



ACADEMIC BOARD

CONFIRMED

Minutes of a meeting of the Academic Board held on Wednesday 24th March 2010.

Present: D Allen; Professor J Arthurs; J Bradley; P Catley; Professor G Channon (chair); P Dowdall; M Frutos-Perez; Professor P Gough; Dr M Grey; S Grive; Dr J Harrington; P Jones; W Jones; J Lanham; T McGoldrick; P Nolan; C Rex; Professor R Ritchie; G Sandford; R Scott; C Stoney; J Thomas; Dr S Waite; G Wilson.

Apologies: Professor A Bensted; A Cheshire; Professor J Duffield; T Goodhew; D Hawes; A Mathieson; Professor Paul Olomolaiye; M Partington; K Phillips; J Rushforth; R Shaw; Professor S West (chair).

In Attendance: Dr S Gutteridge; T Harrison (secretary); P Hume (for minute AB10.3.7); Professor J Longhurst; Professor J McLeod (for minute AB10.3.7.6)

AB10.3.1 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Paper AB10/3/1 was received.

The Board approved the unconfirmed minutes of the meeting held on 9th December 2009.

AB10.3.2 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

AB10.3.2.1 AB09.12.2.1 – UWE Academic

The Board noted that the new articulation of the UWE Academic had been published and widely promulgated.

AB10.3.2.2 AB09.12.7.1 – Annual Report on Academic Standards and Quality

The Academic Registrar reminded the Board that Faculty Boards had been invited to review and comment on the annual report on academic standards and quality. Feedback received had been broadly positive on the usefulness of the report. Further work was now required on including data on PGT, PGR and comparative data on collaborative provision students in the 2009/2010 report. The Academic Registrar also noted the opportunity in future to compare UWE data with other HEIs when the new public TQI site went live.

ACTION: Academic Registrar

AB10.3.2.3 AB09.12.7.2 – Postgraduate Awards : Differential Awards

The Board noted that, following advice received after the meeting of the

Academic Board, introduction of the revised requirements had been delayed to September 2010.

ACTION: Academic Registrar

AB10.3.3 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

AB10.3.3.1 AB09.10.7 – Academic Calendar

AB10.3.3.1.1 The Board was reminded of the recent approval to introduce a new academic calendar within a phased approach to change over the next two to three years from 2010. The final phase would need to be approved by the Board in Autumn 2010.

AB10.3.3.1.2 In the meantime the Academic Calendar Working Group continued to meet in an expanded form for the remainder of 2009/2010 to consider implementation issues arising from the new calendar. The Working Group was currently considering four themes via individual groups:

- start of year
- assessment
- award ceremonies
- HR issues

AB10.3.3.1.3 The key headlines requiring further consideration through a series of bi-lateral discussions had been identified as:

- the need for faculties to bring proposals for 'non standard calendars' to the June 2010 meeting of Academic Board
- further consideration of assessments around the December/January period and the implications for staff and students of the Christmas shut-down
- IT developments that might be required to support the summer award ceremonies
- ensuring a process was in place to review the impact of the regulatory changes in the current cycle to inform the decision about the final phase in Autumn 2010
- communication issues

ACTION: Warwick Jones

AB10.3.3.2 AB09.10.11 – Fitness to Study

The Board noted Chair's Action to amend the Fitness to Study Policy to show that the DVC would appoint a senior manager (not an Assistant Vice-Chancellor) to oversee cases at level 3.

AB10.3.4 VICE CHANCELLOR'S REPORT

Paper AB10/3/2 was received.

AB10.3.4.1 The Board received the Vice Chancellor's report, noting in particular:

- update on restructuring/change process
- masterplanning

- strategies
- Hartpury
- UG Applications
- PG Open Evening
- UCAS Fair
- UWE Undergraduate Prospectus 2011
- Graduate Internships
- Living Centre Launch
- Xcel Awards
- THE Leadership and Management Awards – noting that the University had been shortlisted for three awards (Outstanding Library Team, Recruitment Campaign of the Year, HR Team)

AB10.3.4.2 The Chair offered the Board's congratulations to BBS for the faculty's success in the recent AMBA re-accreditation.

AB10.3.5 LEARNING AND TEACHING AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE

AB10.3.5.1 REVIEW OF POLITICS, PHILOSOPHY AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
Paper AB10/3/3 was received.

AB10.3.5.1.1 The Chair reminded the Board that its role in considering the report was to comment and make recommendations to the Board of Governors.

AB10.3.5.1.2 AVC Jones introduced the report of the recent review of Politics, Philosophy and International Relations which had been initiated within the context of institutional restructuring and also the academic performance of the subject areas. The review process had been intense and had been completed in two months with considerable support from the departmental staff.

AB10.3.5.1.3 The review's conclusion was that from student, financial, academic and employability perspectives the provision was fundamentally sound. The final recommendations, which were in part structural regarding the location of the department were as follows:

- (a) to establish a department of History, Philosophy and Politics in the Faculty of Creative Arts, Humanities and Education for 2010/2011
- (b) to establish a process within the current department and units and faculty planning process to take forward the recommendations arising from the review during the 2009/2010 academic year and beyond
- (c) to distribute the final report to all members of the department.

AB10.3.5.1.4 The Board congratulated staff for their open engagement with the review process evidenced by the report. UWESU welcomed the explicit reference to the student experience in the review and noted the importance placed on the positive NSS scores received by both Politics and Philosophy.

The Board agreed:

- (i) to commend the report and its recommendations to the Board of

- Governors
- (ii) to formally thank AVC Jones for his leadership of the review.

**ACTIONS: Secretary to refer (i) to Clerk to the Board of Governors
Secretary to bring forward a year on report on progress to the Spring
Term 2011 meeting of the Board**

AB10.3.6 REVIEW OF SOCIOLOGY, CRIMINOLOGY AND SOCIAL POLICY
Paper AB10/3/19 was tabled.

AB10.3.6.1 The Chair informed the Board that the review had been commissioned by the Vice Chancellor. The final recommendations were:

- (a) to amalgamate the present department of Sociology and Criminology with the present department of Health, Community and Policy Studies
- (b) to base the new department in the faculty of Health and Life Sciences
- (c) to re-launch the Centre for Psycho-Social Studies to emphasise its broad commitment to research and knowledge exchange around this area (consideration should be given to the location of the co-directors needed to be based in Sociology)
- (d) to establish a Sociology and Applied Social Studies Network with an annual celebratory conference.

AB10.3.6.2 The Executive Dean (SSH) informed the Board that the imperative behind the review had been the clarification of the location of the department in light of institutional restructuring. The available options had been discussed openly with staff. The final option signalled the future for applied sociology at the University within the context of health and life sciences. The Board could be confident that the final decision was owned by staff and was consistent with the overall strategy for sociology at the University.

AB10.3.6.3 The Board agreed to thank Professor Means for his leadership of the review and Dr Mackenzie for her leadership of the department throughout the review.

AB10.3.7 QME FRAMEWORK
Paper AB10/3/4 was received.

AB10.3.7.1 The Deputy Academic Registrar attended and introduced the paper setting out the internal and external drivers behind re-articulating the University's QME Framework which had been widely discussed with faculties previously. There was considerable work now to do to design and operationalise the Framework including a staff development programme and the production of guidance material.

AB10.3.7.2 The key principles underpinning the QME Framework were the need for it to:

- be robust in enabling the University to have confidence in the academic standards of its awards wherever they were delivered
- be risk-based

- be proportionate
- support the move to a one university approach to the management of quality away from the previous mantra of 'managed diversity'
- articulate how the QME Framework supported teachers reflecting on their learning, teaching and assessment to enhance the student experience and not to focus on performance management.

AB10.3.7.3 The key changes in the re-articulation were:

- the removal of internal audit
- articulating the elements and how they worked together and informed each other
- a stronger emphasis on dealing with employer responsive provision
- taking an exceptions based approach
- strengthening and connecting the review of curriculum with academic portfolio activities.

AB10.3.7.4 During discussion, the following issues were raised:

- the need for clarity about the focus for academic review within a six year cycle so that the process engaged colleagues appropriately
- the impact of the external QA activities
- recognition that the task set by the re-articulation was challenging in that it sought both a robust/audit approach and one that supported innovation at the subject level
- support for moving away from an overly managed approach to QAA activities which appeared to have become the norm in the sector up until now
- support for the introduction of a risk-based approach whilst recognising the need for a shared understanding of risk and strong staff development programme

AB10.3.7.5 The Board agreed:

- to note that until the implementation of the new Framework existing institutional QME processes would continue in their present form with the exception of internal academic audit which would continue to be suspended
- to thank the Deputy Academic Registrar for leading the University to ask the fundamental questions about the purpose of its approach to QME
- to approve the proposals as set out

ACTION: Academic Registrar

AB10.3.7.6 **WORK BASED LEARNING POLICY**
Paper AB10/3/5 was received.

AB10.3.7.6.1 Professor McLeod, Chair of the Work Based Learning (WBL) Advisory Group, attended and introduced the policy pointing to the significance of the work undertaken. Professor McLeod reminded the Board that the LTAC had commissioned the Advisory Group to refresh the University's WBL policy taking into account recent initiatives around the UWE Federation,

employability and the Shell Award Framework. Further outcomes would be brought to the Board on a WBL Framework and the resources required to underpin the delivery of WBL at the University.

AB10.3.7.6.2 The aims of the redrafted policy were to enable the University to reflect current practice and to look wider and take things further as the University developed in this area. Many staff would be able to recognise their current activities in the new policy. The policy also set out proposed revisions required to regulations, with the aim of highlighting the main ethos of the new policy in appropriate sections of the regulations.

AB10.3.7.6.3 The Board agreed:

- (i) to approve the policy and the changes to regulations as set out
- (ii) to thank Professor McLeod for her leadership of the working group and Brigid Hewett from the Academic Registry for advising and supporting the Advisory Group.

ACTION: Chair and Secretary of the WBL Advisory Group

AB10.3.8 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

AB10.3.8.1 F12 – INTERIM REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION

Paper AB10/3/6 was received.

AB10.3.8.2 The Academic Registrar introduced the report which set out the outcomes of feedback received from faculties on the implementation of the changes to regulations introduced at the start of the session. In introducing the report the Academic Registrar expressed her thanks to colleagues in ITS for their commitment to delivering agreed ISIS changes in time for the February examining boards, noting also that implementation of the remaining ISIS changes was on schedule for the July examining boards. It was recognised that additional burdens had been placed on faculty administrative colleagues in February and their efforts in ensuring that examining boards ran smoothly were recognised.

AB10.3.8.3 There had been no feedback to suggest that the University should not have introduced the regulatory changes. The key implementation issues that had arisen from the feedback were:

- the impact of the strengthened F12 (non completion) regulation on student progression
- removal of the late work regulations and its impact on extenuating circumstances claims
- communication with staff and students

AB10.3.8.4 The Director of Student Services informed the Board that the introduction of the changes to regulations had coincided with work on the support for disabled students. The emergence of issues related to the use of extenuating circumstances in place of formal reasonable adjustments had been both helpful and difficult. A paper setting out institutional benchmarks for reasonable adjustments would be brought to the June meeting of the Board. The Director of Student Services stressed the importance of decisions about reasonable adjustments being made on the basis of

evidenced recommendations from a qualified practitioner in consultation with the members of academic staff and other staff working in partnership with the student concerned, and as such there needed to be greater understanding of the shared responsibility in implementing reasonable adjustments for disabled students.

During discussion the following issues were raised:

- the need to ensure consistency of practice across faculties in implementing the University's regulations on extenuating circumstances. The Academic Registrar had been chairing a working group of EC Panel Chairs to review current practice, develop shared understanding and broad based guidelines. Faculties were ensuring that records of all decisions were kept to enable cross institutional comparison and quality assurance of the process
- the need to recognise differences in impact of the regulatory changes on postgraduate students, particularly the impact of the removal of late work when students have an assessment within the early weeks of their programme
- the ongoing need to ensure appropriate communications to students about the changes and their requirements on them to engage with all assessments. The Dean of Students reported on a recent university-wide seminar held on communications with, between and for students resulting from representations from students and comments from across the University. The seminar had considered the timing, method and medium of communication and considered whether protocols and policies needed to be developed. A report would shortly be circulated more widely
- the importance of recognising the importance of system support when introducing large scale and complex changes

The Chair thanked the Board for the comments noting the inherent difficulties of achieving institutional consistency whilst balancing the individual needs of students. It was agreed that any interim operational changes that needed to be approved over the next few months leading up to the June examining boards would require Chair's Action.

AB10.3.8.5 SHELL AWARD FRAMEWORK

Paper AB10/3/7 was received.

The Board agreed to approve the proposals as follows, noting that the concomitant ISIS developments formed part of the University's ISIS Development Project:

- (i) specific academic regulations in relation to the awards of the Shell Award Framework to permit the acceptance of marks as well as recognising credit for learning achieved at a UK awarding body with the same degree awarding status as the University;
- (ii) to remove the opportunity for condonation to apply to Shell Award Framework awards (regulation G2.3R)
- (iii) to constitute an Award Board for the Shell Award Framework with the same responsibilities as Faculty Award Boards.

ACTION: SAF Programme Director

AB10.3.8.6 PROPOSED CHANGES TO ACADEMIC REGULATIONS FOR 2010/11 IN RELATION TO RESEARCH DEGREE PROGRAMMES

Paper AB10/3/8 was received.

The Board agreed:

- (i) to approve the proposals as follows, noting that the concomitant ISIS developments formed part of the University's ISIS Development Project
 - inclusion of the Masters by Research in the QME Framework for taught programmes
 - clarification of interim awards for the Masters by Research
 - introduction of a regulatory requirement for the Director of Studies to be a permanent member of UWE staff
 - clarification of the thesis format for Creative Practice degrees
 - introduction of guidance on the training requirement in relation to the DPhil and MPhil by Publication
 - guidance on options available to examiners at viva
 - introduction of reporting requirements from annual progress monitoring to the Research Degrees Award Board
 - introduction of permission for external examiner availability by video link
 - clarification of the experience required of independent chairs
 - clarification of the requirements for second external examiner for members of staff
 - clarification of the definition of external examiner
- (ii) to invite the Director of ITS to submit a report on progress with the ISIS Development Project to the next meeting

ACTION: Academic Registrar (i); Director of ITS (ii)

AB10.8.3.7 PROFESSIONAL AND POST GRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN EDUCATION AWARDS

Papers AB10/3/9 & AB10/3/10 were received.

The Board agreed to approve the proposals as set out.

ACTION: Academic Registrar

AB10.8.3.8 PUBLICATION OF ASSESSMENT DEADLINES

The Board agreed to:

- (i) approve an amendment to regulation F6.7R to strengthen the requirement for assessment deadlines to be published in writing to students following concerns raised by the Students' Union that there was evidence of students not receiving notification of deadlines formally and evidence of module handbooks not being updated

- (ii) to include a regulatory requirement for faculties to also publish in writing the return date for assessment feedback.

ACTION: Academic Registrar

AB10.3.8.9 TAYLORS UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

Paper AB10/3/11 was received.

The Board agreed to approve the proposed marks conversion table with the aim of aligning the University's and TUC's different marking systems.

ACTION: Academic Registrar

AB10.3.9 REPORT OF THE DEAN OF STUDENTS

Paper AB10/3/12 was received.

The Board received the report from the Dean of Students, noting in particular the need to continue efforts to improve student survey response rates whilst recognising the challenges facing areas of the University.

AB10.3.10 REPORT FROM THE PRESIDENT OF UWESU

The UWESU Vice-President reported on:

- (a) the recent survey on safety on campus the main finding of which was that the majority of students stated that they felt safe/very safe during the day and after dark. Specific areas of campus had been identified as being perceived as particularly unsafe and students had requested improved/increased lighting, greater CCTV presence, more visible security, regular cutting of foliage around campus. A further issue raised by students in the Student Village related to a lack of awareness about whom to call in an emergency; this would be followed up with Facilities
- (b) the outcomes of the recent UWESU Elections
- (c) the impact of faculty restructuring on student representation structures
- (d) preparations for the forthcoming General Election
- (e) the Student Rep Awards which would be taking place on 22nd April
- (f) a reminder to members interested in becoming a member of the UWESU Board of Trustees to inform the Secretary.

AB10.3.11 QAA ACTIVITIES

AB10.3.11.1 QAA AUDIT OF COLLABORATIVE PROVISION

AB10.3.11.1.1 BAC MALAYSIA

The Board noted that a QAA audit team had visited the University on 17/18 February 2010 to review the link between UWE and Brickfields Asia College (BAC), Malaysia for the LLB(Hons) Qualifying Law Degree. The audit team would not make a judgement, but would identify good practice and make recommendations for enhancement. The report of the audit would be published in June 2010.

AB10.3.11.1.2 SINGAPORE

The Board noted that the QAA would audit UK HEI provision in Singapore

in 2010/2011.

AB10.3.12 RESEARCH

AB10.3.12.1 RESEARCH EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK (REF)

AB10.3.12.1.1 Pro Vice-Chancellor Gough reported that The Research Strategy Implementation Group was working on preparations for REF pending publication of the outcomes of the sector wide consultation. It was still unclear whether REF would be scheduled in 2013 or 2014. An initial stock take undertaken with faculties would be used to frame the next phase of preparations including:

- a first rehearsal at the mid-point between 2008 and 2012 to assess the University's position
- a pre-dress rehearsal in Autumn 2011 depending on announcements from HEFCE regarding the timing of REF

AB10.3.12.1.2 Judgements on what would be included in the University's submission would be undertaken and discussed thoroughly as the University planned its strategy in light of what was expected to be an increasingly selective approach to funding research. Further work was being undertaken on the equal opportunities statement and on producing guidance and impact case studies.

AB10.3.12.1.3 Discussions were taking place at faculty level to determine the likely impact of the University's REF strategy on the workload model and with the Workload Management Group to ensure the identification of issues, the management of priorities and the consistency of approach across the institution.

AB10.3.12.1.4 Professor Gough also reported that the Research Repository had now been launched. It was to be hoped that the academic community would continue to contribute to the ongoing relocation of faculty databases into the repository. The Head of Library Services noted that outstanding copyright issues continued to affect the inclusion of some material and that digital media was also now being considered for inclusion. The data-sets arising from the repository were also being considered.

AB10.3.12.2 RESEARCH CODE OF CONDUCT

Paper AB10/3/13 was received.

AB10.3.12.2.1 Pro Vice-Chancellor Gough introduced the proposed Code which had been worked on for some time in light of RCUK guidance. The next phase was the development of an implementation plan supported by a series of staff development workshops. Ongoing ethics issues arising from the Code were being considered by the Ethics Committee

AB10.3.12.2.2 It was important to be clear that the Code related to PGR students and that the 'grey area' for students working in enquiry-based programmes and activities and in consultancy activities required further clarification. There was also a need to seek further clarification of the broader ethical principles about where research funding came from and where it might come from in the future.

AB10.3.12.2.3 The Board agreed to approve the Code, subject to the following:

- clarification of the definition of 'research involving human participants' and the role of the Faculty Ethics Committee in establishing the individual facts
- removal of the reference to diskette on page 10
- completion of the EIA

ACTION: PVC Gough

AB10.3.12.3 RESEARCH CENTRES

Paper AB10/3/14 was received.

AB10.3.12.3.1 The Executive Dean of the Bristol Business School introduced the proposal for a Bristol Centre for Enterprise, Innovation and Entrepreneurship (CENTIENT) which had been in development for a number of years. Discussions were ongoing regarding an Institute for Leadership and Enterprise within which the Centre of Excellence would be located, building on the strengths of staff already in place at the University.

AB10.3.12.3.2 The aim of the new Centre of Excellence was to bring together faculty and institutional staff to strengthen a key area of the University's mission. Family entrepreneurship, business and enterprise was a fast and growing area of activity which could be a key niche area for the Centre to develop.

AB10.3.12.3.3 The Chair commented on the importance of the proposal both for its own sake but also as a model that encapsulated research, applied research and scholarship leading to curriculum developments and that it was therefore a model which would have relevance for other areas in the University. Professor Gough reported on discussions taking place with the RKE Executive on the nomenclature of centres, institutes etc.

AB10.3.12.3.4 The Board agreed to approve the proposal for a Centre of Excellence for Enterprise, Innovation and Entrepreneurship.

ACTION: Executive Dean BBS

AB10.3.13 KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

AB10.3.13.1 KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE STRATEGY

Paper AB10/3/15 was received.

AB10.3.13.1.1 Pro Vice-Chancellor Gough updated the Board on the history of the development of the University's KE Strategy and on discussions that had been taking place over several months. The key words in the strategy were 'dialogue' and 'reciprocal'. UWE was a strongly rooted civic university and was signalling a deliberate move away from defining KE as a single entity or activity and towards a KE system.

AB10.3.13.1.2 Professor Gough highlighted practice in other HEIs which tended to use KE as a showcase for specific one off activities; where UWE was different was in the way with which KE was engaged at all levels of the University's activities. The key to the success of the strategy would be delivering on

the enabling measures and ensuring strong and sustainable links to the recently re-articulated UWE Academic. Discussions had taken place on the issues relating to the designation of workload bundles and the need to ensure a consistent approach across the University.

AB10.3.13.1.3 The Board agreed to:

- (i) request that appropriate cross referencing to the forthcoming revised Strategic Plan was added to the strategy, perhaps via a short executive statement
- (ii) endorse the strategy to the Board of Governors, and in particular the section of the strategy on dimensions of engagement

ACTION: PVC Gough (i); Academic Registrar (ii)

AB10.3.14 REPORTS FROM FACULTY BOARDS

Faculty Executive Deans reported that key areas of discussion at recent faculty boards had been:

- Masterplanning and Learning Spaces
- QME Framework
- Academic Standards Overview Paper
- F12
- celebration of teaching fellows and other faculty successes

AB10.3.15 PROFESSORIAL APPOINTMENTS AND AWARDS OF HONORARY DEGREES.

Paper AB10/3/16 was received.

AB10.3.15.1 The Board noted the summary of honorary degrees conferred by the University during the calendar year 2009.

AB10.3.15.2 The Board noted that Professor Sarah Hewlett's professional title had changed to Arthritis Research UK Professor of Rheumatology Nursing following changes to the name of Arthritis Research Campaign.

AB10.3.15.3 The Board noted that Professor Alan Bensted had been awarded the title Professor Emeritus by the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities.

AB10.3.16 LEARNING AND TEACHING FELLOWSHIP SCHEME

Paper AB10/3/17 was received.

The Board noted the summary of awards made under the University's Learning and Teaching Fellowship Scheme and thanked staff from the Academic Registry for their contribution to the success of the development and launch of the Scheme.

AB10.3.17 MEETINGS OF SUB COMMITTEES AND JOINT COMMITTEES

Paper AB10/3/18 was received.

The Board received the following minutes of sub committees and joint committees:

Board of Governors – 24 November 2009; 26 January 2010

Bristol Business School Faculty Board - 25 November 2009; 27 January 2010

Creative Arts Faculty Board – 25 November 2009

Environment and Technology Faculty Board – 27 January 2010

Health and Life Sciences Faculty Board – 2 December 2009

Social Sciences and Humanities Faculty Board – 2 December 2009

Hartpury Faculty Board – 2 February 2010

Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee – 5 February 2010

Research Committee – 12 February 2010

Internationalisation Strategy Group – 10 November 2009; 2 February 2010

UWE Federation Group – 10 December 2009

AB10.3.18 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

AB10.3.18.1 VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY (VCU)
Paper AB10/3/S1 was received.

AB10.3.18.1.1 The Chair updated the Board on the University's relationship with VCU and on issues that had arisen in respect of the student workload whilst at VCU which was agreed to be in excess of expectations. Adjustments had been made for students currently at VCU to reduce the number of counting VCU credits from 30 to 24.

AB10.3.18.2 The University needed to consider the future of the relationship and the approval requirements for students participating in the exchange. For those students permitted to go, it was clear that there must be an agreed minimum pass mark to be achieved before they could go but further work would be required on this.

The Board agreed :

- (i) that the decision on the required minimum pass mark would be made by the VCU Advisory Group and reported to the June meeting of the Board
- (ii) that a report on the future of the relationship would be brought to the June meeting of the Board.

ACTION: PVC Channon

AB10.3.19 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Wednesday 9th June 2010

