

ACADEMIC BOARD

Minutes of a meeting of Academic Board held on Wednesday 23 February 2011.

Present: Professor G Atwood; Professor M Boddy; P Catley; Professor O Doran; M Frutos-Perez; A Gilkison; T Goodhew; Professor P Gough; Professor S Gray; M Grey; P Jones; Professor H Langton; A Mathieson; Professor J McLeod; Professor J McLeod; P Morgan; C Offler; Professor P Olomolaiye; M Partington; Professor R Ritchie; J Rushforth; G Sandford; B Senior; F Tolmie; L Ventura; Dr S Waite; Professor S West (chair); G Wilson.

Apologies: D Allen; Dr J Harrington; P Hume; Professor J Longhurst; Professor G Lyons; Professor G Lyons; Professor R Means; P Nolan; Professor L Raphael Reed; R Scott.

In Attendance: J Bradley; Professor J Brine (for agenda item); A Cheshire; S Grive; T Harrison (secretary); T McGoldrick; C Rex.

AB11.1 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Paper AB11/2/1 was received.

The Board confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 8 December 2010.

AB11.2 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

AB11.2.1 AB10.12.3.1 Academic Governance

The Board noted that discussions were currently taking place with faculty executives, chairs and secretaries of all committees and executive groups to review the operation of the new governance framework. A formal update would be brought to the April meeting.

ACTION: Academic Registrar

AB11.2.2 AB10.12.7 Review of the Regulatory Framework

AB11.2.2.1 Deputy Vice Chancellor Gough reported that a review of the regulatory framework had begun. A small team involving the Academic Registrar, the Executive Dean of FBL and the AVC (LTSE) had begun a scoping exercise with colleagues from across the institution to explore the fitness for purpose of the current regulations within the context of the future vision for the University and to identify any short term 'quick fixes'. Discussions about the ITS systems would be undertaken later. The intention was to go live in September 2012.

AB11.2.2.2 During discussion the following points were noted:

- the Vice Chancellor stressed the importance of engaging with the students union to ensure the views of the full range of the University's students about the University's regulations could be captured
- immediate issues with the regulatory framework should be referred

to the Academic Registrar to ensure faculties could be supported in providing consistent advice to staff and students throughout the current years assessment process

- the impact of changes to regulations on administrative resources should be explored in addition to any system issues.

AB11.3 REPORT OF CHAIR'S ACTIONS SINCE THE LAST MEETING

The Board noted the following approvals by Chair's Action since its last meeting:

- (i) approval of an exceptional award of PHCert Leadership and Organisation of Public Services to an individuals
- (ii) approval of changes to the titles of Media Practice awards in CAHE to include Filmmaking in the new titles
- (iii) Taylors Dual Award Regulations.

AB11.4 VICE CHANCELLOR'S REPORT

Paper AB11/2/2 was received

The Board received the paper and was informed that a VC Update would be circulated before the end of the week to include further information about the One University Administration initiative.

AB11.5 ACADEMIC STRATEGY

Paper AB11/2/3 was received.

AB11.5.1 The Vice Chancellor introduced the paper which set out a draft academic strategy which aimed to encapsulate the academic character of the University under three driving principles:

- Partnership
- Quality
- impact

Deputy Vice Chancellor Gough noted that the aim was to define who and what UWE was and to provide a 'container' for the various existing academic related strategies and enabling strategies taking INSPIRE as the key headings to frame tactics and key performance indicators. Taking the example of curriculum design, Professor Gough noted that there was currently no explicit expectation to embed partnership in the design of new programmes; similarly it wasn't clear how employability was embedded. The Vice Chancellor informed the Board that at its recent meeting the Board of Governors had discussed the draft and welcomed the initial attempt by the University to join up the academic-related strategies. Further consultation across the University was now needed to inform the Board of Governors' thinking about the academic character of the University. This discussion would also inform the next stage in developing the institutional Strategic Plan.

AB11.5.2 During discussion the following points were noted:

- performance success would need to explicitly clarify internal and external measures and the relationship between them
- strategic objectives were not expressed sufficiently clearly in the current draft and it was therefore difficult to assess how success would be measured and aligned to the key strategic performance

- indicators already in place at all levels within the University
- the report of the Board of Governors' discussion had highlighted student concerns about their experience of GDP and it would be important that these concerns were heard and appropriately responded to. The integration of GDP, employability, peer assisted learning, enterprise and portfolio development would be critical in moving forward to the articulation of a coherent experience. A paper had been produced by UWESU on students' concerns about GDP and this was being considered by LTSEE; discussions had also taken place with groups of students. This year's graduating cohort would be the first that would impact on the DLHE statistics
- it was worth considering whether the University might use the academic strategy to be more specific about the graduate attributes of its students
- there was concern about whether it was possible to address all of the University's audiences (e.g. governors, potential students, employers, staff) through one document. The academic strategy would need to be authentic to the University and avoid becoming a document that stayed on the shelf which suggested that the key audience was UWE staff although there was a need to articulate clearly what was distinctive about UWE to external audiences
- the issue about PGR students and the costs associated with provision was noted and that a review of PGR provision was currently being undertaken. The concept of a single graduate school would focus on PGR students only. Students themselves would remain physically located in their faculties; the graduate school would provide a central infrastructure within which faculties and professional services would support students
- references to INPIRE could be enhanced in the document
- references to staff could be strengthened
- a more explicit connection to the University's quality management and enhancement framework was required in the document to recognise the centrality of quality assurance and enhancement processes in ensuring and measuring implementation of the University's stated learning, teaching and assessment aspirations
- the global aspects of UWE and its desire to become a global institution could be enhanced in the values. A number of current significant projects could support the articulation of the vision
- it was certain that 'strategy' was an appropriate title and that academic character might better reflect the intention to be confident, distinctive and ambitious.

AB11.5.4 The Board agreed:

- (i) to request DVC Gough to ensure appropriate feedback mechanisms were in place with the student body
- (ii) to invite DVC Gough to further develop the paper and bring it back to the June meeting prior to the July meeting of the Board of Governors.

ACTION: DVC Gough

AB11.6 **PROPOSAL TO CHANGE THE NAME OF THE FACULTY OF CREATIVE ARTS, HUMANITIES AND EDUCATION**
Paper AB11/2/4 was received.

AB11.6.1 The Executive Dean of CAHE introduced the paper setting out the rationale behind the proposed change of name to the Faculty of Arts, Creative

Industries and Education.

AB11.6.2 During discussion the following points were noted:

- the benefits of making the change of name were not fully understood; communication to students and staff about the rationale behind the proposal would be critical and should stress that the proposal did not signify an attempt to remove or devalue humanities from the University's portfolio but was concerned with repositioning faculty's activities and brand within its market place. The faculty executive had a key role in leading communication with stakeholders
- faculty titles weren't the only way in which the University's activities were publicised; not every discipline area was expressed in faculty or even in departmental titles
- there were key external audiences for the University that were critical to the implementation of the University's strategic objectives; the change in name was concerned with reaching these wider audiences and markets and these would inevitably change over time as the needs of external markets changed
- whilst the timing of the proposed change in title could be seen to be unfortunate within the current political context, government cuts were not solely focussed on humanities; they were wide-ranging across all disciplines and the proposal was not a direct response to recent unhelpful statements in the media
- the current planning round was testing current and future portfolio opportunities aimed at meeting the needs of business and improving the student experience.

AB11.6.3 The Board agreed:

- (i) to approve the change of name as proposed – the paper presented to the Board provided a clear rationale for the change which should be used to communicate the rationale and change to staff and students
- (ii) that the names of the departments within the faculty should be included in the paper
- (iii) the announcement of the change in name to staff and students would be circulated from the VC's office.

ACTION: Executive Dean (i and ii); Vice Chancellor (iii)

AB11.7 UWE FEDERATION

Paper AB11/2/5 was received – the paper is confidential to the Board.

AB11.7.1 The Assistant Vice Chancellor (Partnerships, Diversity & Civic Engagement) introduced the paper which summarised a number of consultative papers on a revised approach to the implementation of the UWE Federation Strategy in the wake of the release of the Browne Review, the ensuing Government response and the Comprehensive Spending Review. Professor Ritchie stressed that the paper did not represent a change in strategy but a revised approach to implementing the strategy and moving away from a one size fits all approach. The paper differentiated between key strategic partners and niche partners of which some of whom would be more active than others and proposed revisions to the approach to financial agreements to present a fair deal to partners whilst ensuring financial sustainability for the University and a revised internal resource allocation model.

AB11.7.2 The Board agreed:

- (i) to approve the proposals as set out and to report to the Board of Governors
- (ii) to commend colleagues for the way in which they were managing the University's relationships with its FE partners

ACTION: AVC (Partnerships, Diversity & Civic Engagement); Director of UWE Federation

AB11.8 REPORT OF THE DEAN OF STUDENTS

Paper AB11/2/6 was received.

The Board received the report from the Dean of Students.

AB11.9 REPORT FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UWESU

AB11.9.1 The SRC President reported on the most recent meeting of the SRC which had identified the current top five educational issues as being :

- assessment issues including late notification of changes to assessment methods and assessment feedback, information to students and the currency of programme and module handbook information
- consistency of Blackboard usage
- timetabling and the spread of examinations, especially in January
- consistency of enthusiasm, engagement and quality across staff in faculties
- module feedback and how it was used – discussions had taken place with the Academic Registry on how to improve the collection of feedback and communication of actions taken in response as part of the QME Framework project.

AB11.9.2 During discussion of the issues of concern to students, the following points were noted:

- the issues had been discussed with the AVC (LTSEE) and were being taken forward within the LTSEE. Late assessment changes would need to be specifically identified at departmental level to be referred to appropriate academic managers to act on
- the importance of identifying best practice would be critical in improving the inconsistencies across the University and the students had an important role in identifying best and poor practice to inform this
- the AVC (LTSE) and DVC Gough had been discussing with HR ways in which an annual programme of staff development activities to support learning and teaching could be developed. Discussions would be taking place with faculties about how this might be related to performance and development reviews
- external initiatives (e.g. KIS) would be useful to the University in driving improvements in the student learning experience (e.g. contact hours)
- Executive Deans needed to be appraised by the UWESU of persistent issues with academic staff in their faculties which would improve the speed of referring issues to departments and programme teams so that they could be dealt with at the right level
- there was a need for greater oversight at departmental and institutional levels of the quality of service which would address

issues that might be perceived to be related to academic licence. For example, observation of teaching was a critical tool in supporting staff to develop their learning and teaching practice and was in many institutions embedded into PDR processes

- the programme staff:student liaison groups should play a critical role in supporting the relationship between academic staff and students and further work was needed here to empower students to contribute and staff to respond
- a programme of testing the impact of faculty assessment feedback action plans was needed
- whilst moving beyond the minimum expectations on Blackboard usage was recognised, expectations needed to be carefully managed within what could be reasonably resourced
- completing feedback loops at all levels in a timely way needed to be a key priority for all academic leaders throughout the University and actions needed to be tracked and reported back

AB11.9.2 The SRC Vice President reminded the Board that elections were currently taking place and that the names of the new officers would be reported to the next meeting. She also reported that UWESU had recently recruited a new general manager.

AB11.10 REPORTS FROM ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND QUALITY COMMITTEES

Paper AB11/2/7 was received.

AB11.10.1 The Board received a summary of issues arising from recent meetings of Academic Standards and Quality Committees. These issues would be referred by AQSC officers to appropriate colleagues for action with a request that they report back to Academic Board on progress.

ACTION: AQSC Officers

AB11.11 ACCREDITATION

Paper AB11/2/8 was received.

The Board received an update on PSRB engagements with the University. The Vice Chancellor reminded faculties of the requirements on them to engage Academic Registry from the outset of activities.

AB11.12 ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH REVIEW

Paper AB11/2/9 was received. A revised cover sheet was tabled.

AB11.12.1 The Vice Chancellor reminded the Board about a number of reviews that had been instigated as part of the review of faculty structures including a review of Environmental Health. The Executive Dean of HLS noted that the review had been long and comprehensive and was triggered by the low applicants to the programme; the full route had been closed for two years. Since the publication of the final report there had been further consultation on options arising from the review which had been discussed with the Vice Chancellor, Weston College and Chartered Institute for Environmental Health. At the options phase an additional option had been presented by staff which had been reviewed and rejected. The significant and continuing shifts in the external context of public and environmental health had informed the review and the decisions taken.

AB11.12.2 During discussion the following points were noted:

- concern was expressed about whether the formal trade union consultation processes had been adhered to but the Board was reassured that they had and that in any case the trade union consultation process was not the business of the Board
- the paper had been included in the Board papers for information only following its interest in the reviews that had been signalled by faculty restructuring. It was not Board's role to approve the recommendations; that responsibility rested with the Executive
- satisfactory discussions had taken place with Weston College about the progression arrangements for students and appropriate arrangements put in place.

AB11.13 SHELL AWARD FRAMEWORK : PROPOSAL FOR AN INTERGRATED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (IPD) AWARD DESCRIPTOR FOR THE BRITISH HEART FOUNDATION

Paper AB11/2/10 was received.

The Board agreed to approve a new award descriptor: Integrated Professional Development (Cardiac Practice) for employees of the British Heart Foundation registered on the Shell Award Framework.

AB11.14 CAHE: ASSESSMENT REGULATIONS (NON-MODULAR) DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Paper AB11/2/11 was received.

The Board agreed to refer the proposal for Chair's Action subject to receiving confirmation from the faculty about the administrative cost/benefits associated with the proposal.

ACTION: Academic Registrar

AB11.15 RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE CENTRES AND UWE INSTITUTES.

Paper AB11/2/12 was received.

AB11.15.1 The AVC (Research and Enterprise) introduced the paper setting out proposed criteria for UWE Research Centres and Institutes, addressing definitions and titles, reporting and monitoring processes and approval/termination mechanisms. The paper proposed a uniform approach to the management of the University's 'Research and Knowledge Exchange Landscape' ensuring that Centres and Institutes were able to demonstrate sufficient quality, activity and trajectory.

AB11.15.2 During discussion the following points were noted:

- the proposal was an attempt to ensure consistent language was used across the University with the aim of promoting a clear message about research at UWE as the University, particularly as it positioned itself for the forthcoming REF
- the engagement of research centres with externals was recognised as good practice but it was not necessarily something the University would want to prescribe
- there was concern about the potential for conflicting messages between research structures in faculties and the procedures in the paper which provided for research groups. This raised issues in relation to workload and the impact on attempts to simplify and streamline research structures in faculties. There was merit in identifying informal research groups within research centres that

would work towards becoming research centres over time. Executive Deans would need to avoid creating a separate sub-structure of research groups that weren't aligned to the faculty's research structure whilst recognising the need to facilitate new opportunities and growth areas. Faculties had discretion over how they organised workloads and how far they implemented the arrangements relating to research groups

- the expectations regarding public engagement needed to be made more explicit given the University's strategic imperatives in this area
- the decision to close a research centre or institute would be a significant strategic decision that rested with Academic Board.

AB11.4.3 The Board agreed to approve the criteria as set out.
ACTION: AVC (Research and Enterprise)

AB11.15.2 Health and Life Sciences Research Centre Structure
Paper AB11/2/13 was received.

The Board agreed to endorse the new Research Centre structure within the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences as proposed following a review and consolidation of existing provision.

ACTION: Executive Dean (HLS)

AB11.16 SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR FORMER STUDENTS FROM SINGAPORE INSTITUTE OF COMMERCE
Paper AB11/2/14 was received.

The Board noted the special arrangements.

AB11.17 FBL : LLB (HONS) – PROPOSED VARIATION TO ACADEMIC REGULATIONS AND PROCEDURES TO ENABLE MARKS AND CREDIT AWARDED BY INTI, HELP AND PTPL TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE UWE LLB (HONS) AWARDS
Paper AB11/2/15 was received.

AB11.17.1 The Head of the Department of Law introduced the paper which built on the principle previously agreed by Academic Board in 2010 regarding the transfer of marks and credit to contribute to UWE awards.

AB11.17.2 The Board agreed to approve the proposal subject to suggesting that Law might want to reconsider its position regarding stating 80% as the highest available mark in the conversion table when the expectation of the University was that the full range of marks should be used.

ACTION: Head of Law

AB11.18 POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH REGULATIONS
Paper AB11/2/16 was received.

AB11.18.1 The Chair of the Research Degrees Award Board introduced the paper noting that the proposals represented and attempt to :

- clarify and simplify the regulations for staff and students
- improve and clarify the relationship between the University RDAB and faculty Research Degree Committees in terms of having oversight of student registration and approving faculty recommendations for extending registration and progression examining outcomes

- introduce changes to the final examination process state unequivocally that once a thesis was submitted it would be sent to examiners and would go to viva without exception – this would shorten the current unacceptable length of the examining process and reduce unnecessary stress on students. There was a further amendment to make to make explicit the responsibility on students to decide what and when to submit
- clarify minor amendments and resubmission regulations; the former was a pass that required tidying up; a resubmit was completely different and required further examination
- clarify and strengthen the role and training of a smaller pool of Independent Chairs (the existence of which was favourably commented on by external examiners)

The proposals had limited systems implications but would have a positive impact on streamlining the administration of PGR assessment activities that would need quantifying.

AB11.18.2 The Board agreed

- (i) to thank the Chair of RDAB for a comprehensive and important piece of work which would significantly improve the student experience
- (ii) to approve the proposals as set out which would apply to professional and practice led doctorates.

ACTION: Academic Registrar

AB11.19 PROFESSORIAL APPOINTMENTS

AB11.19.1 The Board noted the following professorial appointments made since the last meeting:

Liz Falconer - Professor in Technology Enhanced Learning (DIR)
 Margaret Fletcher - Professor in Clinical Nursing (HLS)
 Tony Killard - Professor in Biomedical Sciences (HLS)
 Derek Braddon – Professor Emeritus
 Paul Dunne – Professor Emeritus
 Clara Greed – Professor Emerita
 Peter Howells – Professor Emeritus
 Professor Roy Light – Professor Emeritus
 Ursula Lucas – Professor Emerita
 Peter Malpass - Professor Emeritus
 Anna Pollert – Professor Emerita
 Dianna Jeater – Professor Emerita
 Jacky Brine – Professor Emerita

AB11.19.2 The Board agreed:

- (i) any further recommendations from Executive Deans should be referred to the Secretary of Academic Board for Chair's Action to be taken and reported to the Board
- (ii) to consider opportunities for Professors Emeritus and Emerita to be involved in the work of the University.

ACTION: Academic Registrar

AB11.20 MEETINGS OF SUB COMMITTEES AND JOINT COMMITTEES
Paper AB11/2/17 was received.

The Board received the following:

Board of Governors – 23 November 2010, 1 February 2011
Academic Standards and Quality CAHE – 24 November 2010, 26 January 2011
Academic Standards and Quality FBL - 1 December 2010, 26 January 2011
Academic Standards and Quality FET – 1 December 2010, 2 February 2011
Academic Standards and Quality HLS – 1 December 2010, 1 February 2011
Academic Standards and Quality Hartpury – 1 December 2010
Research Knowledge and Exchange (Business Engagement) CAHE – 15 December 2010
Research Knowledge and Exchange (Business Engagement) FBL – 15 December 2010
Research Knowledge and Exchange (Business Engagement) FET – 15 December 2010
Research Knowledge and Exchange (Business Engagement) HLS – 15 December 2010

AB11.21 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Wednesday 6 April 2011
Wednesday 15 June 2011

AB11.22 2011/2012 Calendar of Meetings
Paper AB11/2/18 was received.

The Board agreed to approve the calendar of meetings for 2011/2012.

The meeting closed at 4.35pm.