

# Council

6 July 2023

1700-1900

Shilling Building Seminar Room 0-04



## Actions

Action	Minute ref.	Responsible	Date
<b>Matters Arising: Student Accommodation:</b> A report of the strategy to address the short-term demand for student accommodation for 2024/25. <del>In the interim period the V, C&amp;P and CoC to discuss plans to accommodate students in September and to inform Council members as appropriate.</del>	23/142	DW  JS/DMH	23 November 2023  July/August
<b>RH2030s Strategy:</b> A timeline for sharing insights and data with Council Committees to be developed for initial review by S&G.	23/148	Secretariat	2 November 2023
<b>2023/24 Budget:</b> Finance committee to look in more detail at a breakdown of the capital expenditure budget and operating expenses.	23/171	Secretariat	Referred to Finance Committee
<b>Council Training:</b> Consider a carbon literacy training session for Council, a shorter version of the currently available university training.	23/185	Secretariat	15 February 2024
<b>Strategy Development:</b> A paper about commuter students and how the university could better meet their needs including the UG/PG split and any demographics specific to the commuter student group. (Pillar 1 update)	23/079	TB/ZK	23 November 2023
<b>Artificial Intelligence/VR/Immersive Technology:</b> will form part of the discussion of the development of the new strategy at the November Strategy meeting.	23/080, 23/109, 23/119, 23/176	JS	22 November 2023
<b>Freedom of Speech:</b> the Code of Practice and process to be presented to Council after approval by Executive Board.	23/097	JS	Referred to ARCC
<b>Freedom of Speech:</b> The Chair of Council to formally write to the SU Board of Trustees, to emphasise their responsibilities for close oversight and monitoring.	23/100	DMH	TBC
<b>Freedom of Speech:</b> Council to review the work being undertaken to ensure that real openness in debate is being maintained and the Code of Practice and processes are in place and implemented.	23/102	JS/AB	15 February 2024

<b>Pillar 1 Update:</b> include in the next annual Pillar 1 report the Pillar 4 projects which are symbiotic	23/111	TB	February 2024
<b>Pillar 4:</b> The Data Ethics policy to be provided to ARCC.	23/111	MW	Referred to ARCC

#### Action from current meeting

~~Action completed since last meeting.~~

## Approvals

Approved at this meeting	Minute ref.	Responsible	Date
APPROVED the 2023/24 Budget	23/171	MW	6 July 2023
APPROVED the revised Statement of Investment Policy.	23/175	MW	6 July 2023
APPROVED six short term KPI's from 2023 – 2026 for the Environmental Sustainability Strategy	23/185	KD	6 July 2023
APPROVED, with one abstention, the conferral of five Honorary Degrees of the University of London in 2024.	23/190	JS	6 July 2023

# Council

6 July 2023

17.05-18.42

Shilling Building Seminar Room 0-04



M23/139-M23/201

## Minutes

<b>Present:</b>	Dame Margaret Hodge (Chair of Council)	Sarah King
	Ann Ewing (Vice Chair of Council)	Gerry O'Hagan
	Dr Donna Brown	Nick Perryman (Vice Chair of Council)
	Simon Davis	Professor Julie Sanders (Vice-Chancellor and Principal)
	Sally Dicketts	Shrijeet Shrey
	Professor Michael Farthing	David Walker
	Professor Bob Fitzgerald	David Williams
	Maia Jarvis (SU President)	Ian Wilson
	HHJ Khatun Sapnara (MS Teams)	
<b>Apologies:</b>	Sarah Honeycombe	Balram Veliath
<b>Secretary:</b>	Mary White	Chief Financial Officer and Acting Secretary to Council (Secondary minutes)
<b>In attendance:</b>	Professor Tracy Bhamra	Provost and Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Global)
	Professor Klaus Dodds	Executive Dean (School of Life Sciences and the Environment) (Item 9.3: 18.08-18.34)
	Professor Matthew Humphreys	Interim Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education & Student Experience)
	Professor Gavin Shaddick	Executive Dean of EPMS (Item 9.1: 18.08- 18.25)
<b>Clerk:</b>	Pauline Martin	Executive Officer for Council (Minutes)
<b>Observers</b>	Hannah Hockin	RHSU President elect 2023/24 (until 18.42)
	Sharanya Sivarajah	Elected student representative and VP Education 2023/24 (until 18.42)
	Rikke Jensen	UCU (until 18.42)

### 1. APOLOGIES

NOTED apologies received from Sarah Honeycombe and Balram Veliath

23/139

17.07 Professor Michael Farthing arrived

### 2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

- NOTED Dr Donna Brown declared an interest in any discussion about the current ongoing industrial action and the marking and assessment boycott, as Chair of RHUL UCU. 23/140
3. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**
- APPROVED minutes and approvals of the meeting held on 18 May 2023 (M23/075-23/138) 23/141
4. **MATTERS ARISING**
- NOTED: 23/142
- Freedom of Speech:** a letter to the SU Board of Trustees regarding freedom of speech would be sent in due course.
- Student Accommodation:** During the summer break the plan for the provision of student accommodation in September would be discussed between the Vice-Chancellor and Principal and the Chair of Council, with updates to inform Council members if appropriate.
- A report of the strategy to address the short-term demand for student accommodation would be provided scheduled for the November Council meeting. Thereafter, as noted in the reserved business minutes (RES 23/25), a longer-term strategy would be developed to accommodate the planned growth in student numbers.
5. **REPORT OF DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE CHAIR OF COUNCIL**
- There were none. 23/143
6. **UN-STARRING OF ITEMS**
- No items were unstarred. 23/144

## MAJOR BUSINESS

7. **VICE-CHANCELLOR AND PRINCIPAL'S UPDATE**
- RECEIVED a report from the Vice-Chancellor and Principal. 23/145
- NOTED recent grant successes, including at the launch of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport's "Creative Industries sector vision, that RHUL was the preferred bidder for the national Convergent Screen Technologies and performance in Realtime (CoSTAR) lab. With thanks to Professor James Bennett and the whole team for their work. 23/146
- NOTED senior leadership team appointments, including the appointment of Dr Zainab Khan, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Education and Student Experience. Thanks were extended to Professor Matthew Humphreys for his work as Interim Pro-Vice-Chancellor Education and Student Experience. 23/147
- NOTED staff engagement on work to develop the new RH2030s strategy and the roadmap towards Council approval of the new strategic plan in July 2024. A detailed timeline for the sharing of insights and data with Council committees throughout 2023/24 was requested. 23/148

DISCUSSED that the risk to international student recruitment for 2023/24 remained, as government policy was not yet fully defined around accompanying dependants. There was a lack of data on the number of accompanying dependants associated with our student applications. Work at sector level suggested that restrictions would have a bigger impact on women PG students than men. The age profile of international students was possibly a better indication of student numbers likely to have dependants, and there were also implications for women originating from some countries where the culture requires them to be accompanied.	23/149
NOTED that the university was working closely with UUKi on the issue, discussions included any implications for government policy from the Equalities Act.	23/150
DISCUSSED preparations for the UKVI Audit due take place on 18 July and the risk to the dual licence should there be any major failings.	23/151
DISCUSSED publication of the QS World University Rankings with our rank falling 11 places to 413 <sup>th</sup> , and 42 <sup>nd</sup> amongst UK institutions. NOTED the metrics of greatest weakness and a decline in ranking in every metric except for "International Students". The Rankings and Reputation Working Group would continue its work in reviewing all tables and rankings and was due to report to Council in the Autumn.	23/152
NOTED the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with the Royal Agricultural University to develop our collaborations on food sustainability and Bio Sciences.	23/153
DISCUSSED the Marking and Assessment Boycott (MAB) and an oral update was provided on the impact of MAB on Royal Holloway students. The current position at the time of the meeting was: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 30% of undergraduates had no confirmed outcomes, but numbers were still changing.</li> <li>• Emergency Regulations had been applied to get results for as many finalists as possible and to allow students to progress.</li> </ul>	23/154
NOTED the UCU had announced 12 days of industrial action to coincide with summer graduation ceremonies, clearing week and arrival week.	23/155
NOTED students at Royal Holloway were amongst the most badly affected HE institutions, with students of Psychology, Politics and Philosophy, Geography, Maths, Music and Media Arts some of the most impacted. Other areas, such as Biology, Earth Sciences and Business and Management had completed 100% of outcomes.	23/156
NOTED by Council that the UCU action had been called to coincide with the major student events of the year. Any action taken would not be in the interests of our students and would impact future student recruitment. Supporting and delivering for our students and the interests of our students must be the top priority, especially for this graduating cohort who were particularly badly affected in their education journey by new GCSE marking schemes, Covid and lockdowns.	23/157
DISCUSSED steps being taken to support students where employment depended upon proof of the qualification in order to be appointed. Some employers were being understanding and the university was providing tailored "comfort" letters, including one that was specifically for employers, and one where needed for applications for further study.	23/158
NOTED that discussions continued with local UCU branch, but the MAB needed to be understood in the context of the national dispute. Affordability of the sector of further pay increases was a concern and there were complex debates underway via UCEA with multiple unions and parties to the discussions.	23/159

## 8. FINANCE

- 8.1 RECEIVED the current year financial report, taken as read, with no major changes since the last report. 23/160
- NOTED disappointment with research income not achieving the target. 23/161
- NOTED some extensions granted for spending research funding, any unspent must ultimately be returned. 23/162
- NOTED the one-off provision in the accounts, including for costs of any litigation, for the IP Claim. Work was underway with our insurance company, but it is looking likely to meet the criteria as a contingent liability and will therefore be accrued in this Financial year. 23/163
- NOTED that the position was improved since the same time last year, but the aim was to increase the surplus as investment in the estate was needed and made more difficult as costs were increasing due to inflation. 23/164
- 8.2 RECEIVED the 2023/24 Budget and evaluation of the Resource Plan, recommended by Finance Committee with no major changes since the review by Council at the May meeting. The report was commended. 23/165
- NOTED the evaluation of the 2020 resource plan in the context of higher inflation environment, which even with growth to 15,000 students as planned, would not deliver a surplus. Work was underway with Executive deans to improve financial awareness including of the levers that move the figures and to focus on achieving financial sustainability. 23/166
- NOTED achieving the 2023/24 planned student recruitment targets will be central to achieving the budget as student income was budgeted to be £9m higher than last year, risk mitigations are in place. 23/167
- NOTED the budget includes savings targets across the university with £4m unallocated savings still required in Academic Schools in addition to savings already allocated to Professional Service budgets. 23/168
- DISCUSSED staff cost assumptions and assumptions around the impact on student recruitment from staff strike actions. Staff action had potential to affect the university brand and a consequent impact particularly for international student recruitment where brand was important in the choice of university. 23/169
- DISCUSSED further work was needed to investigate variance in staff: student ratios. 23/170
- APPROVED the 2023/24 Budget, NOTING that Finance committee would be looking in more detail at a breakdown of the capital expenditure budget and operating expenses at future meetings. 23/171
- 8.3 RECEIVED the revised Statement of Investment Policy recommended by Finance Committee following review by the Investment Sub-Committee, fund managers Rathbone Greenbank and external consultants Barnett Waddingham. 23/172
- NOTED the most significant change was to include a specific set of exclusions, which made the policy clear in the areas of munitions, tobacco, gambling and adult entertainment. Also included was a 100% exclusion for companies involved in the exploration, production, refining, storage or transportation of fossil fuels. 23/173

	NOTED divestment was expected to be completed by July 2023 and further changes included:	23/174
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes to the benchmark asset allocation.</li> <li>• Addition of 'greenwashing' risk.</li> <li>• Addition of commitment to transparency and active stewardship.</li> <li>• Changes to sustainability targets.</li> </ul>	
	APPROVED the revised Statement of Investment Policy.	23/175
	18.08 Professor Gavin Shaddick and Professor Klaus Dodds joined the meeting	
<b>9.</b>	<b>STRATEGY</b>	
9.1	RECEIVED an interim update on Pillar 1, a discussion paper on artificial intelligence (AI) which had been discussed at Academic Board, as an introduction to a continuing conversation about the future of AI in the university at the November Council meeting.	23/176
	DISCUSSED the ethical use of AI and the likely impact on assessment and research including interdisciplinary research. Colleagues, student and the local community will need to have the skills to understand and use AI and to update their knowledge as AI develops.	23/177
	NOTED that the end of this year's assessment cycle provided the opportunity to review and rethink assessment policy in the light of AI, Academic misconduct policies will be enhanced, if required, following the assessment.	23/178
	DISCUSSED collaboration with a group of universities to lead on research, core technology development and skills training developing the opportunity to work with business and industry, develop the KEF and REF and income opportunities.	23/179
	DISCUSSED the ambition and opportunity must be clearly defined and resource needs to ensure delivery of the ambition. NOTED that schools would be using AI to overturn the current modes of education and the university needed to understand and build on their work.	23/180
	18.25 Professor Gavin Shaddick left the meeting	
9.2	RECEIVED the annual report on Pillar 2: Expanding the horizons of all our students by building strong and sustainable international partnerships NOTING the achievements of the Pillar 2 projects to date with closure of the projects, reverting to business as usual:	23/181
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expansion of the Study Group partnership.</li> <li>• Expansion of the distance learning programmes offered with the University of London worldwide.</li> <li>• Establish and grow new and existing partnerships in India and China.</li> <li>• Refresh our Study Abroad offering.</li> </ul>	
	NOTED work continued on the expansion of the London Campus with due diligence on the Gordon Square property and development of the PGT course portfolio to grow student numbers in central London.	23/182
9.3	RECEIVED the implementation plan and KPI's for the Environmental Sustainability, Pillar 6 of the three-year strategy.	23/183
	NOTED that the proposed KPI's were considered to be ones that it was possible to take action on immediately. Initiatives around the estate and decarbonisation of operations was still required and would be the next steps for the additional staffing, which included the Head of Sustainability, to work on the estates strategy.	23/184


	AGREED to consider a carbon literacy training session for Council, a shorter version of the currently available university training.	23/185
	APPROVED six short term KPI's from 2023 – 2026 and the aim to launch a first climate action plan by 2024/25.	23/186
	18.25 Professor Klaus Dodds left the meeting	
9.4	NOTED the KPI Report and update on key topics with 6 KPI's on track or ahead of target and noting the direction of travel for all KPIs.	23/187
	NOTED there were two KPIs with an amber RAG rating. Research income was forecast to be below £17m against a target to increase, due to unspent research income rather than a lack of awards. The IMD awarding gap has been volatile and may not meet the targeted reduction.	23/188
	NOTED three KPIs with a red RAG rating:	23/189
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research income from industry, action to improve receipts would take a long time to have an impact.</li> <li>• Distance learning programmes where the number of students had not increased but overall income was rebalanced by the increased number of students at the Teaching Centres.</li> <li>• The Black and White awarding gap remained difficult to address and was a focus of re-prioritised projects in Pillar 1 and ongoing work on the APP.</li> </ul>	
	NOTED progress with two KPIs of the People Strategy, ability to explain what the College is trying to achieve and having a clear understanding, achieved an increase of over 10% in staff agreeing with the statements.	23/190
<b>10.</b>	<b>HONORARY AWARDS 2024</b>	
	APPROVED, with one abstention, the recommendation to Council for conferral of five Honorary Degrees of the University of London in 2024. Members were asked for confidentiality on the names of the individuals being awarded.	23/191
	NOTED proposals for the award of Honorary Fellowships would be brought to the next meeting.	23/192
<b>11.</b>	<b>COMMITTEE REPORTS</b>	
	Due to lengthy discussions of matters affecting students Committee reports were not addressed at this meeting.	23/193
<b>STARRED ITEMS FOR REPORT AND FORMAL APPROVAL</b>		
<b>12.*</b>	<b>REPORTABLE EVENTS</b>	
	NOTED an oral update of the report to the OfS of a reportable event under OfS condition 3(i) on Thursday 6 July. A report of missing marks and the impact on award and progression outcomes, resulting from the UCU marking and assessment boycott.	23/194
<b>13.*</b>	<b>REPORT OF DECISIONS AGREED BY CIRCULATION</b>	
	There were none.	23/195
<b>14.*</b>	<b>FINANCIAL COMPLIANCE</b>	




	APPROVED the financial compliance policies:	23/196
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anti-Bribery Policy</li> <li>• Anti-Money Laundering policy</li> <li>• Counter-Fraud Policy</li> <li>• Criminal Finance Act Policy</li> </ul>	
<b>15.*</b>	<b>SEALING OF DOCUMENTS</b>	
	NOTED the use of the College seal:	23/197
	15 May 2023: Section 106 Agreement, Deed of variation to section 106a of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 relating to the development of Rusham Park, (inc. Nightingale Lodge), Whitehall Lane, Egham. TW20 9MW. Between Runnymede Borough Council, Surrey County Council and RHBNC.	
	15 May 2023: Contract document for Chestnuts refurbishment at Chestnut Drive, Egham Hill, TW20 0BQ	
	15 June 2023: Deed of Novation between the National Film and Television School, RHBNC and Uplands Television Limited	
	27 June 2023: Contract document for Founders FRA works Phase 1 – Passive fire stopping at Founders Egham Hill Campus	
	<b>OTHER MATTERS</b>	
<b>16.</b>	<b>ANNOUNCEMENTS</b>	
	There were none.	23/198
<b>17.</b>	<b>OTHER BUSINESS</b>	
<b>18.</b>	There were none.	23/199
<b>19.</b>	<b>DATES OF NEXT COUNCIL MEETINGS</b>	
	On Campus unless indicated otherwise:	23/200
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 October 2023, 17.00-19.00</li> <li>• 22 November 2023, Council Strategy Day, Cumberland Lodge</li> <li>• 23 November 2023, Strategy day 2 and Council meeting finishing 14.00.</li> <li>• 15 February 2023, 17:00-19:00 (tbc. rescheduling to 22 February 2023)</li> <li>• 16 May 2024, 17:00-19:00</li> <li>• 4 July 2024, 17:00-19:00</li> </ul>	

NOTED the following minutes provided in the Exhibition Book as a separate document.

EB1	<b>MINUTES OF COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEETINGS</b> <i>Minutes designated "unsigned" are those not yet signed off by the Committee but approved by the Committee Chair</i>
	Students, Education and Research Committee 22 February 2023
	Finance Committee 30 March 2023
	Strategy & Governance Committee 20 April 2023
	Audit, Risk & Compliance Committee 24 April 2023
	Remuneration Committee 5 June 2023 ( <i>Not yet available</i> )
	Strategy & Governance Committee 8 June 2023 ( <i>Not yet available</i> )
	Students, Education and Research Committee 8 June 2023 ( <i>Not yet available</i> )
	Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee 12 June 2023 ( <i>Not yet available</i> )
	People, Staff Development, Reward and Wellbeing Committee 15 June 2023 ( <i>Not yet available</i> )
	Finance Committee 22 June 2023 ( <i>Not yet available</i> )
	<b>The following Committees have not met since the last meeting of Council</b>
	All have met
	EB2
	Minutes of the annual meeting of 12 May 2023



Dame Margaret Hodge DBE MP  
Chair of Council



Date 5 October 2023