

GREEN PAPER

**Academic Governance
Review 2023/24**

Audience: University of Warwick staff and students
Authors: Senate Working Group on Academic Governance
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Executive Summary

1. The Senate has commissioned a review of Academic Governance at Warwick. The overall aim of the review is to secure good academic governance and ensure that, through the Senate and its committees, academic self-governance is facilitated in an inclusive, values-driven, and evidence-based way on behalf of the Council, ensuring that decisions support the strategy, sustainability, diversity, and regulatory compliance of the University overall.
2. The review seeks to reflect on our strengths and effectiveness, recognise opportunities for enhancement, benchmark against sector practice, meet evolving regulatory expectations, and capture what we have learned since the last academic governance review of 2016/17. The review runs through this academic year, aiming for agreement of recommendations by the Senate in April 2024.
3. The review draws on desk-based analysis, self-reflection by committees, meeting observations and consultation with staff and students (surveys, workshops, focus groups and interviews). While much of this has been carried out internally, we commissioned Advance HE to undertake part of the review and to offer an independent view of Warwick's effectiveness in the context of the sector.
4. The Senate formed a working group on academic governance with a remit to steer the review, digest the findings, consider potential ways forward for the University, and to reach a coherent set of recommendations to the Senate on academic governance. The Senate Working Group is chaired by Professor Rachel Moseley and draws together a diverse mix of academic (from each faculty), professional services, UCU and Students' Union perspectives.
5. Our Stage 1 / Term 1 work is now complete. We have received Advance HE's findings and the Senate Working Group's current thinking is crystallised into this Green Paper for consultation. This Green Paper is being shared widely to invite feedback and frame engagement with key stakeholders to formulate the more detailed proposals for a White Paper.

Advance HE's View

6. Advance HE **found academic governance at Warwick to be effective overall**. They recognised many strengths, including *a culture that appears to be admirably self-reflective and unafraid to tackle difficult issues*.
7. At our request, the team offered a wide range of recommendations to help us update and enhance our practice further. These recommendations centre on two broad themes: **bringing greater clarity and effectiveness** to the roles of different bodies (noting our current structures were summed up as 'good but confusing'); and **ensuring a more diverse range of voices are effectively heard** through our structures (noting that we had included an explicit item on EDI in Advance HE's terms of reference for this review). Advance HE's findings are embedded in this Green Paper, and the full report can be found [here](#).

Initial Findings of the Academic Governance Review

8. This Green Paper brings together the Senate Working Group's findings to date – drawing on internal analysis, the Advance HE report, and extensive discussion by the group – and sets out initial thinking about how we could further strengthen academic governance at Warwick. These are not firm proposals at this stage, but rather they invite engagement from staff and students. Details of consultation exercises with the University community are outlined in the conclusion of this paper.
9. The Green Paper has five core sections setting out the Senate Working Group's thinking to this point:
 - a. **Definition, Principles and Scope** (see: [Chapter 1](#))

For the first time at Warwick, we propose explicitly defining what we think *good academic governance* involves. This includes articulating the scope of academic governance as well as setting out principles that guide the implementation of good academic governance. These provide the framework for the rest of the review and for our ongoing operation of academic governance.

b. Architecture and Remits (see: [Chapter 2](#))

This theme explored institutional, faculty and departmental academic governance arrangements, and considered current models of policy development, scheme of delegation and the arrangements for responsibilities currently held in our committee structure. We found that the process for navigating proposals through the current governance system for consultation and approval is complex, sometimes ambiguous, and not universally well-understood. There is therefore a need for clearer specification of pathways for those making proposals, being consulted, or making decisions.

In the same vein, the current structure is ‘committee-heavy’ and there is room for simplification, removal of duplication and a reduction of consequent resource waste and overall cost associated with this. Proposed solutions to address these issues include streamlining committees and their remits, improved delegation of authority from the Senate to its committees, developing model approaches to policy development and consultation, and making clearer when and how it is appropriate to engage stakeholders outside of committee meetings.

c. Academic Assurance and External Compliance (see: [Chapter 3](#))

The working group agreed that Warwick is currently academically assured and externally compliant (in relation to Education), having robust internal and external mechanisms in place to ensure this and having quality assurance practices embedded through everyday activity and processes. Work is underway to develop an institutional Quality Framework to further strengthen our approach to assurance and compliance. In addition, we see a need to strengthen (two-way) reporting lines at various levels, from the Senate and Council through to education committees in faculties and academic departments.

Currently, exploration of this theme has been focused on Education and further exploration of the Research element of academic governance is warranted.

d. Constitutions and Diversity of Memberships (see: [Chapter 4](#))

Current committee constitutions and recruitment practices do not go as far as they reasonably could in ensuring that memberships reflect an appropriate diversity of perspectives or the composition of our University’s community. Several potential barriers to improved diversity of memberships were found. The review is exploring potential proposals for overcoming these potential barriers, including alternative committee-appointment processes, widening the range of committees that are counted into standardised workload allocation, developing some form of Nominations Committee with oversight of membership diversity, and making use of recognised diversity and inclusion toolkits to improve relevant practices.

e. Inclusive Environments and Ways of Working (see: [Chapter 5](#))

While *inclusive environments and ways of working* has been identified as an individual theme, matters falling within this broad theme underpin much of what the review aims to achieve. The ideas being explored here include: a more robust induction process for new members and committee chairs, developing training and guidance for committee members and chairs based on the inclusive behaviours framework, demystifying the committee structure through greater clarity of committees’ purposes, roles and responsibilities, standardising approaches to committee paper drafting and circulation, and ensuring appropriate encouragement and acknowledgment of student contributions.

Consultation and Next Steps

10. Throughout this Green Paper, [a series of consultation questions are posed for discussion](#), challenge, and refinement by the University community. Feedback received through Term 2 of the academic year 2023-24

will inform a refined set of proposals that will be developed into a White Paper for further consultation and decision.

Introduction

11. This Green Paper shares the initial findings and proposals from the University of Warwick's 2023/24 Academic Governance Review. It is intended for dissemination across the University community, including staff and student colleagues with little or no prior knowledge or experience of academic governance as well as those with more extensive such knowledge and experience. As such, this paper is written to support accessibility and inclusion with definitions and acronyms articulated throughout. Links to further reading are also provided.
12. The University Council, the Senate, the Executive Board, and the committees that report to them provide the decision-making structure through which the University is governed and managed. Further information, including a full list of committees and diagrammatic representations of their structures, are available on the governance webpages: <https://warwick.ac.uk/services/gov/>.
13. Academic governance is the term used to describe the way that academic matters of the institution are governed, led at Warwick by the Senate. Corporate governance covers areas such as finance and estates, led at Warwick by Council. Together *academic* and *corporate* governance form the system of governance for most Higher Education Institutions.
14. This review solely focuses on academic governance at Warwick, which includes the following (based on the current remit of Senate – [Senate \(warwick.ac.uk\)](https://warwick.ac.uk/senate/)):
 - **Student:** admission, registration, success, wellbeing, experience, conduct and discipline, complaints and contention, students' union, and student organisation.
 - **Education:** qualifications and courses, teaching and learning, assessment, progression and award, quality assurance, partnerships and credit transfer, strategy.
 - **Research:** performance, quality, impact, strategy.
 - **Academic:** academic freedom and freedom of speech, organisation (faculties, departments, centres) and governance, resourcing, academic dress, library administration.
 - **Advice to Council on:** academic staff appointments and conditions, academic resourcing, Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor appointments, scholarships and prizes, estate development.

Why launch a review of academic governance now?

15. Regular review of academic governance is good practice. As a Higher Education Institution, we are also obliged by the Office for Students (OfS) to have adequate and effective governance in place as part of the ongoing conditions of registration. The last review of academic governance at Warwick was undertaken in 2016/17. [This broad ranging review](#) led to substantial change to academic governance at the University. It is therefore timely to reflect on this.
16. Since 2017, various aspects of UK higher education institutions, and the environments in which they operate, have changed. These changes include regulatory reforms, the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, changing expectations around higher education governance, enhanced focus on student and staff wellbeing and mental health, and increasing use of technology in education, as well as the accelerating complexity and power of that technology (See Advance HE Report p. 4)

17. As an institution, our internal expectations have also changed, with a increasing concerns for inclusivity, learning from experience and ongoing improvement.
18. In March 2022, the Senate welcomed a proposal to launch a light touch review of the institution’s system of Academic Governance. The high level of engagement and interest shown for the review led to the timeframe and scope of the work being extended, by agreement with the Senate. that the extended aim of the review is to ensure good academic governance at Warwick is founded in the Senate and its committees facilitating academic self-governance in an inclusive, values-driven, and evidence-based way on behalf of the Council, ensuring that decisions support the strategy, sustainability, diversity, and regulatory compliance of the University overall.
19. This review seeks to ensure the University’s system of academic governance is reflective, forward looking, and enables activity that both reacts to and enacts change, all in ways that support University strategy.

Understanding our starting point

20. The structure of the review is designed to be self-reflective, self-critical and to emphasise stakeholder engagement and consultation, without a defined or predetermined outcome. The review aims to make space for exploration, engagement, and potentially difficult conversations.
21. Through initial project scoping, [the project team](#) has undertaken data gathering, desk-based analysis and committee engagement to build a picture of existing committee structures, practices and effectiveness.
22. In addition to an internal review, we contracted Advance HE to provide an expert independent view by undertaking an external review of the Senate. [Advance HE](#) is an independent, member-led charity, specialising in higher education; they support institutions globally to improve the higher education sector for all, including in the specialist domains of governance and equality, diversity, and inclusion. Advance HE’s review brings a sector-wide perspective, benchmarking against best practice and external requirements to facilitate internal reflections at Warwick.

Our Approach

23. As agreed by the Senate, an Academic Governance Review Senate Working Group (SWG) was formed with a remit to steer the review, digest the findings of consultation and desk-based analysis, consider potential ways forward for the University, and to reach a coherent set of recommendations to the Senate on changes to academic governance.
24. The Senate Working Group constitution and membership is comprised as follows:

Chair	Professor Rachel Moseley	Vice-Provost and Chair of the Faculty of Arts
Members	Emma Cann	Head of Social Inclusion
	Professor David Davies	Warwick Medical School; Deputy Chair (Education) of the Faculty of Science, Engineering & Medicine; Chair of the Academic Freedom Review Committee 2023-24
	Dan Derricott	Director of Education Policy & Quality; Assistant Secretary to Senate
	Dr Sarah Duggan	Director of Operations, Economics
	Professor Guy Longworth	Head of Department, Philosophy
	Anna O'Neill	University Librarian
	Vaishnavi Ravi	Vice-President (Postgraduate), Students' Union
	Dr Gavin Schwartz-Leeper	Associate Professor, Liberal Arts; Faculty Senior Tutor - Science, Engineering & Medicine
	Kulbir Shergill	Director of Social Inclusion

Secretariat	Anna Taylor	President of the Students' Union
	Dr Chris Twine	Secretary to Council
	Kim Robinson	Deputy Director and Head of Education Policy and Governance, Education Policy and Quality
	Geraldine Connelly	Senior Project Manager, Education Policy and Quality

25. Alongside defining what good academic governance means at the University of Warwick and refining a set of underpinning principles, the Senate Working Group explored four key themes in detail to provide a robust review of our institutional approach to academic governance:

- Architecture and Remits
- Academic Assurance & External Compliance
- Inclusive Environments and Ways of Working
- Constitutions & Diversity of Memberships

26. The outcomes from the Senate Working Group thematic discussions are brought together in this single, holistic Green Paper for consultation.

Why a Green Paper?

27. Early review discussions showed that staff and students are often unaware of the status of any given proposal when they are approached for consultation. The use of the green and white paper model has been adopted as a means of addressing this and it is intended to test the approach through this review.

28. This Green Paper presents, at an early stage, the context, challenges, and opportunities the review seeks to address, alongside potential solutions for exploration. It is being shared with the wider University community for discussion, challenge and shaping through Term 2 of 2023/24. The feedback received will be used to develop and refine detailed proposals for further consideration.

29. The stakeholder community for this review includes but is not limited to all university staff. It includes academic staff and professional services at all levels, the student community, the Students' Union, campus trades unions and members of the University Council. We welcome individual and collective feedback (e.g. on behalf of a department's senior team or a committee).

Responding to the consultation

30. Each section of this Green Paper includes consultation questions on which we would especially welcome feedback. However, wider, or more general observations are also welcome. Feedback can be provided in writing through senate@warwick.ac.uk.

31. As well as broad discussions of the paper as a whole, additional spaces to feedback and collaborate, as well as interviews and focus groups involving specific stakeholder groups will be used through Term 2, to test and refine specific proposals with the aim of ensuring that a diverse range of views are heard. Details of opportunities to take part are available [here](#).

32. Feedback on the Green Paper will be explored by the Senate Working Group to inform a revised set of proposals (a White Paper). The White Paper will incorporate more detail on the implementation of the proposals and will again be consulted on ahead of Senate being invited to approve the final set of proposals of the review at its meeting in April 2024.

Advance HE's Academic Governance Effectiveness Review

33. [Advance HE](#) was engaged to undertake a review of the effectiveness of academic governance and assurance at University of Warwick as part of this Academic Governance Review. As a respected sector body with considerable experience in governance effectiveness reviews, consultation and training, Advance HE brings an informed external perspective to the review.
34. With a remit to conduct an effectiveness review of Senate to include sector benchmarking and with specific focus on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), Advance HE's aims in this review included:
 - Be forward looking with sector insights.
 - Review Senate's engagement with academic strategy and policy development as well as with academic assurance.
 - Examine how Senate embodies and encourages diversity, inclusion and ethical and collegial behaviour.
 - Review size, composition, and delegation.
 - Consider the relationship with Council.
35. The final report from Advance HE assesses academic governance at Warwick as **effective** overall.
36. Areas of strength were highlighted as follows:
 - Well written, comprehensive committee papers.
 - Cover sheets that make clear the decisions that committees need to make and highlight strategic risks and issues.
 - Collegial and thoughtful discussion with respectful challenge to and from the executive.
 - Very able secretariat teams.
 - A culture that is admirably self-reflective and unafraid to tackle difficult issues.
37. While the core observation of Advance HE is that academic governance at Warwick works, it does set out 25 recommendations and 9 suggestions for improvement that are aimed towards developing sector leading effectiveness in our system of academic governance.
38. These recommendations centre on two broad themes: **bringing greater clarity and effectiveness** to the roles of different bodies (noting that our current structures were described as 'good but confusing'); and **ensuring a more diverse range of voices are effectively heard** through our structures (noting that we included an explicit item on EDI in Advance HE's terms of reference for this review).
39. Advance HE findings are embedded in this Green Paper, and **the full report** can be found on the [consultation webpages](#).
40. While the Academic Governance Review as a whole considers academic governance at departmental, faculty and university levels, Advance HE's review focuses primarily on the Senate and business directly to and from this body. Also, the Advance HE review did not include a review of academic policies and regulations. These are scheduled for review as part of wider work being undertaken at Warwick in relation to academic governance.

Chapter 1: Definition, Principles and Scope

41. To effectively review our academic governance, the review first asked, ‘what does good academic governance look like?’. In response, the Senate Working Group has developed and refined a working definition for Good Academic Governance at Warwick to frame the work of the review. **It is proposed that the University adopt this definition, a set of overarching principles for academic governance and an articulation of which matters are within scope for academic governance.**

Proposed definition of good academic governance

42. In formulating the following definition, we have sought to propose one that has utility in evaluating current practice and guiding decisions on future practice.
43. We have deliberately opted to define *good* academic governance, rather than simply academic governance, to underline the importance of effectiveness from the outset. *Good* is characterised in four ways here – governance that is coherent, inclusive, transparent and in support of the University as a whole. These reflect the themes that have been considered as most important in the Review’s early engagement with staff and students, and in external expectations of the University.

Good academic governance is where the Senate and its committees work coherently on behalf of the Council to self-govern education, research, and student matters inclusively and transparently, in support of the values, sustainability, strategy, and regulatory compliance of the University as a whole.

Proposed principles to underpin academic governance at Warwick

44. We are proposing that the University adopt the following principles that help to operationalise good academic governance in a consistent way. Taking a principles-led approach recognises that not every scenario can be foreseen and designed into the architecture, tools, or process of our academic governance system. Instead, those responsible for facilitating academic governance can look to a set of guiding principles that ensure any decisions they take are in the spirit of those principles.

- a. Senate and its committees lead by example in upholding these principles.
- b. Rounded, robust decisions have regard for the diversity of our academic disciplines while seeking the best fit for and upholding the interests of the University and its community overall.
- c. Decision-making is informed by and improves the experiences and outcomes of our diverse student and staff communities.
- d. The rationale for reaching decisions is captured and shared with the University community.
- e. Diversity of thought is important in the scrutiny of proposals and encouraged through inclusive, respectful discussions that uphold Academic Freedom, Freedom of Expression, and the principles of Dignity at Warwick.
- f. The remit, authority and parameters of the Senate, its committees and policy development processes are published and communicated transparently, implemented consistently, and designed as a coherent system in a way that builds understanding and trust over time.
- g. The memberships of the Senate and its committees include representation of senior responsible officers, academic units, subject matter experts and our diverse staff and student bodies.

- h. Students are partners in their education and student experience, including through our academic governance system.
- i. Staff and students involved in academic governance are supported to effectively fulfil a defined set of responsibilities and make an active contribution.
- j. Defining, evaluating, and improving the effectiveness of our approach to academic governance is a continuous and shared endeavour for all staff and students involved.

The scope of academic governance

We are proposing that the University recognise the following aspects as those that are within the scope of academic governance at Warwick:

- **Student:** admission, registration, success, wellbeing, experience, conduct and discipline, complaints and contention, students' union, and student organisation.
- **Education:** strategy, qualifications and courses, teaching and learning, assessment, progression and award, quality assurance, partnerships and credit transfer.
- **Research:** strategy, performance, quality, impact, knowledge exchange, training and development.
- **Academic:** strategy, academic freedom and freedom of speech, organisation (faculties, departments, centres) and governance, resourcing, academic dress, library administration.
- **Advice to Council on:** academic staff appointments and conditions, academic resourcing, Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor appointments, scholarships and prizes, estate development.

Consultation Questions

We would welcome feedback on the following aspects of this section, as well as any other general observations:

- Q1.** Are the proposed **definition, principles** and **scope** of (good) academic governance fit for purpose and agreeable?

Chapter 2: Architecture and Remits

45. The Senate Working Group explored the theme of Architecture and Remits which considered the roles and relationships of the Senate and its committees. Exploration included institutional, faculty and departmental level academic governance. This theme discussed the scheme of delegation, committee responsibilities (using the Responsible, Accountable, Considered, Informed model), models and process for policy development and ways in which matters can be raised with committees.
46. We are looking to articulate clear pathways for the proposal and consideration of business, better use of delegated of authority from the Senate to its committees, improved communication and a wider understanding of the purpose and practices of academic governance across the University community.
47. Ultimately, our current system for academic governance works and Advance HE confirms we are effective in our practice. There is room for improvement, however, with several areas identified to help strengthen our approach to academic governance through its architecture.
48. Definition is concerned with the clear articulation of the purpose and function of each committee, and a shared understanding of areas of work for which each committee is responsible, accountable, considers or informs. This is expressed through committee Terms of Reference. The Advance HE report makes specific recommendations about consideration of the primary purpose of Senate and by extension UEB and Council in relation to Senate.
49. Clarity of definition and structure has the potential to address the observation that current structures are 'good but confusing' and to supporting clearer navigation of the pathways through which matters are considered and approved in our academic governance structures. In addition to this, both the internal and external reviews found that our current committee architecture is currently 'committee-heavy' for the consideration of items. There is a need for simplification and removal of duplication to reduce the time and cost associated with this.
50. [Our scheme of delegation](#) outlines the responsibilities and delegated authorities for making key decisions in the name of, or on behalf of the University of Warwick. The Scheme reflects the way in which we currently work and provides evidence of the challenges outlined above. We encourage consideration of the extent to which the Senate could further delegate authority and responsibility to its committees.
51. We are also exploring areas of unnecessary duplication and opportunities to review the purpose of sub-committees currently without well-articulated responsibilities (e.g. Boards of Faculty) and considerations of remit and committee contribution as part of the second phase of the review.
52. Communication is an aspect where both the Senate Working Group and Advance HE invites proposals for improvement on ways to consult, engage, disseminate and receive information from the academic governance structure to ensure that all parts of the University community are included. The aim here is to address feelings of disconnect between institution, faculty, department, and individual members of staff.
53. There is a pivotal role for communication within and between parts of the academic governance structure. Two examples illustrate the need to improve this: the loop between a question or issue first being raised through to final decision-making is not closed consistently; and Advance HE highlights that there is room to strengthen communication links between Council and the Senate.
54. We have identified gaps in the current academic governance structures. For example, there is currently no 'home' for matters concerning non-academic Student Experience and Student Wellbeing. We need to consult

and agree on how these areas should relate to academic governance structures. A similar observation applies to Postgraduate Taught provision.

Early Thinking

55. At the top level, we should reconsider and better articulate the primary focus of the Senate and by extension, its relationship with the University Executive Board and Council.
56. We recommend that Terms of Reference for the Senate and its sub-committees be revised and clarified. We recommend the adoption of a simplified approach to Terms of Reference, akin to that recently adopted by Council's committees, and that these Terms of Reference be stated in plain English.
57. Consider the extent to which the Senate can delegate authority to its sub-committees and presents opportunities in terms of more effective use of committee resources. Clarifying the way in which the Senate receives assurance and retains oversight of this delegated authority would also represent a positive improvement.
58. Develop a clear process flow for policy development and consultation through the governance system would contribute to improved effectiveness and ease in navigating that system. This process flow should include a regularly reviewed and updated committee RACI, identifying issues with respect to which committees are responsible, accountable, consulted or informed in a way that reflects the scheme of delegation.
59. To further improve the navigability of our academic governance structure, the Senate Working Group is considering a method of triage or support for staff and students taking proposals into and through the academic governance process. Staff induction also represents an opportunity to embed understanding of the University's system of governance and management.
60. To further clarify the structure of responsibilities and authorities, we could establish an agreed approach to nomenclature. This approach would define what constitutes a committee or any of a range of types of sub-groups (including working groups, sub-groups, taskforces, task and finish groups). Institution-wide adoption of such definitions would help to ensure consistency and to foster a common understanding of our governance structures.
61. Establishing an agreed set of expectations for what constitutes good consultation on proposals, including when, where and how this is undertaken, would not only support better, more inclusive engagement with the University community, but would ensure more effective use of committees' meeting time. The approach favoured in our thinking to date would involve developing a set of broad principles on consultation that incorporate methods, audiences and timeframes that can be adapted in the contexts of specific proposals.

Consultation Questions

We would particularly welcome feedback on the following aspects of this section as well as any more general observations:

- Q2.** What are your overall impressions of the early thinking set out for the theme of Architecture and Remits?
- Q3.** Is there anything that has not been considered in our early thinking and that might help to address our findings concerning places where there is possible room for improvement in the architecture and remit of our current academic governance structure?

Chapter 3: Academic Assurance and External Compliance

62. The review has considered the ways in which the University's academic governance processes provides academic assurance and assurance of external compliance to Council. This was an area of particular focus by Advance HE.
63. Academic assurance is formed across a range of institutional activity and is embedded in our mechanisms for assuring education quality in everyday practice from departmental to university level.
64. Bodies in the academic governance structure are often the key forum or decision-maker for assuring and enhancing academic standards and practice, through our approach to regulation, policy, and strategic direction. Further layers of assurance enable the University to measure the effectiveness of our frontline quality assurance mechanisms and to identify potential areas of risk.
65. As a university we are subject to external regulatory and legal requirements to uphold academic standards and practice, which allow us to operate effectively within national and global frameworks, and ensure that the interests and rights of students, graduates and the public are safeguarded.
66. The evidence available confirms that the University can be confident in the assurances it receives, with external perspectives embedded in the majority of our quality assurance processes at institutional, faculty and departmental levels. We also have external recognition of our excellence in teaching and research.
67. Advance HE's view is that academic assurance and compliance at the University is comprehensive and that the levels of oversight and discussion about matters relating to assurance and regulatory requirements are appropriate. They highlight, whilst acknowledging the associated workload, that the Institutional Teaching and Learning Review (ITLR), is an area of potentially excellent practice in the sector.
68. They, like us, confirm that it is less clear than it could be what role is played by the different committees in providing solid academic assurance to Council, with some committees undertaking the heavy lifting of academic assurance within the current structure (i.e. Academic Quality and Standards Committee) and others not explicitly involved in ways that they might naturally be expected to be. To address this, Advance HE proposes a clear academic assurance map and annual report from the Senate to Council.
69. The evidence base for academic assurance comprises internal audit exercises, the Institutional Teaching and Learning Review, the Teaching Excellence Framework scheme (TEF), curriculum and periodic review, internal independent reporting mechanisms and external assurance measures embedded in quality processes. The University is currently developing a Quality Framework, to set out Warwick's approach to assuring and enhancing the quality of all levels of provision, whether delivered directly or in partnership, and the subsequent review and enhancement of each component. The Quality Framework will underpin and articulate the institution's approach to academic assurance and compliance in providing a coherent and consistent framework. This will address aspects of assurance mapping recommended by Advance HE.

Early Thinking

70. The Senate Working Group recognises that observations of the academic governance review are currently skewed towards taught education, and there is a need for great consideration and focus on research, postgraduate research and postgraduate taught provision with our academic governance structures and within the review itself. The second phase of this review will ensure to attend to each of these areas of provision, including current arrangements for assurance and compliance throughout the academic governance structure.

71. When exploring how the University can ensure that our academic governance structure contributes to meaningful academic assurance and compliance there is acknowledgment that there is currently limited time for discussion and scrutiny in some committees. The shared view of the Senate Working Group is that rather than further checkpoints for retrospective audit (e.g. commissioning an external review from QAA (Quality Assurance Agency) or a similar body), the stakeholder community should be empowered to execute their roles and responsibilities. Our recommendation, therefore is that reporting lines and communication from department to faculty level, where operational and academic delivery is rooted, be strengthened within the current governance structure.
72. The evidence we considered, including an internal audit report, suggests that the terms of reference for Departmental Education Committees and their reporting lines vary considerably across the institution and do not clearly link to Faculty level committees. During their introduction as part of the 2017 Academic Governance Review, a set of standardised terms of reference and baseline expectations were approved for Department Education Committees, but not well disseminated or consistently implemented. Revisiting these as part of this review support communication across the committee structure.
73. Communication between the Senate and Council should be strengthened, a view corroborated by Advance HE. They recommend that accountabilities for academic assurance across the committee structures be reviewed to ensure that duplication is minimised, and that Council has a clear academic assurance map. To support this, we recommend considering how the use of data at the Senate meetings could be used to strengthen academic assurance, particularly if more of the detailed work is delegated to its committees.
74. The University currently meets its statutory duties concerning Freedom of Expression, but it was agreed that this could be more clearly articulated through our internal compliance reporting.

Consultation Questions

We would particularly welcome feedback on the following aspects of this section as well as any more general observations:

- Q4.** What are your overall impressions of the early thinking to strengthen our approach to academic assurance and compliance?
- Q5.** What wider considerations should be incorporated into the proposed development of standardised terms of reference and baseline expectation setting for departmental Education Committees to ensure that they are meaningfully and effectively developed?

Chapter 4: Constitutions and Diversity of Memberships

75. One of the Academic Governance Review’s aims is to improve diversity of representation and diversity of thought in our committee structure. As such, we have started by considering the current diversity of the Senate and committee memberships, the current profile of members and the current mechanisms for determining the constitution of committees.
76. Our committee memberships currently comprise a relatively small proportion of the University community. From existing university and faculty committee constitutions, the following analysis was compiled: (Note: *departmental Education Committees are excluded from this analysis as the information was unavailable*).

a. Total number of committee seats on ‘in scope’ committees:

- 506 potential committee seats
- 33 (7%) are currently vacant: 17 staff (4% of staff seats), 16 students (35% of student seats)
- 413 (82%) are academic staff, 47 (9%) are PSS (Professional Service Staff) staff, 46 (9%) are students
- 245 (59% of academic members) are Professors

b. Total number of individuals on ‘in scope’ committees:

- 264 individuals sit across committees
- 91 (34%) sit on more than one committee
- 27 (10%) sit on 4 or more committees

c. Member ‘types’ (of the 506 committee seats):

Type	Count	%
<i>Ex officio</i>	200	40
Appointed	212	42
Student	46	9
Elected	22	4
Co-opted	12	2
In attendance	9	2
Independent	5	1

77. If we are to take a principles-based approach that supports the values and strategy of the University, we are currently out of step in our existing approach, as the [Social Inclusion Strategy](#) objectives are not embedded within our academic governance practice. Feedback through different strands of the review reflects widespread awareness that we need to more to implement our objectives around inclusion. There is also a demonstrable will to affect change.
78. The review noted that routes to becoming a committee member are currently unclear and greater consideration of the various routes available is required. Alongside this, clarification of the typology of committee memberships should also be developed (e.g. elected versus appointed members of committees). Advance HE’s view is that the primary focus in addressing lack of diversity within committee memberships should be diversifying the workforce itself. However, it also points out that improving awareness of the work of the Senate and its committees in the wider organisation would help to promote wider engagement and diversity of membership.

79. Advance HE and internal review recognise barriers to participation including recognition of the workload associated with committee work for both for staff and student members.
80. Student membership is a critical element in providing a representative voice in our academic governance system. During discussion with Advance HE, student focus groups responded positively around engagement at department and faculty level but found that engagement is significantly more challenging at the university level. One major cause to which this is attributed is the volume of meetings to be attended by a relatively small number of student representatives (usually Students' Union sabbatical officers). A potential tension was acknowledged where students are compensated or paid to be in a certain space or employed by the University, but where they also need to represent and present challenge. This presents potential risk and a conflict of interest.
81. Having objective and competency-based criteria in place for identifying committee members, based on the committee remit, could be a sensible development when seeking to appoint, and may open space for wider engagement of the stakeholder community and bring increased diversity of thought, skill, and voice. Similarly, clarifying the remit and purpose of committees and outlining the skills sets required against this would bring value, productivity, and more representative meetings.
82. End of year committee effectiveness reviews, considering attendance at committees, and reviews of membership and duration of membership at the end of each academic year were discussed as mechanisms for ensuring committees remain representative and effective.
83. We recognise, as do Advance HE, that progress in these areas is not a matter of an easy or quick fix and that our aim should be to make continuous progress over time, with work beyond the scope and duration of the review supporting the longer-term objectives.

Early Thinking

84. There are excellent resources available to us that bring in sector research and learning. Utilising the [Advance HE Board Diversity and Inclusion Toolkit](#) in this Academic Governance Review could help to improve diversity and inclusivity within our academic governance practices.
85. Clarifying the various routes to committee membership, defining the typology of membership(s) and considering inviting additional co-opted members onto Senate and its committees could improve diversity and provide specific EDI expertise. Advance HE recommends considering a liaison role for co-opted members between Senate and the Social Inclusion Committee, to enable a more proactive approach to EDI considerations.
86. Developing a set of principles to inform the design of committee memberships will help to ensure that representation is proportionate not only to our community but also appropriate to the needs of the committee's remit. Exploring interventions to review existing memberships and vary the processes for identifying members will also help to address the challenges identified.
87. Enhancing our training and guidance around good practice for committee chairs and committee members would further support diversity of membership and thought.
88. Advance HE recommends undertaking a joint Students' Union and University audit of meetings attended by student representatives, and reconsidering the balance of attendance by students across academic governance. This could help to facilitate effective and representative engagement of our student community, and beyond that of the Students' Union. Advance HE specifically recommends increasing the number of student representatives in the Senate.

89. Both elements of our review agree that there is space for a panel or group or committee which would have oversight of the diversity of committees, and which can shine a light on this and report on an annual basis back to the Senate to support and ensure improvements in inclusive and diverse membership. This would be similar to the role of Nominations Committees in corporate governance settings.

Consultation Questions

We would particularly welcome feedback on the following aspects of this section as well as any more general observations:

- Q6.** What would help or hinder you from joining and meaningfully engaging in committees?
- Q7.** Outside of enhanced induction, training and resources for new members, chairs and secretariat, what innovative practice could be considered to support inclusivity and diversity in committee business?
- Q8.** What would support those who bring business to committees and are in attendance to present items to engage inclusively with the committee?
- Q9.** What are your overall impressions of our early thinking on improving the diversity of our academic governance committee memberships and constitutions?

Chapter 5: Inclusive Environments and Ways of Working

90. Inclusion is the practice of including people in a way that is fair, values difference, and enables everyone to thrive while feeling safe in being themselves. An inclusive environment is one in which a diverse range of people are supported to work together effectively, where everyone feels that their contribution is valued, and policies and practices are fair. Inclusion is part of the University's five strategic priorities, with a culture of inclusion defined in the Social Inclusion Strategy, but inclusive practices are not yet embedded in all aspects of academic governance.
91. As highlighted throughout this paper, we have found that there are elements of good practice in our ways of working across the academic governance structure. Advance HE notes that discussion is collegial and thoughtful with respectful challenge to and from the Executive, secretariat teams are very able and there is a culture that appears to be admirably self-reflective and unafraid to tackle difficult issues. That said, we have discussed a number of proposals and received recommendations from Advance HE to strengthen our culture of inclusivity both in and outside of committee environments.
92. The Academic Governance Review seeks to develop and embed inclusive approaches to academic governance activities to support more effective governance practice.
93. As well as attending to the inclusiveness of formal meetings there are a number of alternative ways of working to fulfil the decision-making and discharging of a committee's remit beyond the formal meeting environment, which may be more effective and inclusive modes of engagement.
94. It was observed that there is an overreliance on the committee meeting itself as the location of all committee work. Pre-meetings or briefing sessions were proposed to prepare and support members and to ensure more effective use of committee time.
95. Consideration should be given to training for all committee Chairs to ensure that committees are well run and that the culture of governance at Warwick is inclusive.
96. Engagement by committee members can be limited by a lack of standardised approach to drafting committee papers and their late circulation. Similarly, committee secretariat face significant workload issue and related challenges in this area, and instituting a consistent approach, with hard stop deadlines, would have been beneficial.
97. Silent majorities, whereby a large proportion of members do not routinely and actively contribute to meetings, are too common and there is a need to explore ways of mobilising a wider range of voices in academic governance.
98. Students' Union officers' participation on committees is positive and useful. However, students expressed their view that it would be helpful to go and meet students 'where they are'. We agree that there is a need to take diverse and flexible approaches when working with students, as well as taking care to determine who should be included as part of engagement exercises. Similarly, clarity is needed about when committee members are representing students in general versus representing the Students' Union.
99. There is no standardised approach to setting and sharing schedules of business for committees at the start of each academic year, although there are elements of good practice in this area. Developing a more standardised approach would help to ensure that engagement and consultation outside meetings can be undertaken, thus supporting inclusion of a wider community.

100. Advance HE notes that the Assembly is an unusual body in HE governance, and this could be an area for further exploration over the course of the review's second phase, with regard to how it could be mobilised and utilised more advantageously. We could potentially make greater use of working groups of the Assembly, which could be managed in a transparent and structured way, in conjunction with the Students' Union and other constituencies. The Advance HE report also reflects on alternative approaches to engaging staff voice.

Early Thinking

101. Standardising our approach to drafting and circulating committee papers is an important starting point. Specifically, consistently achieving the baseline expectations of circulating all papers at least one-week in advance, ensuring clarity on the purpose and rationale behind paper classifications (protected/public/restricted) and agreeing a consistent platform for sharing papers (e.g. Convene, Files.Warwick, SharePoint) were proposed as supporting more effective and inclusive ways of working.

102. Recommendations regarding inclusive practices for committee meetings are to be implemented as a priority. We are working with the Students Union to refine the list of standards for introduction that will be communicated and introduced with immediate effect in the current academic year 2023-24

103. Developing a plain English style campaign to demystify our academic governance structure, incorporating clarity and transparency about the purposes, remits, roles and responsibilities of committees and their memberships. We also recommend a positive communication plan with the aim of reaching the widest possible range of community members.

104. Developing a training or guidance package around the Inclusive Behaviours framework will help enhance skills, develop knowledge, and drive change around inclusive environments and how to be an inclusive colleague.

105. Having a standardised and mandatory approach to induction for new members, Chairs and Secretariat of each committee would support membership engagement, inclusive environments and positive ways of working.

106. Introducing 'observer spots' or 'associate members' to committees would provide access to others for development, succession planning and knowledge building purposes.

107. Providing further recognition of student participation via the HEAR and Warwick Award would be proportionate and would help to recognise the efforts of students engaging in our academic governance structure.

Consultation Questions

We would particularly welcome feedback on the following aspects of this section as well as any more general observations:

Q10. What are your overall impressions on our early thinking on inclusivity and ways of working in academic governance? What else could we consider to help empower colleagues to contribute their voice to committee deliberations?

Responding to the Consultation

Summary of Consultation Questions

We would welcome feedback on the following aspects of this section, as well as any other general observations:

- Q1.** Are the proposed **definition, principles** and **scope** of (good) academic governance fit for purpose and agreeable?
- Q2.** What are your overall impressions of the early thinking set out for the theme of Architecture and Remits?
- Q3.** Is there anything that has not been considered in our early thinking and that might help to address our findings concerning places where there is possible room for improvement in the architecture and remit of our current academic governance structure?
- Q4.** What are your overall impressions of the early thinking to strengthen our approach to academic assurance and compliance?
- Q5.** What wider considerations should be incorporated into the proposed development of standardised terms of reference and baseline expectation setting for departmental Education Committees to ensure that they are meaningfully and effectively developed?
- Q6.** What would help or hinder you from joining and meaningfully engaging in committees?
- Q7.** Outside of enhanced induction, training and resources for new members, chairs and secretariat, what innovative practice could be considered to support inclusivity and diversity in committee business?
- Q8.** What would support those who bring business to committees and are in attendance to present items to engage inclusively with the committee?
- Q9.** What are your overall impressions of our early thinking on improving the diversity of our academic governance committee memberships and constitutions?
- Q10.** What are your overall impressions on our early thinking on inclusivity and ways of working in academic governance? What else could we consider to help empower colleagues to contribute their voice to committee deliberations?

108. Whilst we have included specific consultation questions within this green paper (summarised above), more general observations are also very welcome.

Responding to the Consultation

Submitting Written Responses

109. Feedback will be sought through a series of consultation events and exercises, but where colleagues are unable to share their feedback via these mechanisms, or would like to do so directly by email, this can be provided in writing via senate@warwick.ac.uk.

Consultation Events

110. As well as broad discussions of the paper as a whole, additional spaces to feedback and collaborate, as well as interviews and focus groups involving specific stakeholder groups will be used in Term 2, to test and refine specific proposals with the aim of ensuring that a diverse range of views are heard. We intend to be innovative

in our approach, testing ideas explored through the review to date, regarding discussion and consultation beyond 'the committee room'. Details of opportunities to take part will be available [here](#).

111. We will reengage with stakeholders who took part in our term 1 consultation activity, as well as expanding to liaise with the wider University community in stage 2 of this review, which includes: academic staff and professional services at all levels, Senate Sub-Committee Chairs, Secretariat and members, the student community, the Students' Union, campus trades unions and members of the University Council.

Committee, Departmental and Network Meetings

112. We would encourage chairs, convenors and secretaries of existing committees, departments and networks to include the Green Paper on their agenda for discussion, and to feed the views from those discussions back to the Senate Working Group via senate@warwick.ac.uk. We may be able to arrange for a member of the Senate Working Group or Project Team to attend some meetings where their input would be helpful and welcome invitations via the same email account.

Next Steps

113. Feedback on the Green Paper will be explored by the Senate Working Group to inform a revised set of proposals (a White Paper). The White Paper will incorporate more detail on the implementation of the proposals and will again be consulted on ahead of Senate being invited to approve the final set of proposals of the review at its meeting in April 2024.