



University of the
West of England

CONFIRMED

ACADEMIC BOARD

Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Board held on Wednesday 13th June 2007

Present: Sir H Newby (Chair), Dr G Attwood, Professor A Bensted, Professor M Boddy, J Bradley, Professor G Channon, N Clough, Professor R Cuthbert, P Dowdall, Dr K Foreman, Professor C Fudge, Dr R Gillibrand, S Grive, A Habib, Dr J Harrington, T Harrison, G House, R Lawton, Professor J Longhurst, G Mann, T McGoldrick, F Mertens, D Passfield, C Rex, Dr J Rogers, J Rushforth, J Thomas, Professor S West.

Apologies: M Adams, Professor C Aitchison, C Croudace, Professor J Duffield, B Hawkins, N Khurana, Dr S Newby, Professor R Ritchie, B Senior, E Smith.

In attendance: R Clewett (for minutes AB07.06.7.2 – AB07.06.7.3.1), D Francombe, Professor S Hagen, K Hicks, M Wheeler, P Williams (representing E Smith).

AB07.06.1 WELCOME

The Chair welcomed members to the last meeting of the academic year.

AB07.06.2 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 16TH MAY 2007

The Board approved the minutes of the meeting of 16th May 2007.

AB07.06.3 VICE CHANCELLOR'S REPORT

Paper AB/07/6/2 was received.

AB07.06.3.1 The Vice Chancellor confirmed that the paper was a public document. The Board noted updates on recruitment (including improved conversion rates), faculty restructuring (including the appointment of Heads of School and Faculty Academic Registrars), services restructuring, UWE's strategic plan and developing enabling strategies, review of the academic portfolio and student successes, and @ Bristol initiatives.

AB07.06.3.2 The Board also noted the marked fall in drop-out rates

AB07.06.4 ACADEMIC BOARD GOVERNANCE

Paper AB/07/6/3 was received.

AB07.06.4.1 The Academic Registrar highlighted the proposed amendments to terms of reference and membership of Academic Board and its committees, in light of the operation of the committees in 2006/2007 and taking account of faculty restructuring. Whilst the Research Degrees Examining Board would report to Academic Board, operational issues in relation to postgraduate studies would be referred through the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee; policy discussions would take place at the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee. The International and UWE Federation

Groups would have dotted reporting lines to the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee and to the Student Affairs Committee.

AB07.06.4.2 The Academic Registrar and Faculty Academic Registrars would discuss guidelines for faculty committees, including the calendar of meetings.

Action: Academic Registrar

AB07.06.4.3 The Board agreed to recommend to the Board of Governors the proposed amendments to terms of reference and membership, subject to:

- (a) the formalisation of student representatives on faculty committees
- (b) a review of the composition of the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee, with a view to reducing the size of the committee, while retaining representation.

Action: Academic Registrar

AB07.06.4.4 The Board agreed to approve the calendar of meetings for 2007/2008.

AB07.06.5 **REGULATORY FRAMEWORK REVIEW**

AB07.06.5.1 The Academic Registrar reported that work had progressed to codify the regulations and procedures into a more simplified regulatory framework to be in place for September 2007. A timetable for the rollout of the changed resit regulations had been agreed with ITS.

AB07.06.6 **ACADEMIC PORTFOLIO**

AB07.06.6.1 Deputy Vice Chancellor West made a presentation on the strategic positioning of UWE, focussing on profiling UWE against Pre and Post '92 institutions using key performance indicators, and on a process to ensure focus on corporate portfolio management. The slides would be made available to members after the meeting.

Action: Clerk

AB07.06.6.2 The presentation identified UWE's strengths and weaknesses compared to its competitors; the collated data would inform initial deliberations at Senior Management Team and Board of Governors on priorities for development and investment. Faculties would be invited to review their academic portfolios in light of the data now available.

AB07.06.7 **STUDENT EXPERIENCE**

AB07.06.7.1 **STUDENT EXPERIENCE PROGRAMME**

AB07.06.7.1.1 The Dean of Students reported that the implementation of the Graduate Development Programme was progressing to timetable. An advertisement for the Director of the GDP would be published in the near future.

AB07.06.7.1.2 The SEP had commenced a review of its activities in 2006/2007. Road shows in faculties and services were currently being scheduled; colleagues would be invited to give constructive feedback on developments and to suggest the next set of issues for priority attention.

AB07.06.7.1.3 The Dean of Students thanked all who had been involved with the SEP in 2006/2007, and paid a particular tribute to the contributions made by the Students' Union and SRC, whose input had been invaluable.

AB07.06.7.2 **UWE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

Paper AB/07/6/4 was received.

AB07.06.7.2.1 The Chair welcomed Roger Clewett to the meeting.

AB07.06.7.2.2 The paper outlined the work undertaken by the Complaints Project Team and proposed a new Complaints Procedure, to take effect from September 2007, including the creation of a new senior post of Service Enhancement Manager to oversee the Complaints Procedure and to respond to Stage 3 complaints. It was anticipated that a single procedure adopted across the University, with clear guidance on all aspects of the process, would lead to greater transparency and ownership.

AB07.06.7.2.3 The recent developments in student representation and student feedback were applauded, and it was anticipated that the resolution of many issues via this route would continue, with students being actively encouraged to utilise the SRC system.

AB07.06.7.2.4 The Board agreed to recommend the proposed Complaints Procedure and appointment of a Service Enhancement Manager, for consideration by the Board of Governors.

Action: Roger Clewett

AB07.06.7.3 **ANNUAL REPORT ON COMPLAINTS**

Paper AB/07/6/5 was received.

AB07.06.7.3.1 Student representatives expressed concerns about the number of complaints concerning accommodation and requested further information. It was agreed that this would be provided to the SRC and to the October meeting of Academic Board.

Action: Clerk to the Governors

AB07.06.7.4 **STUDENT MATTERS**

Paper AB/07/6/6 was received.

AB07.06.7.4.1 The paper summarised the issues which had been raised during the academic year 2006/2007 and which the SRC felt should continue to be considered by the University.

AB07.06.7.4.2 The Vice Chancellor and Dean of Students confirmed that the issues were high on the University's and on the Student Experience Programme's agenda:

- (a) Transport: negotiations were ongoing with First Bus and Bristol University
- (b) Plagiarism: the Regulatory Framework Review Group would submit recommendations to the October meeting of Academic Board
- (c) Lecture cancellations: a national contract for SMS text messaging in Universities had recently been agreed; it was anticipated that a system would be in place at UWE for the commencement of the academic year 2007/2008
- (d) UWEOnline: student attachment to modules was being progressed by the Academic Registry; the draft E-learning policy covered staff development, and this would be discussed at faculty level; the posting of lecture notes to UWEOnline would be discussed by faculty Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committees.

- (e) Resits: recurring high failure rates in modules would be considered by faculty Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committees as part of annual monitoring and evaluation.
- (f) Minimum entitlement to assessment feedback and examination scripts: following discussion at the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee, the Dean of Students would consult faculties over this issue; the GDP would address some of the learning and teaching issues; the President-Elect of the SRC confirmed that he would be happy to lead a Focus Group on the issue.
- (g) Timetabling: the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee would review the timetabling strategy in 2007/2008, with a view to prioritising academic considerations.

AB07.06.7.4.3 The Vice Chancellor expressed the Board's thanks to all SRC officers and representatives for their contributions to the work of the Board in 2006/2007, and particularly to Akram Habib who would return to his studies in 2007/2008.

AB07.06.7.5 **UWESU STRATEGIC PLAN**
Paper AB/07/6/7 was received.

AB07.06.7.5.1 The Board noted the current draft of the UWESU Strategic Plan, and the departmental strategic plan for student representative support.

AB07.06.7.6 **FUTURE OF STUDENT REPRESENTATION**
Paper AB/07/6/8 was received.

AB07.06.7.6.1 The Board noted the final arrangements agreed for each faculty for 2007/2008.

AB07.06.8 **RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE**

AB07.06.8.1 **RESEARCH STRATEGY**
Paper AB/07/6/9 was received.

AB07.06.8.1.1 The Board agreed to endorse the strategy. The next steps would include the drafting of a full implementation plan.

Action: Pro Vice Chancellor Fudge

AB07.06.8.2 **RESEARCH CENTRES**
Paper AB/07/6/10 was received.

AB07.06.8.2.1 The Board noted the approval in principle of the following Research Centres, and that further work would be undertaken on the documentation:

- (a) Bristol Centre for Research in Lifelong Learning and Education (BRILLE)
- (b) The Bristol Centre for Linguistics.

AB07.06.8.3 **KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE POLICY**
Paper AB/07/6/11 was received.

AB07.06.8.3.1 The Board agreed to endorse the Policy.

AB07.06.9 **COLLABORATIVE PROVISION**

AB07.06.9.1 **UWE FEDERATION**

AB07.06.9.1.1 The Vice Chancellor reported that academic agreements would be signed with New College Swindon and with Richard Huish College before the commencement of the new academic year.

AB07.06.9.1.2 The Board agreed to endorse a proposal that Filton College be awarded Associate College status. As with Hartpury College, an exclusivity arrangement would be agreed. Consideration of the development of any programmes which might be deemed to be potentially in competition with Hartpury College (eg in the area of Sports Science) would be discussed by all interested parties. Benefits to the University of a formal association with Filton College would include mutual use of sports and drama facilities, and a progression route for Filton's Sports Science students.

AB07.06.9.1.3 The Vice Chancellor confirmed that there were currently no plans to consider the award of Associate College status to other Further Education Colleges.

AB07.06.9.1.4 In anticipation of receipt of an application from Bristol Zoo to become an Associate Institute of UWE, and in light of Filton College's existing collaborative links with the Zoo, the Vice Chancellor asked the Board to approve any such application. The Board agreed to endorse an application from Bristol Zoo to become an Associate Institute of UWE.

AB07.06.9.1.5 The Board noted that the Vice Chancellor had endorsed the Western Access Progression Agreement (WAPA) on behalf of the Board.

AB07.06.9.1.6 The Board noted that the business plan for the UWE Federation would be considered by the Board of Governors on 9th July 2007.

AB07.06.10 **INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION**

AB07.06.10.1 **INTERNATIONALISATION STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**
Paper AB/07/6/20 was tabled.

AB07.06.10.1.1 The Director of AIR reported that the draft business plan focussed on the recruitment and external partnerships strand of the internationalisation strategy, that the regional strategy for Malaysia was an example only, and that the list of identified strategic partnerships included only those partners with whom UWE had an existing strong relationship.

AB07.06.10.1.2 Members confirmed that the direction of travel was appropriate. There would need to be further clarification over the reasons for prioritising the specified partners, and over links to the University's Key Performance Indicators.

AB07.06.10.1.3 Members were invited to forward comments on the paper to the Director of AIR.

Action: All

AB07.06.10.2 **INTI HONG KONG**

AB07.06.10.2.1 The Director of AIR reported that the outstanding issues were in the process of being resolved in respect of library provision. The Vice

Chancellor reminded the Board that he had been appointed to the Quality Council of Hong Kong.

AB07.06.10.2.2 Deputy Vice Chancellor West reminded the Board that it was essential that risk registers were in place for all similar developments, for auditing purposes.

AB07.06.10.2.3 The Vice Chancellor reminded the Board that at its last meeting if had agreed to refer the final approval to Chair's Action.

AB07.06.10.3 **BRICKFIELDS ASIA COLLEGE, MALAYSIA**
Paper AB07/06/13 was received.

AB07.06.10.3.1 Professor Channon reported that a UWE Panel, including a representative of the Joint Academic Stage Board, had conducted an Institutional Meeting at Brickfields Asia College, a leading Law College in Malaysia, and had considered the capacity and capability of the College to deliver the first two years of the UWE LLB(Hons) qualifying law degree. The visit had been very successful, resulting in a recommendation to Academic Board that Brickfields Asia College, Malaysia, be designated an Affiliated Institution for a period of five years, with effect from September 2007. Five conditions were set, to be met by 1st July 2007. Two further recommendations were also made.

AB07.06.10.3.2 The Board agreed to approve the designation of Brickfields Asia College, Malaysia, as an Affiliated Institution.

AB07.06.11 **THE UWE ACADEMIC**
Paper AB07/06/14 was received.

AB07.06.11.1 The paper set out a small number of changes to the 'UWE Academic', originally adopted in 2000/2001. The changes recognised the need to support the new Strategic Plan and University's key priority areas. Deputy Vice Chancellor West confirmed that UCU continued to be consulted over the development, which would also be submitted to the Board of Governors.

AB07.06.11.2 The Board agreed to endorse the revised definition of the UWE Academic.

AB07.06.11.3 The Vice Chancellor confirmed that a similar document would be progressed on the 'UWE Professional'.

AB07.06.12 **ITEMS TO NOTE**
The Board received the following for information:

AB07.06.12.1 Unconfirmed minutes of the Joint Student Affairs Committee of 14th May 2007

AB07.06.12.2 Unconfirmed minutes of the Joint Policy and Resources Committee of 30th April 2007

AB07.06.12.3 A report from the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee on progress on actions arising from annual monitoring and evaluation 2006/2007.

AB07.06.13 **E-LEARNING POLICY**
Paper AB07/06/17 was received.

- AB07.06.13.1 The Board agreed to endorse the policy.
- AB07.06.14 **COLLABORATIVE PROVISION – REGULATORY ISSUES**
Paper AB07/06/18 was received.
- AB07.06.14.1 The Academic Registrar reported that recent collaborative activities had highlighted the need for variations to Academic Regulations. In order to enable the implementation of the internationalisation strategy, the Board agreed to:
- (a) approve the principle that for joint programme and/or joint award developments with a key strategic partner, such as VCU, faculties can propose a variation to University Academic Regulations which will be approved as part of the programme and/or award approval process and which will be codified in the written agreement(s) and the programme specification(s).
 - (b) commission the Academic Registrar to do further work on what might constitute the addition of 'with study abroad' to an award title and how this might be incorporated into regulations with a view to bringing recommendations for specific regulatory changes to the Board at a later date.
- Action: Academic Registrar**
- AB07.06.14.2 The Board noted that a proposal would be forthcoming in respect of amending MAR8 to allow differential grading of Foundation Degrees.
- Action: Academic Registrar**
- AB07.06.15 **EXTERNAL PARTNERSHIPS: BUSINESS BOFFINS**
Paper AB07/06/19 was received.
- AB07.06.15.1 The Bristol Business School Associate Dean reported that Business Boffins Ltd currently offered a distance learning Postgraduate Certificate in small business management, validated by Oxford Brookes University. Business Boffins wished to roll out its programmes into the SWRDA region. BBS and RBI had had initial discussions with Business Boffins, resulting in the current submission.
- AB07.06.15.2 The Board agreed to approve the direction of travel and to approve further work to be undertaken with a view to making a submission for Business Boffins to be considered as a designated Affiliated Institution of UWE, and for the Postgraduate Certificate to be validated as a UWE programme.
- AB07.06.16 **DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**
- Wednesday 17th October 2007, 2.00 pm, venue to be confirmed
 Wednesday 5th December 2007, 2.00 pm, venue to be confirmed
 Wednesday 27th February 2008, 2.00 pm, venue to be confirmed
 Wednesday 23rd April 2008, 2.00 pm, venue to be confirmed
 Wednesday 11th June 2008, 2.00 pm, venue to be confirmed