

**MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF SENATE**

**Held on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2021**  
*Virtually via Microsoft Teams*

ITEM	DISCUSSION	ACTION	WHO
1.	<p><b>Apologies and Absences</b></p> <p>The attendance, apologies and absences are noted on the attached list.</p> <p>The Vice-Chancellor welcomed Senators, noting the importance of the extraordinary meeting to consider proposals to address student progression and awards in 2020/21 in the context of the ongoing disruption caused by Covid-19. He confirmed that there was currently no clear view on a date for students returning to campus, which hinged on the advice and guidance provided by government. At this stage nothing new was known, beyond the prevailing lockdown rules.</p>		
2.	<p><b>Declarations of Interest</b></p> <p>None.</p>		
3A	<p><b>Proposals to Strengthen the Student Safety Net</b></p> <p>Professor O’Sullivan presented the proposals and confirmed that they had been designed to balance supportive measures and standards of programme delivery with staff workloads and the need to address student concerns.</p> <p>It was emphasised that the proposals required requisite credits to be passed and maintained the integrity of the awards. The measures were designed to build on the steps taken since September to account for the significant effects of the pandemic on students and staff. Proposals had been discussed with Education Committee and Faculty Education Committees and feedback received had been incorporated into the versions presented to this meeting of Senate.</p> <p>The challenges posed by the structure of Foundation Year programmes were highlighted, which had resulted in the changes shared with Senate prior to the meeting.</p> <p>If approved by Senate, the next steps would be to develop detailed staff and student communications to underpin the implementation of the proposals.</p> <p>Senators discussed the proposals and raised a number of</p>		

	<p>queries, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whether SCIMS would identify Postgraduate Students who fell within the borderline. It was confirmed that it would.</li> <li>• The possible impact of re-assessment on progression, in terms of the timing of resits. It was confirmed that detailed guidance would be provided for students on the implications of re-assessment timing and also on PSRB requirements.</li> <li>• The need for detailed guidance on the use of scaling was emphasised to include confirmation that this was an exceptional action to be used only where appropriate. It was also noted that the impact of automatic progression at Foundation Year and Level 4 in 2019/20 may affect the distribution of marks. It was also stressed that the information provided to students should be that this was an exceptional measure, therefore, was not expected to be widely used. It was confirmed that guidance on scaling was included in the moderation policy but additional guidance would be developed with the external examiner. The final exam board would also consider the application of scaling.</li> <li>• Consideration of implications for Access and Participation were queried, including sufficient clarity around the use of terms like standards and integrity and the need to act on analysis from 2019/20 regarding the attainment gap. The importance of these issues was noted. In terms of standards and integrity, the terms were understood to refer to comparable academic standards to maintain the integrity of final awards. It was highlighted that there was evidence of a growing unease from employers and professional bodies regarding 2019/20 qualifications and a clear steer that measures taken last year should be seen as exceptional with the approach taken in 2020/21 needing to be discernibly different. It was confirmed that there was work underway to research the outcomes from 2019/20 in relation to the attainment gap, with the assumption being that alternative assessment methods provided a better opportunity for students to demonstrate their knowledge than more traditional forms of assessment. There was a concerted push across the</li> </ul>		
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	<p>sector to maintain the positive aspects of the approach taken in 2019/20 and to learn and understand them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The need for the guidance to students to make clear that Harper and Keele Vet School students would be subject to a separate policy taking account of professional requirements and the partnership was highlighted. This was noted and it was confirmed that other professional programmes may also have their own specific arrangements.</li> <li>• It was confirmed that, where a student may benefit from a repeat year, rather than progression, they would still be guided towards this option.</li> <li>• An amendment to remove the wording, “Academically less strong” from paragraph 3.4 was agreed.</li> <li>• Clarification on the implications of Safety Net Measures 1 and 2 was requested. For Safety Net 1 it was confirmed that the only change proposed was that this year, all students flagged within the borderline would be automatically upgraded, where usually this action is discretionary. It was noted that it is rare for a student to be within the borderline without any marks in the higher classification, though statistically it was not impossible. For Safety Net 2 it was confirmed that this removed the requirement for the mark for the dissertation module to be in the higher classification. Again, it would be rare for a student to achieve the higher classification without any marks in the higher classification, though statistically it was not impossible.</li> <li>• It was confirmed that there was no mechanism for any individual adjustment of marks as this action was too difficult to quantify but the option to resit was available via the EC process and the Support to Study process could also benefit students with individual difficulties.</li> </ul> <p><b>Senate resolved:</b></p> <p><b>That</b> the proposals presented <b>be approved</b>, subject to the minor amendments discussed at the meeting.</p>		
<p><b>3B</b></p>	<p><b>Proposals to Address Covid Related Concerns in Relation to the Structure of the Academic Year</b></p> <p>Professor O’Sullivan presented the paper and confirmed that it was anticipated that students would not return to campus before 8<sup>th</sup> March but this date was by no means confirmed.</p>		

	<p>The paper sets out the possibility of utilising time at the end of semester two if required to allow flexibility. Use was discretionary but, if being used, School plans for how the post Easter period will be used should be sufficiently clear.</p> <p>Discussion followed on possible ways the extra time could be used. It was stressed that any arrangements would need to be concluded in time for the final examination board.</p> <p>Further discussion on summer schools for Postgraduate students followed. The possibility was confirmed, subject to more detailed proposals and plans from Schools. The Vice-Chancellor highlighted that there was a Heads of School meeting on 4 February 2021 where these ideas could be further developed to ensure a proportionate and complimentary approach.</p> <p>The risks for Combined Honours students were noted, should their two Schools take a differing approach, however, as long as timed assessments followed the block, this was felt to be manageable. There was a question as to whether Combined Honours students would pressure Schools into making a consistent decision, KeeleSU noted that there was more discomfort with this measure than any of the others.</p> <p>Scheduled teaching would follow the School plans, already mentioned, however, scope would be for smaller groups, larger ones would be more difficult to accommodate. In terms of assessments, there was more time available to involve external examiners.</p> <p>The re-assessment period timing needed to mirror the examination board dates, with finalists undertaking their assessments first.</p> <p>Use of the Easter vacation period was queried but it was confirmed that this had been discounted for several reasons, many of which had been included in the chat function for the meeting, including the pressure on staff with caring responsibilities and the need to be able to take leave. From a student point of view, many would have other commitments in this period as they were not expecting to need to attend learning and teaching in this period.</p> <p>Senate <b>resolved:</b></p> <p><b>That</b> the proposals presented <b>be approved.</b></p>		
4.	<p><b>Equality and Diversity Considerations</b></p> <p>The key areas had been highlighted as part of the main discussion on each paper, there were no further issues raised.</p>		
	<p><b>Closing Remarks</b></p>		

	<p>The Vice-Chancellor noted thanks to staff who had developed the proposals and thanked Senate members for their contributions to the discussion. It was also noted that there was still work to do, commencing with the Head of School meeting on 4 February 2021.</p> <p>KeeleSU requested that communications to students on the agreed proposals were not circulated on Friday afternoon if possible.</p>		
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(a) ***The Vice-Chancellor***

Professor Trevor McMillan

(b) ***Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost; and the Pro Vice-Chancellors and the Deans (including the Chairs of the Boards of Studies and Faculties)***

Professor Mark Ormerod	Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost
Professor Helen O'Sullivan	Pro Vice-Chancellor Education
Professor David Amigoni	Pro Vice-Chancellor Research & Enterprise
Professor Pauline Walsh	Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences and Pro Vice-Chancellor
Professor Shane O'Neill	Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences and Pro Vice-Chancellor (Advancement in Global Engagement)
Professor Jonathan Wastling	Dean of the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Pro Vice-Chancellor (Postgraduate Studies)

(c) ***Academic Registrar and Director of Student and Academic Services***

(d) ***Librarian***

Mr Daniel Perry

(e) ***Heads of Departments and Schools***

***Academic Schools:***

School of Humanities: Dr Nick Seager

Keele Business School: Professor Elaine Ferneley

School of Law: Professor Alison Brammer

School of Social, Political and Global Studies: Professor Robert Ladrech

School of Allied Health Professionals: Ms Anne O'Brien

A School of Medicine: Professor Christian Mallen

A School of Nursing and Midwifery: Dr Patricia Owen

A School of Pharmacy and Bioengineering: Dr Katie Maddock

A School of Chemical and Physical Sciences: Professor Mike Watkinson

School of Computing and Mathematics: Professor Peter Andras

School of Geography Geology and Environment: Professor Christopher Fogwill

School of Life Sciences: Professor Dawn Scott

School of Psychology: Professor Abigail Locke

***Deans of Research***

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences- Professor Derek McGhee

Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences- Professor Nick Forsyth

A Faculty of Natural Sciences- Professor Clifford Stott

***Deans of Education***

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences – Dr Tim Lustig

Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences – Dr Julie Green

Faculty of Natural Sciences – Dr Katie Szkornik

***Keele Institute for Innovation and Teaching Excellence (KIITE)***

Director of KIITE: Dr Rafe Hallett

**(g) Members of the Electoral Roll elected by the Electoral Roll**

*Elected by the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences*

	Dr Shalini Sharma (History)	2018-2021
	Dr Rebecca Richards (International Relations)	2019-2022
	Dr Samantha Weston (Criminology)	2019-2022
	Mrs Catherine Edwards	2019-2022
A	Dr Mariangela Palladino (Humanities)	2020-2023
	Dr Laura Pritchard-Jones (Humanities)	2020-2023
	Dr Xuebing (Jack) Cao	2020-2023

*Elected by the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences*

A	Dr Clare Jinks (Primary, Community and Social Care)	2018-2021
	Mrs Yvonne Flood (Nursing & Midwifery)	2018-2021
	Dr Lisa Dikomitis (Medicine)	2018-2021
	Dr Audrey Skidmore (Medicine)	2018-2021
	Dr Abigail Rutter (Pharmacy & Biomedical Engineering)	2019-2022
	Professor Athula Sumathipala (Primary, Community and Social Care)	2019-2022
	<i>Vacancy</i>	2019-2022
	Dr Emma Healey (Medicine)	2019-2022
A	Mrs Cath Hill (Nursing and Midwifery)	2020-2023

*Elected by the Faculty of Natural Sciences*

A	Dr Masi Noor (Psychology)	2019-2022
	Dr David Mazzocchi-Jones (Life Sciences)	2019-2022
	Dr Laura Hibberts (Foundation Year)	2019-2022
	Dr Adam Stanton (Computing and Mathematics)	2019-2022
	Dr Jacco van Loon (Chemical and Physical Sciences)	2020-2023
	Dr Anja Winter (Chemical and Physical Sciences)	2020-2023
	Dr Dierdre McKay (Geography, Geology and Environment)	2020-2023
	Dr Glenn Hussey (Life Sciences)	2020-2023

**(h) Student Representatives: Elected Officers**

*KeeleSU*

	Mr Jack Karimi- <i>Union Development and Democracy Officer</i>	2020-2021
	Ms Mari Chappell- <i>Education Officer</i>	2020-2021
A	Mr Miles Venvil- <i>Welfare and Internationalisation Officer</i>	2020-2021
	Mr Leroy Cohoone - <i>Activities and Community Officer</i>	2020-2021
	Ms Holy Brooks- <i>Athletic Union and Sport Officer</i>	2020-2021

*Keele Postgraduate Association*

	Ms Katie Charlton- <i>President</i>	2020-2021
	Ms Elisia Narbett- <i>Vice-President</i>	2020-2021

## **In-Attendance at Senate**

- A **Chief Operating Officer:** Dr Mark Bacon  
**Director of Foundation Year:** Simon Rimmington  
**Director of the Keele Doctoral Academy:** Dr Alex Lamont  
**Head of Academic Quality and Student Conduct:** Dorothea Ross-Simpson  
**Head of Student Records and Examinations:** Laurence Fuller  
**EDI Observer:** Dr Sue Sherman and Dr Danielle van de Windt

**Secretary:** Laura Norcop, Governance Officer