

ACADEMIC BOARD

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 23 NOVEMBER 2005

Present: Prof R Cuthbert (Chair), C Augousti, Dr A G Beckett, Professor G Channon, N Clough, Dr K Foreman, M Frutos-Perez, Prof C Fudge, C Hill, S Keeble, M Keppell-Palmer, L Jones, Dr R Lawton, Prof M Lister, A Osborn, V Patel, C Rex, Professor R Ritchie, R Stroud, E Tabiowo, Dr J Vinney

Apologies: Professor A Bensted, Professor M Boddy, J Bradley, Prof J Duffield, J France, Professor P Gough, T Harrison, W Jones, J Lydon, A C Morris, Dr S Newby, E Newman, Prof S West, T Westcott, Professor A Winfield

In attendance: C Croudace (for Mins AB.05.5.26–AB.05.5.29), Dr R Eke (for Mins AB.05.5.19–AB.05.5.21), K Hicks and Dr E Praulitis (for Mins AB.05.5.22–AB.05.5.25),
A Hill, M McLaughlin (Secretary), L Tobia

MEMBERSHIP

- AB.05.5.1 The Chair welcomed the following members to their first meeting of the Board:
- Professor Martin Lister newly elected Chair of faculty Board of the Faculty of Humanities, Languages and Social Sciences
 - Lee Jones, Rob Stroud and Ernest Tabiowo, elected from the Student Representative Council

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 12 OCTOBER 2005

- AB.05.5.2 The Board confirmed the minutes of the meeting of 12 October 2005 subject to the following amendment:
- (i) **Min AB.05.4.21** Amend to read “..Faculty Board Chairs were encouraged to submit the names of **representatives** to the UWESU...”

VICE CHANCELLOR’S REPORT

- AB.05.5.3 Paper AB/05/5/1 was tabled.
Estates and House Services Matters
Glenside Campus–preparations were underway for the appointment of architects and masterplanners as a first step in the development of Glenside campus, in which the Dean and Faculty would participate fully.

PARTNERSHIP IN PLANNING

Governance Review

- AB.05.5.4 The ongoing review of Academic Board Governance had been assimilated with other reviews instigated by the Vice-Chancellor Designate, to promote synergy and ensure consistency of methods and report presentation. . An interim report was anticipated by the end of the calendar year.

CPE Meeting with Deans and Heads of Service

- AB.05.5.5 Members were advised that a meeting of the CPE with Deans and Heads of Service had taken place on 1 November 2005, the main agenda item of which was preparation for the planning round 2005/06.

Planning Round

- AB.05.5.6 The Board noted that paperwork regarding the Planning Round exercise had recently been disseminated to faculties and services. A special meeting was scheduled for 28 November to focus on academic planning.

STUDENT MATTERS

Assessment Feedback Report September 2005

Paper AB/05/5/11 was received.

- AB.05.5.7 The Students' Union President spoke briefly to the Assessment Feedback Report, noting that a full consideration of the report would be undertaken at the meeting of TLAC scheduled for 2 December. The main concerns identified by the report were for greater consistency across the University in terms of promptness, frequency and quality/content. These themes had been identified at earlier stages by the Student Written Submission to the QAA for Institutional Audit and had been fed into the work of the TLAC Assessment Working group on which the President had been an active member. The richer analysis and data in the report were welcomed and members were encouraged to feed questions or comments into the Students' Union for consideration in due course.
- AB.05.5.8 It was noted that promptness of feedback had been addressed through TLAC's work by requiring feedback to be given to students within a maximum of four weeks from the submission date. The minimum entitlement statement also set out expectations in terms of the content and quality of the feedback to be given to students. One member queried whether the number of assessments might have an adverse effect on the frequency of feedback given to students. The President commented that although this aspect had not necessarily been analysed in full, it was evident that consistency in the quality of feedback varied even within individual modules.
- AB.05.5.9 In reference to paragraph 3.1.3 relating to students with dyslexia, members queried whether information regarding the status of dyslexia students ought to be more widely shared within faculties. It was noted that the Disabled Students Advisory Group had considered this issue at length. There were issues regarding confidentiality which would conflict with information-sharing in this manner. In line with legislation and common practice, faculties had instead been asked to make clear that particular adjustments had been effected to cover the full range of possible disabilities amongst the student body without having to name individual students. It was agreed that the wider issues regarding the benefits and feasibility of identifying the work of dyslexic students would be discussed further by the UWESU President and Pro Vice-Chancellor Julie Lydon.

Student representation

- AB.05.5.10 A good response from faculties had been received to the request to forward the names of student representatives to the UWESU. This had led to a very successful round of Faculty Student Councils and a marked increase in student involvement in the committee system to date. A full meeting of the SRC had taken place in October which had provided opportunities for all representatives to discuss wider issues such as UWE Online. The President added that a regular and welcome line of contact had been established between the SRC and the Academic Registrar in order to have full discussion of relevant operational matters

REPORTS FROM SUB COMMITTEES

Annual Report from the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee 2004/05

Paper AB/05/5/2 was received.

- AB.05.5.11 The Chair presented the annual report from TLAC on activities undertaken during the course of 2004/05, focussing particularly on the work of the Assessment Working Group on feedback to students on assessed performance and use of assessment criteria, which had led to the establishment of a statement of minimum entitlement and development of an assessment website to disseminate good practice. The UWESU President asked for an update on how the statement of minimum entitlement regarding assessment feedback would be disseminated to students in February 2006.

Action : Academic Registry

- AB.05.5.12 Members also sought clarification on the institutional approach to the use of Personal Development Plans and were advised that the pilot work in individual faculties instigated by the Skills Steering group on PDP had now been passed to the Employability Group, chaired by the Head of CSA, for further development prior to the likely formulation of an institutional position which would then be communicated via TLAC in the near future.

REPORT FROM FACULTY BOARD CHAIRS

- AB.05.5.13 The Board was advised that the Faculty Board Chairs wished to request that the review of Academic Board would look at reinforcing clear communication lines between the Board and its sub committees and would look for ways of developing effective means of requesting information and stimulating discussion of key items at faculty boards in particular.

QUALITY ASSURANCE MATTERS

QAA Major Health Review

- AB.05.5.14 Dr Kevin Foreman, Dean of the Faculty of Health and Social Care gave a brief oral report on the outcomes of the QAA Major Health Review which had concluded on 22 November. The review visits took place in five days over six weeks and covered a very wide range of academic provision and professional practice. Although the full report was not anticipated for publication until April 2006, initial feedback had been extremely positive and the Board congratulated the Faculty on a well deserved outcome.

QAA Foundation Degree Review

Paper AB/05/5/3 was received.

- AB.05.5.15 The Board received the full report of the QAA Foundation Degree review of the Sports Conditioning and Coaching programme delivered at Hartpury College which would be available on the QAA website from the end of November. The attention of the Board was drawn to the overall confidence judgments delivered in: the emerging academic standards; emerging achievements of students (deemed “emerging” as there had not been a completing student cohort at the time of the review); and, in the quality of learning opportunities provided for students. Areas of good practice had been identified including the provision of short courses to supplement skills development alongside the degree programme and the excellent physical facilities underpinning the programme. The Review Team had taken account of most of the University's comments in response to the initial draft report earlier in October. There were several points for development aimed specifically at the programme itself but more notably for the institution as a whole in relation to the nature of and the future development Foundation Degrees at UWE and as regards the articulation of the place of work based learning in particular. Members were also advised that the QAA would be issuing a “Learning from Foundation Degree review” report later in the academic year which could prove to be a useful reference point for further programme developments in the future.

QAA Consultation on Revised Audit process for Universities

- AB.05.5.16 The Board was advised that the QAA had published a consultation document on the proposed Operational Description for the revised institutional audit process for higher education institutions in England and Northern Ireland with a response date of 13 January 2006 (<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews/institutionalAudit/revisedOD/default.asp>).
- AB.05.5.17 The six main features of the new process included: the replacement of Discipline Audit Trails with more flexible audit trail procedures (theme not subject based); a greater emphasis on enhancement, building on quality assurance; a continued emphasis and more structured guidance on student participation in and engagement with audit; a change to the wording of judgments to replace “broad confidence” with “confidence” with qualifying statements underpinning the overall judgement; more effective interaction between institution and audit team before, during and after the audit; clearer guidance on expectations of and preparation for the audit and the need to move away from “gold plating” in preparation for audits by working more effectively with live processes and documentation. **Members were encouraged to access the full document and forward any comments for consideration and inclusion in the institutional response to the Secretary at the earliest convenience and before the end of term on 16 December 2005.**

Doctor of Counselling Psychology (DCounsPsych):

Paper AB/05/5/4 was received.

- AB.05.5.18 The Board received and **approved a proposal to establish a new award title, within the suite of Professional Doctorates, of Doctor of Counselling Psychology (DCounsPsych) with effect from September 2006.**

External collaboration: new proposals for collaborative provision - Immanuel Kant State University of Russia, Kaliningrad

Paper AB/05/5/10 was received together with tabled paper AB/05/5/10a.

AB.05.5.19 Members received and considered a brief background paper (AB/05/5/10) on the proposals for collaborative provision with the Immanuel Kant State University of Russia (IKSUR), Kaliningrad and a brief report on the outcomes of an institutional visit to IKSUR which took place over 16-18 November 2005 to consider the designation of IKSUR as an affiliated institution. The Chair of the Institutional Panel, Dr Richard Eke, attended the meeting to speak to the proposals.

AB.05.5.20 It was noted that the previous meeting of the AQAC, held on 23 October, had recommended that the Visiting Panel should verify key information about IKSUR's suitability to design, deliver, assess and evaluate the designated UWE award (i.e. the MA in English Language Training) and that the Panel should make its initial recommendations directly to Academic Board prior to fuller consideration by AQAC at its December 2005 meeting. It was anticipated that the designated programme, written collaboratively with IKSUR, would be considered for validation within the current academic year. It was noted that delivery would be effected by blended learning encompassing face to face delivery, exchange visits of staff and students and use of UWE Online materials. Members were also advised that IKSUR enjoyed a good positional ranking amongst the Russian Universities (in the top 50) and had degree awarding powers.

AB.05.5.21 **Following further discussion, the Board agreed to**

- (i) **approve the designation of IKSUR as an affiliated institution within the Academic Procedures G1a;**
- (ii) **endorse the recommendations regarding the validation of the new MA in ELT.**

Teaching Quality Information, the National Student Survey and UWE performance in relation to the HEFCE Performance Indicators

AB.05.5.22 The Board received tabled information relating to a presentation on TQI, the National Student Survey and the HEFCE PIs for 2005. Dr Egils Praulitis and Keith Hicks attended the meeting to speak to these items and their implications for UWE. Amongst the tabled papers were key TQI Benchmarking data for 2003/04 in respect of the Law JACS code area. Members were advised that packs of similar information would be disseminated to each faculty over coming weeks in order to aid faculties in the preparation for the forthcoming planning round. The TQI Standing Group had established a UWE Intranet website offering advice and guidance on TQI and information relating to UWE in particular. TQI provided a useful window into HESA data and should prove to be an effective tool in the greater understanding and appreciation of such information for the University's own benefit and use in the future.

AB.05.5.23 The first NSS had led to a new Times League Table in which UWE had been placed 77th amongst the 93 institutions cited, which was a cause for concern for the University's reputation, whether or not the differences within the table were statistically significant. Students undertaking programmes funded by TTA or NHS were excluded from the NSS, which presented ongoing concerns about misrepresentation of NSS outcomes in these areas. The concentration of data on undergraduate programmes and not on postgraduate provision also skewed any reading of the outcomes. Small changes in performance in some areas could yield a large positional change for league tables, and many institutions would be working on the potential "quick wins" in order to achieve such results. Whilst it was important to

address some issues quickly and efficiently, it was agreed that these should be attended to in tandem with a more strategic approach to some of the longer term issues, for example to address the concerns voiced by students in terms of assessment feedback which would require further time and investment to enhance the student experience. In noting the danger that the present student experience could feel somewhat atomised, it was suggested that some issues, such as reasons for student withdrawals, be unpicked individually by way of focus groups to ensure that the University considered causes and not just symptoms.

- AB.05.5.24 Consideration of the University's performance against the HEFCE PIs concentrated on table 1a, *Participation of under-represented groups* and table 5, *Projected learning outcomes* which indicated notable improvements for UWE over recent years. Having petitioned HEFCE to take note of the unusual demographics affecting some regions and formulate location adjusted benchmarks, UWE had managed successfully to raise its performance against the adjusted benchmark and now had the largest body of student numbers from low participating neighbourhoods in the South West region as well as its best figures for degree progression in recent years.
- AB.05.5.25 The Board expressed its appreciation to Dr Praulitis and Mr Hicks for their continued efforts in these increasingly important fields of benchmarked management information.

TEACHING AND LEARNING MATTERS

Widening Participation Strategy

- Paper AB/05/5/5 was received.
- AB.05.5.26 The Board received the proposed revised Widening Participation Strategy for 2005/06 – 2010/11. Chris Croudace, Director of Widening Participation, attended the meeting to speak to the Strategy document. It was noted that HEFCE no longer requires WP strategies as a condition of grant. However, in the light of the University's fundamental commitment to widening participation a decision had been taken by the Vice Chancellor to revise the institution's WP strategy, following the approval of its Access Agreement by the Office for Fair Access in March 2005. It was reported that a Widening Participation Strategy Group (WPSG) had been convened in April 2005 to take the work forward. The Group is chaired by Dr Sheila Newby, and made up of senior representatives from faculties and services.
- AB.05.5.27 Having outlined UWE's longstanding commitment to WP, attention was drawn to the University's successes to date in widening participation, such as its collaborative activity with other HE institutions as part of the Aimhigher West Partnership, aimed at raising aspirations and encouraging more applications to HE. It was recognised, however, that although the University had done much good work to date it was still adrift of its PIs for widening participation, including its benchmarks for full time first degree entrants (young and mature) from state schools/colleges, lower socio-economic classes and low participation neighbourhoods. The new Strategy takes account of the external drivers within the sector and significant developments within the University during the life of the previous strategy. It has been developed around the seven stages of the student life cycle, as identified and promoted by HEFCE, in order that the needs of a diverse student body can be addressed at all stages of university life ranging from aspiration raising activity to employability. Whilst the Strategy is inevitably focused on groups currently under-represented in its student profile, it was argued that the Strategy as a whole should be applied to all students,

regardless of background. The focus on the student life cycle beyond entry was welcomed and it was noted that research work in faculties such as Humanities, Languages and Social Sciences had supported this approach. It was noted, however, that widening participation issues in relation to disabled students perhaps required further attention and development within the context of the Strategy as the University remained adrift of its HEFCE benchmark in this key area. It was also noted that although research and knowledge transfer activities might at first appear to be detached from a consideration of WP issues, recent research had indicated that industry was keen to work in partnership with the sector to address such issues in the future. The likelihood of widening participation shifting its focus in the years to come to address demographic changes in the age profile of the prospective student population was also noted. The impact of recent changes to funding for access programmes for those whose first language was not English could also prove to be a significant factor affecting future development of the Strategy: the University might give further consideration to how to support access for prospective students who might find monolingual provision a barrier to entry. It was agreed that the Chair of the Faculty Board of the Faculty of Education might usefully discuss this issue with the Director of Widening Participation outside the meeting.

- AB.05.5.28 It was agreed that the progress towards the finalisation of the WP strategy be endorsed. Further development was envisaged, to include the incorporation of agreed targets. At this stage the finalised Strategy will be referred to the Board of Governors for formal ratification at a future meeting. The WPSG, and particularly the Director of WP and the Assistant Vice-Chancellor Dr Sheila Newby, were thanked for their work in developing the Strategy and its implementation plan. It was further suggested that the document be uploaded onto the website but promoted in the more dynamic form of a manifesto.

HEFCE's 'Young Participation in Higher Education' report

Paper AB/05/5/6 was received.

- AB.05.5.29 The Board received further information regarding the impact of the work arising from the HEFCE Young Participation in HE report of January 2005 and its implications for UWE in particular. Many of the issues therein had been touched upon in previous items, most notably the University's WP Strategy and the outcomes of UWE's performance against the recent HEFCE PIs, and there was no further discussion of the item.

RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER MATTERS

Knowledge Transfer

- AB.05.5.30 The Board was advised that the round of visits to faculties to discuss issues arising for the Knowledge Transfer Joint seminar held on 3 October were almost complete, with only the visit to Hartpury College remaining. One of the reviews instigated by the Vice-Chancellor Designate would focus on Knowledge Transfer activities and it was anticipated that a draft paper, to be developed by Pro Vice-Chancellor Professor Colin Fudge and the Director of CRIGS, Linda Skinner, would be submitted for consideration to Deans in December 2005 prior to further development and presentation to the Board in full in February 2006. Further information was being gathered from other universities as regards possible physical facilities to support Knowledge Transfer activities. The University was currently involved in the process of selecting developers to begin work on the development of an innovation centre for KT "soft support" activities at Emersons Green Science Park as

the first part of the development of the Science Park.

RAE 2008 preparations

- AB.05.5.31 In the preparations for the mock internal RAE in November 2005, Pro Vice-Chancellor Colin Fudge had now met with all faculty executives to discuss issues such as vulnerability of staff to poaching by other Universities and the opportunities to make significant adjustments and improvements prior to formal submission in 2007. The RAE Policy and Leaders Group would be meeting in December 2005 to consider the mock submission and to make recommendations for further action and development in January 2006. The Vice-Chancellor Designate would play an active part in these discussions and developments.

Science City Bristol

- AB.05.5.32 The Board was advised that, as part of the Government initiative to identify and “badge” “Science Cities”, Bristol had been afforded this accolade along with the cities of York, Leeds, Newcastle, Manchester and Birmingham. Although there was no immediate access to funds it was anticipated that this badge might be used to attract funds from other sources such as industry and business and government in the future. A steering group was to be established and chaired by Professor Eric Thomas, VC of Bristol University. Professor Colin Fudge would represent UWE.

RECENT CONSULTATION PAPERS

HEFCE

- AB.05.5.33 The following papers were noted as having been recently published by HEFCE:
- [2005/44](#) Public resources for teaching and student numbers in HEFCE-funded institutions: 2004-05 (November) (*Web only*)
 - [2005/43](#) Recurrent grants for 2005-06: final allocations (October)
 - [2005/42](#) Contacts in higher education (October)
 - [2005/41](#) Review of the teaching funding method: consultation on changes to the method (October) please see website ref: http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2005/05_41
 - [2005/40](#) HEIFES05: Higher Education in Further Education: Students Survey 2005-06 (September)
 - [2005/39](#) HESES05: Higher Education Students Early Statistics Survey 2005-06 (September)

UUK/SCOP/HEFCE : National Credit Arrangements and Honours Degree classification system (the Burgess Group Consultations)

Paper AB/05/5/7 was received.

- AB.05.5.34 The Board received for information a copy of the University’s response to the consultations issued by the Burgess Group on honours classifications and credit submitted by the deadline of 18 November 2005. The full consultation papers could be accessed at <http://www.scop.ac.uk/UploadFolder/open/news/CreditConsult.pdf> and

Europe Unit/UniversitiesUK : Consultation paper” Towards a European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning”

Paper AB/05/5/8 was received.

AB.05.5.35

The Board received an executive summary for comment and consideration and was advised that the full document could be accessed at:
http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/2010/doc/consultation_eqf_en.pdf

Action: Noting that that the deadline for responses was 1 December 2005, members were invited to forward comments on the questions contained within the proposals to the Secretary for inclusion in the University response by 28 November.

QAA Draft Strategic Plan 2006-11

Paper AB/05/5/9 was received.

AB.05.5.36

The Board received for information a copy of the University's response, as prepared and submitted by the Academic Registrar on behalf of the University, to the QAA Draft Strategic Plan 2006-11. The full consultation document could be accessed at:
<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/aboutus/strategicPlan/draft2005/strategic.asp>

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Vice-Chancellor : Mr Alfred Morris

AB.05.5.37

This was the last meeting before the retirement of the Vice-Chancellor, Alfred Morris. Unfortunately, Mr Morris had been unable to attend the meeting due to conflicting commitments at an Honorary Degree ceremony. Members expressed their appreciation of Mr Morris' long and distinguished service to the University. They paid tribute to the outstanding contribution he had made to its development and enhancement over his 19 years in office, and his lasting imprint on the University's distinctive character. The Board was advised of the several opportunities for members to bid farewell to Mr Morris over the forthcoming weeks before his retirement in December. One of its gifts to the outgoing Vice-Chancellor would be an illustration of the Board in session undertaking by Lauren Tobia who had attended the meeting for this purpose.

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS FOR 2005/06

AB.05.5.38

- 22 February 2006
- 26 April 2006
- 14 June 2006

All meetings were scheduled to commence at 2 pm in Room 3A22.