

CONFIRMED

ACADEMIC BOARD

Minutes of a meeting of Academic Board held on Wednesday 22 February 2012.

Present: D Allen; Professor G Attwood; P Catley; A Cheshire; Professor O Doran; M Frutos-Perez; T McGoldrick; Professor P Gough; S Grey; J Griffiths; P Jones; Professor H Langton; Professor J Longhurst; P Morgan; P Nolan; C Offler; Professor P Olomolaiye; O Reid; C Rex; Professor R Ritchie; Professor K Ross; J Rushforth; B Senior; F Tolmie; Professor S West (Chair);

Apologies: A Gilkison; Professor G Lyons; Professor J McLeod; Dr. S Waite, R Scott-Ward, , Professor R Means, J Rogers, Dr L Harrison, T Goodhew; Professor L Raphael-Reed;

In Attendance: A Osborn (Acting Secretary)

AB12.2.1 MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Papers AB12/02/1 and AB12/02/2 were received.

The Board approved the minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2011.

AB12.2.1.1 Terms of Office for Student Representatives (AB11.12.2.2 refers)

The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning Teaching and the Student Experience) informed Academic Board that the Students Union and the University had agreed to extend the term of continuing student representatives into the first term in order to secure their input on actions arising from student Surveys.

AB12.2.1.2 Student behaviour framework

Members noted the student behaviour framework drafted by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Partnerships, Diversity and Civic Engagement).

AB12.2.1.3 Risk management policy (Minute AB11.12.8.2.1 refers)

Academic Board noted that the processes supporting risk management had been updated and would be subject to Board of Governors approval.

[Secretary's note: Board of Governors Audit Committee approved the Risk Policy on 13 March 2012. The policy is now available on "Policies" Page of the University's website]

AB12.2.2 ANNUAL MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Papers AB12/02/3a-e were received.

Faculty of Arts, Creative Industries and Education (ACE)

AB12.2.2.1 The Associate Dean (Student Experience and International) for the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences introduced the ACE Annual Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Report highlighting areas of strength within the report including the Faculty's responsiveness to the external environment and the identification of gaps within the Faculty's Provision. Areas for further development broadly aligned with the challenges common across the institution; in addition there were three areas where the report appeared to provide actions to address issues raised:

- i. recruitment and selection;

- ii. employability; and
- iii. placements.

AB12.2.2.2 Following further discussion the Faculty accepted the points raised in the review of the report and agreed to discuss further within the executive team.

AB12.2.2.3 Faculty of Business and Law (FBL)

The Head of Department for Health and Applied Social Sciences introduced the FBL M&E Report and noted that there were a number of areas of good practice within the report, including:

- i. the dissemination of mid-term outcomes;
- ii. mentoring of law students within the workplace; and
- iii. the creation of a learning and development centre to help students with academic skills;

AB12.2.2.4 During discussion members noted that there had been some timetabling issues but these had largely been resolved and that on cold reading the M&E reports did not demonstrate the full extent of the Faculty's understanding of, and activity in response to, issues.

AB12.2.2.5 Faculty of Environment and Technology (FET)

The Head of the Department of Law Introduced the the FET M&E report summarising the good practice in the report including:

- i. strengthening links between academics and students;
- ii. flexible placements;
- iii. student calendar of assessments;
- iv. use of alumni within the curriculum; and
- v. use of the new network to facilitate cohort identity and help address employability.

AB12.2.2.6 During discussion members welcomed the presentation of the report and noted that the three key issues identified by the Faculty were important and had relevance across the University. As with other faculties the data presented showed significant variations in student performance and further information on how the faculty was meeting this challenge would have been welcomed. The Board further noted the contribution of members of the Faculty not named as authors on the report.

AB12.2.2.7 Faculty of Health and Life Sciences (HLS)

The Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Environment & Sustainability) welcomed the M&E report from HLS, in particular its analytical and self critical nature and that the Board could be confident the Faculty was discharging its responsibilities appropriately. However the report did not sufficiently draw together the distinct streams of activity within the departments.

AB12.2.2.8 Hartpury College

- i. The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Partnerships, Diversity and Civic Engagement) and UWE nominated Governor of Hartpury College introduced the Associate Faculty's M&E report noting:
- ii. the seriousness with which QME was taken by the College management and Board;
- iii. significant progress on KPIs, including a nine per cent increase in NSS satisfaction;
- iv. where issues existed, such as module pass rates and degree outcomes there was evidence to suggest this was being addressed;
- v. The College also demonstrated a number of areas of good practice, including teaching buddies, the development of GDP and involvement of student voice all of which may be beneficial for UWE to look at in more detail;
- vi. In summary the Board could have confidence in the quality of programmes delivered on its behalf by Hartpury College and the processes in operation.

- AB12.2.2.9** During further discussion the Members noted that the College had:
- i. a strong management focus on quality;
 - ii. a specific requirement for staff development, aspects of which could be applicable to the wider University particularly as the Government considered minimum qualification requirements for HE staff;
 - iii. received a very positive QAA IQER report;
 - iv. a declining NSS score for learning resources which should be questioned further.

ACTION: Secretary to write to the College on behalf of the Board and request further information on action being taken to address a perceived reduction in the quality of learning resources.

- AB12.2.2.10** Shell Award framework
Discussion of the Shell Award framework was postponed to the next meeting of the Board.

ACTION: Secretary

- AB12.2.2.11** During extensive discussion of the reports Academic Board further noted a number of points not related to any one Faculty:
- i. It was important for M&E reports to chime with contemporary discussion and that it may be necessary to look at the timings again to ensure issues raised within the reports are relevant at the time of their consideration;
 - ii. the ongoing development of standard data sets by Corporate and Academic Services to support M&E would be a useful addition;
 - iii. in particular data relating achievement for student from low participation neighbourhoods seemed difficult to obtain;
 - iv. reports should add value rather than repeat data and that in order to achieve this Academic Board should be explicit on the questions it asks of Faculties;
 - v. student feedback was sometimes limited within the reports, particularly in the design of actions;
 - vi. reports should not be red in isolation, as they represented the culmination of significant internal discussion;
 - vii. tension between the action plans associated with the M&E action plans and the faculties' planning documentation was highlighted with members recognising that some issues were picked up within the latter but that these were not seen by the Board;
 - viii. the report templates failed to articulate the links between research and teaching;
 - ix. an increased emphasis on enhancement would substantially change the nature of the reports.

- AB12.2.2.12** Members agreed that the format of the reports required significant further work in order to reflect the comments of the Board, including issues with the timeliness of the information presented. The Vice-Chancellor agreed to convene a group to discuss the issue further and report back at a later date.

ACTION: Vice-Chancellor

- AB12.2.3** **UPDATE FROM THE STUDENTS' UNION PRESIDENT**
Paper AB12/2/4 was received.

- AB12.2.3.1** The Students' Union President outlined the highlights of the Student's Union half year report and noted in particular that:
- i. students were becoming increasing aware of, and beginning to question, assessment methods used; and
 - ii. inconsistency in the use of Blackboard was gaining increased attention;
 - iii. as the University continued to develop its campus infrastructure significant though needed to be given to the facilities and spaces required to create the sense of community seen on the smaller campuses.

- AB12.2.3.2** Academic Board welcomed a presentation from the Vice-President (Education) drawing the their

attention to the contrasts in experience faced by students on a daily basis and the effect that this could have on their engagement with their programme of study as well as their relationship with the University.

AB12.2.3.3

During subsequent discussion members noted:

- i. that to address the student experience it would be critical to continue focusing on activities at department level, but that to do so would require an open and reflective discussion of practice;
- ii. other HEIs had introduced quality initiatives to highlight the importance of the lived student experience to staff;
- iii. that students would prefer to see minimum standards applied to blackboard with the explicit expectation that they should be exceeded;
- iv. the strong communication from the Student's Union and that the University needed to be more responsive in turn demonstrating improvements within years rather than between years.

The Chair thanked the Students' Union for the report and the valuable discussion generated at the Board as a result.

AB12.2.4

REVIEW OF ACADEMIC BOARD

Paper AB12/12/5 was received.

Members welcomed, and **approved** the principles that would underpin a revision to the way in which Academic Board functioned and discharged its responsibilities noting that the arrangements would take into account previous comments on the timeliness and information required as part of the QME process.

AB12.2.5

FEEDBACK FROM ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND QUALITY COMMITTEES (ASQC)

Paper AB12/12/6 was received.

The Board discussed issues arising from ASQCs not already discussed as part of the QME discussion centring around a review of the implementation of One University Administration and student engagement with the new systems. The review would be conducted independently and include students. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) also reported that work was on going to support Faculties in the implementation of the new processes supporting Student Rep Staff Forums.

AB12.2.6

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT AND PROFESSIONAL SUITABILITY PROCEDURE

Paper AB12/02/7 was received.

AB12.2.6.1

The Head of Complaints and Appeals outlined the revised consultation process that had taken place on the procedure following comments from the previous meeting of Academic Board, in particular the use of the University's solicitors to draft the procedures in keeping with other policies.

AB12.2.6.2

The Board welcomed the revised process and noted that it would only apply to the programmes included within the appendix and that following the discussion a number of amendments would be made including the:

- i. description of level two and three concerns (paragraph 24);
- ii. panel decision being reached by consensus rather than a vote.

AB12.2.6.3

Subject to the above amendments, Academic Board endorsed the procedure for approval via Chair's action at a later date.

ACTION: Head of Complaints and Appeals/ Vice-Chancellor [Complete]

AB12.2.7 Additional Items for Approval

Papers AB12/02/08 – 11 were received.

Academic Board approved the recommendations relating to:

- i. *activities to be included within section 6 of the Higher Education Achievement Record and the process for future additions;*
- ii. *amendments to regulations to allow the award of a Graduate Diploma with Merit;*
- iii. *revisions to the Taylors University Dual Award Framework;*
- iv. *a change of title of the LLM International Trade Law and its interim Awards to LLM International Trade and Economic Law and with interim Awards similarly renamed.*

AB12.2.8 RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) provided an oral update on preparations for the Research Excellence Framework assessment which would be a key driver in deciding the University's share of Quality Research (QR) Funding. The update detailed the outcome of the REF rehearsal, including the number of units of assessment the university was considering submitting for as well as the number of staff with likely submissions.

AB12.2.9 ITEMS TO NOTE

Papers AB12/2/12 – 15 were received.

Academic Board noted:

- i. The Vice-Chancellor's Report detailing matters considered by the Vice-Chancellor's Executive;
- ii. Preparations for the QAA Mid Cycle follow up;
- iii. the re-instatement (subject to conditions) of recruitment to BSC(Hons) Digital Media delivered by the Management Development Institute of Singapore;
- iv. Chairs Actions undertaken since the last meeting of Academic Board;
- v. Notes of meetings of Academic Board Committees and the Board of Governors.

AB12.2.10 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

4 April 2012;
13 June 2012.