

# Council

5 October 2023

1700-1900

EWD Seminar Room 1-04



## Actions

Action	Minute ref.	Responsible	Date
<b>Study Group:</b> Update Council about changes for the 2024/25 recruitment round.	23/216	TB	22 February 2024
<b>UKVI:</b> Report will be provided to Council.	23/219	Secretariat	ASAP
<b>Rankings and Reputation:</b> The subject of February Council briefing, with Environmental Sustainability deferred to 16 May 2024.	23/220	Secretariat	22 February 2024
<b>Industrial Action:</b> Lessons learned from the MAB to be reported back to Strategy & Governance.	23/225	ZK/MH	18 January 2023
<b>NSS:</b> Arrange a meeting for Council to receive an update on the NSS student response commentary.	23/234	Secretariat	TBC Jan 2024
<b>Matters Arising: Student Accommodation:</b> A report of the strategy to address the short-term demand for student accommodation for 2024/25.	23/142	DW	23 November 2023
<del><b>RH2030s Strategy:</b> A timeline to be developed for sharing insights and data with Council Committees for initial review by S&amp;G.</del>	<del>23/148</del>	<del>MF</del>	<del>S&amp;G 2 November 2023</del>
<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  See item 19*
<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 Chair of Council to formally write to the SU Board of Trustees, on confirmation of the OfS Condition of Registration for Freedom of Speech	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 supported and the Code of Practice and processes are in place and implemented.	23/102	JS/AB	15 February 2024
<del><b>Pillar 1 Update:</b> include in the next annual Pillar 1 report the Pillar 4 projects which are symbiotic</del>	<del>23/111</del>	<del>TB</del>	<del>February 2024</del>

Action from current meeting ~~Action completed since last meeting.~~

# Approvals

Approved at this meeting	Minute ref.	Responsible	Date
Formal approval of the appointment of the University Secretary which incorporates the Secretary to Council responsibilities.	23/203	Chair of Council	5 October 2023
Minutes of the meetings held on 6 July 2023 (M23/139-23/201).	23/208	Chair of Council	5 October 2023
Extending the co-option of Tim Mitchell to S&G until 31 July 2024 to continue to advise on Estates matters and Rusham Park.	23/242	Chair of Council	5 October 2023
The award of four Honorary Fellowships in 2024.	23/249	Council	May 2024
The Donation Acceptance Policy with amended wording from "organisation" to "donor".	23/254	CFO	5 October 2023
The Code of Conduct and responsibilities of Council Members.	23/255	Council	5 October 2023
Council's Terms of Reference including Council's role regarding the Founder's Endowment Fund and the draft Schedule of Business for 2023/24.	23/256	Council	5 October 2023
2023/24 Terms of Reference for the following Council Committees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategy and Governance Committee</li> <li>• Finance committee</li> <li>• Investment Sub-Committee</li> <li>• Remuneration Committee</li> </ul>	23/259	Council	5 October 2023

# Council

5 October 2023

1700-1900

Emily Wilding Davison Building Room 1-04



M23/202- M23/265

## Minutes

<b>Present:</b>	Dame Margaret Hodge (Chair of Council)	Sarah King
	Ann Ewing (Vice Chair of Council)	Gerry O'Hagan
	Dr Donna Brown (part)	Professor Julie Sanders (Vice-Chancellor and Principal)
	Dame Sally Dicketts	Sharanya Sivarajah
	Professor Michael Farthing	David Walker
	Sarah Honeycombe	David Williams
	Hannah Hockin	Balram Veliath
	HHJ Khatun Sapnara (from 17.15)	Ian Wilson
<b>Apologies:</b>	Simon Davis	Nick Perryman (Vice Chair of Council)
	Professor Bob Fitzgerald	
<b>Secretary:</b>	Andrew Boggs (from 17.05)	University Secretary
<b>In attendance:</b>	Professor Tracy Bhamra	Provost and Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Global)
	Dr Nick Barratt	Executive Director of Student Journey
	Professor Mark Fellowes	Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Strategy, Planning & Resources)
	Professor Zainab Khan	Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education & Student Experience)
	Mary White	Chief Financial Officer
<b>Clerk:</b>	Pauline Martin	Executive Officer for Council (Minutes)
<b>Observer</b>	Rikke Jensen	UCU (part)

### 1. UNIVERSITY SECRETARY

NOTED Council's involvement in the development of the role and the appointment process of the University Secretary. 23/202

Formally APPROVED the appointment of the University Secretary which incorporates the Secretary to Council responsibilities. 23/203

The University Secretary was welcomed to his first meeting of Council. (17.05) 23/204

### 2. COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

	NOTED the membership of Council for the academic year 2023/24. New members of Council and those in regular attendance were welcomed to their first meeting.	23/205
	Members:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Miss Hannah Hockin, RHSU President 2023/24</li> <li>• Miss Sharanya Sivarajah, Elected Student Member and VP Education</li> </ul>	
	Attendees:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr Nick Barratt, Executive Director of Student Journey</li> <li>• Professor Mark Fellowes, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Strategy, Planning and Resources)</li> <li>• Professor Zainab Khan, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience)</li> </ul>	
<b>3.</b>	<b>APOLOGIES</b>	
	NOTED apologies from Simon Davis, Nick Perryman and Professor Bob Fitzgerald.	23/206
<b>4.</b>	<b>DECLARATION OF INTERESTS</b>	
	AGREED for discussion of matters relating to strike action and pensions Dr Donna Brown (Chair of RHUL UCU) and Rikke Jensen (UCU Observer) would leave the meeting.	23/207
<b>5.</b>	<b>MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING</b>	
	APPROVED minutes of the meetings held on 6 July 2023 (M23/139-23/201)	23/208
	NOTED that the Chair of Council would write to the SU Board of Trustees when the requirements of the new OfS Condition of Registration for Freedom of Speech were confirmed.	23/209
<b>6.</b>	<b>MATTERS ARISING</b>	
	NOTED matters arising, not covered elsewhere on the agenda:	23/210
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (Confidential) That IP litigation was lodged with the French courts awaiting a date. (reported previously to the OfS, in the VC-P report to the May 2023 meeting and minute ref 23/128)</li> <li>• London expansion: the plan to take over a particular building was not continuing due to prohibitive costs and the availability of other University of London buildings for this purpose was being investigated.</li> </ul>	
<b>7.</b>	<b>REPORT OF DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE CHAIR OF COUNCIL</b>	
	There were none.	23/211
<b>8.</b>	<b>UN-STARRING OF ITEMS</b>	
	NOTED item 20, the Donation Acceptance Policy and item 23, Committee Terms Of Reference were unstarred for discussion.	23/212
<b>MAJOR BUSINESS</b>		
<b>9.</b>	<b>VICE-CHANCELLOR AND PRINCIPAL'S UPDATE</b>	
	NOTED the report from the Vice-Chancellor and Principal.	23/213
	NOTED Undergraduate and PGT student recruitment for 2023/24 and the detailed presentation.	23/214

DISCUSSED International PGT recruitment was currently facing a nationwide challenge. EU PGT recruitment was currently forecast to be below target and Overseas PGT student numbers remained down (39% below target). The reasons for the shortfall in Overseas PGT recruitment were discussed; Government policy on immigration, UK cost of living in addition to in-cycle increased deposits and tougher credibility checks for certain markets. This led to a drop off in numbers completing the process, but compared to previous years the students that succeeded were expected to be of a very high standard and likely to continue with their programmes.	23/215
DISCUSSED Study Group performance in the first year and AGREED that Council would receive a paper on the changes planned for the 2024/25 recruitment round.	23/216
DISCUSSED undergraduate student recruitment for 2023/24 was ahead of target supported by buoyant home UG recruitment.	23/217
<i>HHJ Khatun Sapnara arrived 5.15pm</i>	
DISCUSSED Estates issues, management of health and safety issues with water ingress and aerated concrete panels (RaaC) was being addressed with monitoring of the situation, planning for future needs and regular communications with both staff and students. A survey of buildings that may have been constructed using the RaaC method was underway by expert structural engineers.	23/218
NOTED the audit report from the UKVI site visit of July, originally due by the end of September, had not yet been received and would be shared with Council as soon as possible.	23/219
NOTED the latest league table update which would be reviewed by the Reputation and Ranking Working Group, due to present on its work at Strategy & Governance Committee of 2 November. A briefing session for Council would be arranged.	23/220
<i>Dr Donna Brown and Rikke Jensen were asked to leave the meeting 5.30pm</i>	
DISCUSSED the current position regarding UCU national action and the ballot, due to close on 3 November, seeking a mandate to extend action into 2023/24.	23/221
DISCUSSED industrial action and how, with the Marking and Assessment boycott (MAB) now withdrawn, steps were being taken to complete outstanding marking for all UG graduating students by 27 October with most anticipated to be available before this date.	23/222
NOTED the OfS were informed of the reportable event (missing marks, impact on student progression and awards outcomes) on 6 July 2023 and a response was received in September with further questions, the response was sent on 21 September with the required figures at that date.	23/223
DISCUSSED that RHUL was amongst the top forty universities most affected by MAB and industrial action, that the reasons were complex, and that revised approaches were needed across the institution. Council NOTED their support for the adoption of an approach that prioritised student experience and outcomes in decision making.	23/224
NOTED a review and report of the impact of MAB mitigation and lessons learned was ongoing and due to be shared with Strategy & Governance Committee in due course.	23/225
DISCUSSED a verbal update on the three-yearly USS pension valuation, the assessment of the pensions assets vs liabilities. The last valuation March 2020 showed a large deficit (£14bn) and required reductions in benefits and increased contribution rates. Recent rising interest rates now contributed to a surplus (£7.4bn) at the March 2023 valuation and offered the opportunity to reduce employers contribution rates from 21.6% to 11.7%. and for employees from 9.8% to 6.1%.	23/226

	NOTED that a member consultation is ongoing relating to improvements to member benefits and a joint statement between JNC and USS was being prepared to recommend improvements in benefits are delivered from January 2024. The employers response to the recent UUK consultation was approved by Finance Committee at their last meeting.	23/227
	<i>Dr Donna Brown and Rikke Jensen returned 5.50pm</i>	
<b>10.</b>	<b>NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY</b>	
	RECEIVED a report and summary of 2023 NSS results and an update on the Response and Readiness Plan for NSS 2024 implemented following Executive Board approval on 15 August 2023. An extended report was due to be discussed at SER on 11 October.	23/228
	DISCUSSED the areas of critical concern; student commentary included in survey responses was being analysed to share with staff across the University in due course.	23/229
	DISCUSSED the requirement for urgent change regarding education practice, the quality of the portfolio and professional behaviours of everyone involved in supporting students.	23/230
	DISCUSSED how staff in Schools and FE Colleges were changing their practice in response to the requirements of the new generation and the different nature of students. RHUL staff working with students, including everyone involved in every step of the student journey, needed to understand their role and responsibilities, to understand the expectations of today's students and respond professionally and be prepared to engage with today's and future students differently.	23/231
	DISCUSSED that the style of communications with students needed to be targeted and to use language around regulations that was easier to understand.	23/232
	DISCUSSED concern with the low level of engagement with surveys of year one and two students which required careful management	23/233
	ACTION to plan a meeting for Council members early in the new year to receive an update on the student commentary in responses to the NSS.	23/234
<b>11.</b>	<b>TEACHING EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK</b>	
	NOTED verbal feedback on the outcome of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) published at the end of September 2023, where the University achieved Silver, awarded to institutions where "student experience and student outcomes are typically of very high quality".	23/235
	NOTED the development of the Education strands of the RH2030s Strategy would reflect the areas where more work was needed. This included improving student experience and outcomes for all student groups by eliminating disparities with an inclusive approach embedded by design. Noted the need to evidence that good practice did not happen only in pockets of the institution but scaled to become fully implemented university-wide schemes. A formal mechanism to measure learning gain was also needed.	23/236
<b>12.</b>	<b>STRATEGY</b>	
	NOTED the KPI Report and update on key topics, an update was in process and would be available for the next meeting.	23/237

<b>13.</b>	<b>FINANCE</b>	
	NOTED the report of the provisional financial results 2022/23, subject to change by the external auditors and an outstanding valuation for Rusham Park which may affect the accounting treatment of the demolition works with a worst case £2.5m of additional expenditure.	23/238
<b>14.</b>	<b>COMMITTEE REPORTS</b>	
	NOTED reports from Chairs of Council committees.	23/239
	<b>Students Education and Research Committee</b> , at its meeting in June received updates on:	23/240
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range and breadth of KEF.</li> <li>• The Education Strategy (Pillar 1)</li> <li>• The Access and participation plan and preparation for the new APP.</li> <li>• The annual presentation from the RHSU leadership team.</li> </ul>	
	<b>Strategy &amp; Governance Committee</b> , other than items included on this agenda, the meeting of 14 September received:	23/241
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A verbal update on the recently published Guardian and Daily Mail league tables.</li> <li>• An update on student accommodation in September 2023.</li> <li>• An update on London expansion.</li> </ul>	
	NOTED the Strategy & Governance Committee APPROVED extending the co-option of Tim Mitchell to S&G until 31 July 2024 to continue to advise on Estates matters and Rusham Park.	23/242
	<b>Audit Risk and Compliance Committee</b> , 2 October meeting: The committee reviewed the Institutional Risk Register and focussed on the key risks to the institution:	23/243
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial sustainability.</li> <li>• Student recruitment.</li> <li>• Cyber security, improving but with a significant risk of attacks.</li> <li>• UKVI and immigration processes, actions underway.</li> </ul>	
	Emerging risks:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generative AI.</li> <li>• the Marking and assessment boycott and curriculum complexity.</li> <li>• Building compliance in relation to RaaC (aerated concrete) panels and risk assessments of all buildings built in the relevant period.</li> <li>• Campus of the future and space utilisation.</li> </ul>	
	<b>Finance Committee</b> : other than items included on this agenda the meeting of 14 September received:	23/244
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An update on the CoStar project and consideration of procuring a lease.</li> </ul>	

	<b>Residential Development Review Group:</b> a report of the workshop on 11 September which considered the next steps for the campus:	23/245
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forecast student numbers.</li> <li>• Space available, the estates stock.</li> <li>• Use of the private sector.</li> <li>• Options to do things differently.</li> <li>• Health safety, RaaC.</li> <li>• Divestment options.</li> <li>• Next steps - the development of a plan of costed and prioritised options, and defined principals to guide decision making over the next 12 months.</li> </ul>	
	<b>Remuneration Committee</b> 14 September:	23/246
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviewed terms of reference.</li> <li>• Considered appointments within its remit and approved.</li> <li>• Received the draft section of the annual financial statements re Senior pay for sign off.</li> </ul>	
<b>15.</b>	<b>UNIVERSITY SECRETARY'S UPDATE</b>	
	NOTED the detailed briefing for Council prior to the meeting. The briefing addressed the expected requirements of the proposed new OfS Condition of Registration in relation to harassment and sexual misconduct and Freedom of Speech; the new legislation, expectations of the OfS, and expected responsibilities of Council.	23/247
	NOTED other recent developments in the external regulatory and legislative environment:	23/248
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Lifelong Learning Act 2023</li> <li>• New CMA Guidance for higher education</li> <li>• Lords Committee on Industry and Regulators published conclusions on the work of the OfS on 13 September</li> </ul>	
<b>16.</b>	<b>HONORARY FELLOWSHIPS 2024</b>	
	APPROVED, with one objection to one nomination, the recommendation to Council from Strategy and Governance Committee for the award of four Honorary Fellowships in 2024. Names are confidential until nearer the time.	23/249
<b>STARRED ITEMS FOR REPORT AND FORMAL APPROVAL</b>		
<b>17.*</b>	<b>REPORTABLE EVENTS</b>	
	RECEIVED an update on a reportable event under OfS condition 3(i) reported in minute ref 23/223.	23/250
<b>18.*</b>	<b>OfS</b>	
	NOTED the letter received from the OfS dated 17 July 2023, regarding freedom of speech.	23/251
<b>19.*</b>	<b>REPORT OF DECISIONS AGREED BY CIRCULATION</b>	
	There were none	23/252
<b>20.*</b>	<b>POLICIES</b>	



	This item was unstarred for discussion and AGREED to amend the wording of paragraph 5 replacing "organisation" with "donor".	23/253
	APPROVED the Donation Acceptance Policy with the amended wording.	23/254
<b>21.*</b>	<b>GOVERNING DOCUMENTS</b>	
	APPROVED the Code of Conduct and responsibilities of Council Members on recommendation of Strategy and Governance Committee.	23/255
<b>22.*</b>	<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE AND DRAFT SCHEDULE OF BUSINESS</b>	
	APPROVED Council's Terms of Reference including Council's role regarding the Founder's Endowment Fund and the draft Schedule of Business for 2023/24.	23/256
<b>23.*</b>	<b>COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>	
	This item was unstarred to question why there were no staff members of Council on these committees.	23/257
	DISCUSSED and agreed to consider keeping under review any committees where it may be appropriate to include staff members of Council in the membership.	23/258
	APPROVED Terms of Reference for the following Council Committees:	23/259
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategy and Governance Committee</li> <li>• Finance committee</li> <li>• Investment Sub-Committee</li> <li>• Remuneration Committee</li> </ul>	
<b>24.*</b>	<b>SEALING OF DOCUMENTS</b>	
	NOTED the use of the College seal as below:	23/260
	<b>7 July 2023:</b> Honorary Degree certificates for conferral during graduation ceremonies:	23/261
	Degree of Doctor of Sciences (Social Sciences) Honoris Causa conferred on Shadrack Frimpong on 13 July 2023.	
	Degree of Doctor of Laws Honoris Causa conferred on Her Honour Anne Molyneux MBE on 12 July 2023	
	Degree of Doctor of Science Honoris Causa conferred on Dr Anne-Marie Imafidon MBE on 14 July 2023.	
	<b>31 July 2023:</b> ICD Intermediate Building Contract with contractors' Design 2016. AJS Contracts (Scotland) Ltd re Highfield Close refurbishment	
	<b>OTHER MATTERS</b>	
<b>25.</b>	<b>ANNOUNCEMENTS</b>	
	There were none	23/262
<b>26.</b>	<b>OTHER BUSINESS</b>	
	There was none	23/263

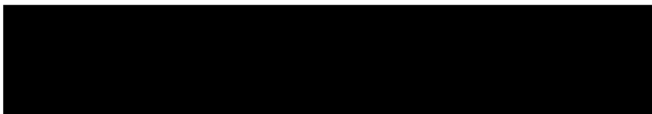

27. DATES OF NEXT COUNCIL MEETINGS

On Campus unless shown otherwise:

23/264

- 22 November 2023, Council Strategy Day, Cumberland Lodge
- 23 November 2023, Strategy day 2 and Council meeting finishing at 14.00.
- 22 February 2023, 17:00-19:00
- 16 May 2024, 17:00-19:00
- 4 July 2024, 17:00-19:00

<b>THE EXHIBITION BOOK:</b>		23/265
The following minutes provided in this Exhibition Book as a separate document.		
<b>EB1</b>	<b>NOTED 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>	
	Remuneration Committee 5 June 2023 <i>(Not yet available)</i>	
	<b>Strategy &amp; Governance Committee 8 June 2023 included</b>	
	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>	
	<b>Finance Committee 22 June 2023 included</b>	
	Strategy & Governance Committee 14 September 2023 <i>(Not yet available)</i>	
	Finance Committee 14 September 2023 <i>(Not yet available)</i>	
	Remuneration Committee 14 September 2023 <i>(Not yet available)</i>	
	Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee 2 October 2023 <i>(Not yet available)</i>	
	<b>The following Committees have not met since the last meeting of Council</b>	
	Students, Education and Research Committee (Next meeting 11 October 2023)	
	People, Staff Development, Reward and Wellbeing Committee (Next meeting 2 November 2023)	
	<b>EB2</b>	<b>JNCC MEETING MINUTES</b>
	None were available.	

 Dame Margaret Hodge DBE MP Chair of Council	 Date 23 November 2023
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