 2027/28.
3. The continuing work to embed sustainability within the curriculum through a university-wide strategy.
4. A new funding system for Lifelong Learning was due to be implemented for English-domiciled students from September 2025, but with no current CETR consultations it was unlikely to impact Wales in the foreseeable future.

32.2 Proposed Fit to Sit Policy

RECEIVED

1. Report from Trevor Pearce, Interim Academic Registrar (SEN2324-038)

NOTED

2. The proposals, previously considered by Academic Board, and designed to replace the existing special circumstances processes for all assessments. Under 'Fit to Sit', students declaring as unfit would have an opportunity to defer assessment until the next available date, without a need to provide independent evidence of mitigating circumstances.
3. Members welcomed the overall aim of a reduced burden on students and a greater consistency in outcomes. Final approval would be subject to equality and Welsh Language impact assessments, and further clarification of the following areas:
 - (a) Achievement of learning outcomes where students were not fit to sit individual components.
 - (b) Any impact on the existing coursework extensions policy.
 - (c) Equality and Welsh Language impact assessments.

- (d) Modelling of impact on the volume of resit assessments and a review of the cap on summer resits.
- (e) Impact on group, practical and continuous assessments.
- (f) The status of draft coursework assessments for students declaring as Unfit to Sit.
- (g) The development of guidance and communications for both staff and students, and the establishment of an implementation group.

RESOLVED

- 4. To welcome the overall principle of 'Fit to Sit', subject to further clarification of specific areas and a final decision by Senate. [**ACTION:** Academic Registrar]

32.3 Top-up Degrees

RECEIVED

- 1. Report from Kim Bradick, Deputy Registrar (SEN2324-039)

NOTED

- 2. The proposal to formalise the current operating practice for top-up degrees, namely that students should pursue 120 credits at Level 6 and must pass 100 credits to qualify for the award. Only credits studied at Aberystwyth University would count towards the calculation of the award.

RESOLVED

- 3. To approve the revised regulations and examination conventions. [**ACTION:** Academic Registry to update the Academic Quality Handbook.]

33. RECRUITMENT AND MARKETING ADMISSIONS BOARD

RECEIVED

Report from Kylie Evans, Head of Admissions Operations (SEN2324-040)

NOTED

The improvement in undergraduate and postgraduate retention rates during the current year, and the development of a new retention strategy.

34. COLLABORATIVE PROVISION BOARD

RECEIVED

Report from David Moyle, Assistant Registrar (SEN2324-041)

35. SENATE EXAMINATION BOARD

RECEIVED

Paper from Trevor Pearce, Interim Academic Registrar (SEN2324-042)

NOTED

The proposed changes to the terms of reference of Senate Examination Board, with the aim of improving the efficiency of examination processes through greater flexibility of attendance requirements at boards.

RESOLVED

To approve the proposed amendments to the terms of reference of Senate Examination Board. (**Action:** Academic Registrar)

36. ABERYSTWYTH UNIVERSITY BRANCH OF COLEG CYMRAEG CENEDLAETHOL

RECEIVED

A report from Mr Jonathan Fry, Chair of the Branch (SEN2324-043)

37. RESEARCH GRANTS

RECEIVED

A report from the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research, Knowledge Exchange and Innovation) (SEN2324-044)

38. WORKLOAD ALLOCATION

RECEIVED

Report from the Interim Academic Registrar (SEN2324-045)

39. REPORTS FROM SUBCOMMITTEES

RECEIVED: Minutes from the following committees (SEN2324-046):

1. Research and Innovation Committee (30 November 2023 and 26 February 2024)
2. Academic Board (7 March 2024)
3. Recruitment, Marketing and Admissions Board (28 November 2023 and 28 February 2024)
4. Collaborative Provision Board (4 March 2024)
5. Council (27 November 2023 and 19 January 2024)

40. ANY OTHER BUSINESS, MEETING REVIEW, AND FUTURE BUSINESS.

Farwell

Senate extended its thanks to Mr Trevor Pearce who was attending his final meeting of Senate as Interim Academic Registrar before taking up a new post.