

Report from the 80th Meeting of the Academic Council – 13th March 2025

Introduction

Detailed below are the matters which the Chair of the Academic Council wishes to draw to the attention of the Board of Directors arising from the Academic Council meeting on the 13th March 2025

Part One: Areas of Consideration and Discussion.

University Academic Key Performance Indicators

Council received and discussed an overview of the University's Academic KPIs. B3 continuation and progression metrics remained positive, with completion on an upward trajectory and good threshold performance forecast. Continued activity to address attainment gaps was noted. Council requested the inclusion of time-series KPI data for future sessions to support longitudinal discussion.

Education and Standards Committee Report and Sub-Committee Reports

Council considered and discussed the presentation of the key business of Education and Standards Committee and its sub-committees. The progression of actions in relation to the Education and Standards Committee was provided and discussed by Council. The Council were also notified of the key areas of discussion, such as progress on University KPIs, updates from the key sub-committees of ESC (AQSC, IHEC, and SEC), and key annual reports received by Council in this session were also discussed and approved.

Due Diligence Reports

Council approved the due diligence reports for Nursing placements and were assured of the actions supporting student safety and wellbeing.

Academic Risk Report

Updates were provided to the Council on the Risk Register. All risks were being effectively managed and mitigated appropriately.

Vice-Chancellor's Update

The Vice-Chancellor provided an update on the University's size, shape, and performance. Student numbers remained stable, with growth in international undergraduate recruitment. The impact of sector-wide Level 7 apprenticeship defunding was discussed alongside diversification and growth plans. Continued revenue growth, successful Ofsted outcomes, programme development in Law and Business provision were also discussed.

Discussion of OfS Strategic Themes

Council discussed the OfS Strategy Consultation, focusing on quality, the wider student interest, and sector resilience. Members emphasised the importance of asserting the University's voice in sector discussions, proportional and risk-based regulation, and the potential impact of new conditions of registration.

Annual Scholarship Report

Council considered the Annual Scholarship Report, noting improvements across all scholarly KPIs, increased engagement with external scholarly activity, and 100% staff engagement in scholarship. Council requested future reporting to include further detail on innovation in scholarly development as part of the ongoing review of the Scholarship Strategy.

Annual Admissions Report

Council received the Annual Admissions Report and noted growth in applications across domestic and international cohorts, increased applications from students declaring a disability, and increased applications from ethnic minority groups. Differences in gender distribution between domestic and international applicants were discussed, alongside ongoing work to enhance admissions data quality.

Part Two: For noting

Sub-Committees

Members received the sub-committee minutes for overview and scrutiny from the Education and Standards Committee, Curriculum Review Group, Academic Regulations and Awards Committee, Academic Appeals Boards, and Apprenticeships Steering Committee. No issues were raised.

Part Three: Items Approved

In addition to the approval of items presented for discussion above, the following further items were formally approved/ratified by Council at this session:

- Ratification of all programmes as set down by the Programme Approval Scrutiny Committee
- Ratification of all awards as set down by the Academic Regulations and Awards Committee