

ACADEMIC BOARD

Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Board held on Wednesday 11 October 2017.

Present: Steve West (Chair), Sarah Bennett, Martin Boddy, Zain Choudhry (SU), Lucy Dumbell, Alex Franklin, Manuel Frutos-Perez, Nadine Fry, Georgina Gough, Sarah Green, Jane Harrington, Catherine Hobbs, Jamie Jordon (SU), Fiona Lawrence, James Lee, Mandy Lee, Lamine Mahdjoubi, Paul Olomolaiye, Adam Pinfold, Gerry Rice, Jane Roscoe, Jeanette Sakel, Rachel Sales, Rosie Scott-Ward, Aylwin Yafele.

In attendance: Jason Briddon, Suzanne Carrie (for AB17.10.7), Andrew Carter (for AB17.10.7), Tracy Chalk, Helen Clark (for AB17.10.9), Chris Gledhill (Clerk), Derek Norris (on behalf of Tracy Willis), Alastair Osborn.

Observers: Delia Bean, James Longhurst, Helene Scott.

Apologies: Jason Briddon, Rachel Cowie, Lynne Lawrance, Stuart McClean, Jo Midgley, Steven Neill, Nicholas O'Regan, Glenn Parry, Darren Reynolds, Donna Whitehead, Tracy Willis.

AB17.10.1 Terms of Reference and Membership

Paper AB17/10/01 was received

AB17.10.1.1 The Chair welcomed the new Pro Vice-Chancellor and Executive Dean for the Faculty of Arts, Creative Industries and Education, Professor Jane Roscoe, to her first Academic Board meeting.

AB17.10.1.2 Members noted Academic Board's terms of reference, composition and membership. Members also noted the current vacancies and that, with the agreement of Academic Board, overdue elections would be undertaken once the forthcoming Academic Governance review was completed. This proposal was accepted.

AB17.10.2 Minutes and Matters Arising

Paper AB17/10/02 was received

AB17.10.2.1 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held Wednesday 5 July 2017 were **approved**.

AB17.10.2.2 Min. AB17.07.8.2 refers: Annual Report of the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee (LTSEC) 2016-2017

Members noted that the LTSEC Annual Report was amended as agreed and approved by Chair's Action.

AB17.10.2.3 Min. AB17.07.10.6 refers: Enhancement Framework for Academic Programmes and Practice

Members noted that the outcome of the Enhancement Framework pilots would be considered under agenda item 4.4.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

AB17.10.3 Vice-Chancellor's Update

Members received an update from the Vice-Chancellor and noted the following:

AB17.10.3.1 *Student Recruitment*

- i. Currently approximately 200 down from the stretch target of +700 FTEs on the previous year; 500 more than 2016/2017;
- ii. 2.3% reduction in UG recruitment nationally;
- iii. By Faculty, ACE: -141, FBL: -118, FET: -31, HAS: +75;
- iv. International – recruitment appeared to be slightly up on the previous year for both UG and PG, despite the slowness of the issuing of visas;
- v. Patterns in recruitment nationally – declines in business, health and some humanities programmes, and growth in engineering and computing. HEFCE had indicated that these changes were not linked to mission group, tariff or Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) score.
- vi. The student recruitment contingency of £2m would moderate the impact of the shortfall and the Director of Finance was meeting with Faculties and Service to discuss implications;
- vii. UWE had its second-best Clearing performance with overall acceptances currently at 689 (750 in 2016/2017).

AB17.10.3.2 *External Developments*

- i. Office for Students (OfS) would be made up of HEFCE (minus Research) and the Office for Fair Access (OFFA) and would be formally established on 1 January 2018, taking over the regulatory functions for HE in England from HEFCE from 1 April 2018;
- ii. OfS appointments included Sir Michael Barber, Chair, Nicola Dandridge, Chief Executive and most recently, Chris Millward – currently Director at HEFCE – as Director of Fair Access and Participation;
- iii. OfS duties were laid out in statute through the Higher Education and Research Act (HERA) 2017, section 75 of which was focused on a new Regulatory Framework;
- iv. The OfS would publish this Regulatory Framework to the sector for consultation in October 2017, open until December 2017. It was anticipated that the Framework would be launched in April 2018 and would take effect from the 2018/2019 academic year;
- v. The focus of the Framework would be the quality of provision for students (regardless of the type of provider) and value for money from the perspectives of students, the taxpayer and employers;
- vi. The responsibilities of the OfS also included the publication and maintenance of a register of providers who had applied and satisfied the conditions of registration. There would be more providers and more penalties for those that did not deliver and the OfS would have the power to close such providers, as appropriate;
- vii. OfS's approach would be risk-based, given the diverse range of institutions on the register and the risk profile would be such that more attention would be given to some institutions than to others, with the latter receiving a light-touch approach. It would be permissible for providers to have a financial

backer and that a change in ownership or backer could be sufficient to trigger a higher risk rating and OfS review;

- viii. The HERA was designed to enhance innovation and to provide more choice to students; its objective was to accelerate this innovation and choice in order to differentiate institutions and the sector over time.

AB17.10.3.3 *Hot Topics*

Members noted the hot topics relating to value for money that were currently exercising the sector, including:

- i. Face to face teaching time
- ii. Academic Year/rental year/extra-curricular activities/level of student engagement
- iii. Accelerated degrees
- iv. Price point for programme/cross subsidy
- v. Spend per student – front line delivery and support staff versus management overhead
- vi. Cost of Administration/senior executive roles/VC pay.

AB17.10.3.4 Members questioned how this approach tallied with the comments made by the Secretary of State for Health the previous week, pledging thousands of extra trainee nurses places and noted the challenge this presented for the University as it recognised the need to find a way to work innovatively and creatively to create a different sort of workforce for the future.

AB17.10.3.5 Members also noted the need for services to also consider what was affordable; currently only a handful of acute providers in the country were at break-even point, all others were in deficit.

AB17.10.3.6 Members further noted the need to be mindful of the possibility that the Schools of Nursing, prevalent in the past, might be resurrected and the significant costs associated with that possibility.

AB17.10.3.7 *Hartpury College*

Members endorsed the Vice-Chancellor's congratulations to Hartpury College on having achieved Teaching Degree Awarding Powers (TDAP) and noted that the University was currently working with the College through the transition. On behalf of Hartpury's Board of Governors, the College's Vice Principal, Higher Education conveyed thanks for the support, encouragement and advice the University had given during the TDAP approval process.

AB17.10.4 Strategy 2030 Development

AB17.10.4.1 Members noted that the Chief Executive of Cabot Learning Foundation had recently shared his thoughts about developments in the education sector, the role of OFSTED and the need for dialogue between schools and universities about students.

AB17.10.4.2 Members also noted the need for the University to equip itself to deliver a quality educational experience to students who had completely different expectations to those previously welcomed by the University; the personalised experience was becoming ever more important.

AB17.10.4.3 Members further noted that the University was starting to engage across the institution in a variety of ways to build a picture of its Strategy 2030. The role of

Academic Board would also be one of input and scrutiny. It was anticipated that by 2019, the draft Strategy would be shared with the Board of Governors and launched towards the end of that year.

AB17.10.4.4 Members noted that a major feature for the academic year would be health and well-being – particularly mental health – for both students and staff; this would be central to the University, a new strand embedded within Strategy 2030 and work would be undertaken to explore how to progress this strategically.

AB17.10.5 Summary of Quality Metrics *Paper AB17/10/03 was received*

AB17.10.5.1 Members noted that the NSS Taskforce was established before the introduction of the TEF and the creation of the OfS, and had since expanded its remit, with further priorities; the Taskforce's absolute focus remained outstanding learning and ready and able graduates.

AB17.10.5.2 Members also noted the following:

- i. NSS - overall satisfaction 88%, up from 87% in 2016, 4% above sector average. Theme scores were all lower than the previous year and the Taskforce would support the work to address this;
- ii. Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) - overall satisfaction had increased from 85% to 87% (sector 82%)
- iii. Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) – UWE's research committees were focusing on this;
- iv. Good honours – recent internal analysis by Business Intelligence (BI) indicated that the University was consistently above the market (and the University Alliance) for good honours and that significant variation existed between subjects and between years in the same subjects. The data had been shared with PVC and Executive Deans. Members noted the importance of looking at the data in the context of regulation changes over the years;
- v. The work of the Taskforce would also focus on a “middle group” of programmes, some of which were declining year on year, some were improving and others remained mediocre. The DVC and Provost would meet with all PVC Executive Deans in November to discuss the matter;
- vi. Whilst the data demonstrated that UWE was in a strong position, it did not yet fully represent the University and its values.

AB17.10.5.3 Members further noted that the University would need to demonstrate the delivery of outstanding learning under subject-level TEF and that the planning round and Taskforce activity would continue to examine the University's provision and what was required to ensure it continued to move forward.

AB17.10.6 Update on Enhancement Framework

AB17.10.6.1 Members noted that:

- i. the Enhancement Framework pilots would inform curriculum development; the new University Strategic Curriculum Panels (USCPs) were due to meet in December 2017 for the first time to consider proposals;

- ii. the development of the new Continuous Improvement (CI) tool was almost complete and would bring together the annual monitoring function and programme on a page;
- iii. the first CI data set was due in November (enrolment) and Members noted the value of receiving this as early as possible in order to support continuation.

AB17.10.6.2 Members also noted that a meeting would be arranged between the DVC and Provost, the Director and Deputy Director of Student and Academic Services, and the Director of Learning and Teaching to address some concerns that had been raised by Associate Deans around the Programme Enhancement Review (PER) process.

AB17.10.7 University Outreach Activity

AB17.10.7.1 Members received a presentation from the Head of Student Inclusivity and Head of Recruitment & Outreach.

AB17.10.7.2 Members noted the range of activities undertaken to support schools and colleges to address educational inequalities in the city, and noted the following in particular:

- i. Partnership was at the heart of all activity;
- ii. The University:
 - a. provided teacher training programmes and professional development
 - b. sponsored two Multi Academy Trusts and one University Technical College, plus Post 16 and alternative provisions, and was in partnership with a Teaching School
 - c. provided the Bristol Reading Scheme, the direct positive impact of which was particularly noted
 - d. was involved in collaborative research and knowledge exchange projects
 - e. provided high quality governance to all such activity;
- iii. BoxEd – originally a STEM-related project, this linked outreach to the curriculum, was part of the annual Faculty planning process each year and now included English, Geography, Business, Law and History and was co-developed with core specialists;
- iv. Children’s University –the initiative catered for 5-14 year olds, ran across the city region and had more than 250 learning destinations. UWE was the West of England ‘hub’;
- v. Future Quest –
 - a. HEFCE offered universities a 4-year funding programme to work collaboratively to raise opportunities in low-participation areas
 - b. developed through a pre-existing partnership between UWE, the University of Bristol and South Bristol Youth
 - c. Core principles included:
 - i. high quality relationships between staff and students
 - ii. high quality support for the young people and
 - iii. close partnership with parents/carers and the community
 - iv. close partnership with school and college staff.

AB17.10.7.3 Members acknowledged that outreach worked most effectively when it was aligned with school improvement plans and noted that clearly defined objectives were in place to measure the impact of activity. For example, Children's University was evaluated nationally, there were objectives in place for each stage and there was a national database through which these young people could be tracked through.

AB17.10.7.4 Members noted the value in publicising the University's outreach work, including the breadth of activity, how its impact was tested and measured.

AB17.10.7.5 Members questioned whether there was any risk to the funding provided by HEFCE and noted this was provided on a 2 x 2-year basis and the University was in the second of those tranches. Members noted the requirement for HEFCE to decide upon an alternative financial strategy and welcomed the Vice-Chancellor's offer to impress upon the regulator to address the matter swiftly.

ACTION: Vice-Chancellor

AB17.10.7.6 Members also questioned whether the Bristol Learning City and the One City initiative were linked and noted that this was not the case, since they were driven by different offices. The Vice-Chancellor offered to follow this through on behalf of Academic Board.

ACTION: Vice-Chancellor

AB17.10.7.7 Members noted how impactful the University's engagement with young people could be and that being aware of outreach activity across the University would be helpful in strengthening a more strategic approach, for both UWE and the children it was trying to engage.

AB17.10.8 External Peer Review Annual Assurance Report to Academic Board 2016-2017
Paper AB17/10/04 was received

AB17.10.8.1 The Senior External Examinations Officer led Members through the contents of the report.

AB17.10.8.2 Members noted the details of the revised process for taking forward feedback which was introduced in 2016/2017 and noted the following in particular:

- i. the inclusion of departmental action plans as a substantive item on the January and June Faculty Academic Standards and Quality Committee (ASQC) agendas;
- ii. Focus by Academic Services focus on administrative feedback and how this should be progressed; the report now included an assurance report confirming that these duties had been discharged;
- iii. Areas for enhancement included:
 - a. Mixed practice across at collaborative provision partners in the sharing of reports with students
 - b. UWE staff as external examiners;
- iv. Early termination of external examiner appointment was set out under section 3.10 of the QMEF (External Peer Review) and was also in the appointment letter (under T&C's) sent to examiners stating the University had the right to terminate;
- v. The University held an External Examiner Conference annually.

AB17.10.8.3 Members noted that external peer review sat at the heart of the HE system in terms of quality assurance and the importance of ensuring that external examiners were asked to focus upon relevant areas.

AB17.10.8.4 Members also noted the need to be clear in terms of how swiftly the University asked external examiners highlight where differences existed between the quality of its own provision and its collaborative provision.

AB17.10.9 University Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee (URKEC) Annual Report 2016-2017

Paper AB17/10/05 was received

AB17.10.9.1 Members received an outline of the annual report's highlights from the Pro Vice Chancellor, Research and Business Engagement.

AB17.10.9.2 Members noted the following in particular:

Research

- i. Bidding levels for research grants had been maintained and £12m income secured in 2015/2016 (2016/2017 details were in the process of being finalised). Target research income for 2019/2020 was £15m;
- ii. 60% of news items during the year had related to research and innovation;
- iii. By September 2017, 680 academic staff had submitted outputs to the UWE Repository – a total of 2,902 outputs;
- iv. The procurement process had started at the end of 2016/2017 for a new Project Information Management System (PIMS) to support efficiency and effectiveness of externally funded research and other projects;
- v. A significant restructuring of Research, Business and Innovation (RBI) was currently underway and due to conclude in November 2017.

AB17.10.9.3 *Knowledge Exchange and Enterprise*

- i. The University's Knowledge Exchange Strategy 2016/2017 to 2020/2021 was approved by HEFCE during the year, without any requirement for revisions. This supported approval of Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF) resources for the year;
- ii. Innovation funding of £4.5m was secured from the EU via the West of England LEP to fund a further round of Innovation for Growth (i4G) Funds to support the following:
 - a. businesses in the West of England
 - b. the Launch Space incubator for recent graduates. Graduates were required to have graduated within the last 3 years (from any university) but must set up their business within the local area. 18 of the graduates currently using the space were from UWE, including from Creative Industries programmes
 - c. the Health Tech Hub alongside the Bristol Robotics Lab (BRL)
 - d. Future Space – 30 companies currently in occupation, including a Japanese company who had felt it to be a bridge space to their market. Future Space was establishing a business community and helpful links for students and for collaboration with researchers
 - e. The Regional Arts Innovation Network, in partnership with the Watershed and other partners.

AB17.10.9.4 The offer from the SU VP, Education to assist in securing a student representative to the URKEC membership was welcomed.

ITEMS FOR APPROVAL

AB17.10.10 Annual Report to the Board of Governors

Paper AB17/10/06 was received

AB17.10.10.1 Members noted that this was the second report to the Board of Governors following the introduction of the Revised Operating Model, introduced on 1 August 2016.

AB17.10.10.2 Members also noted that the adapted format of the report sought to demonstrate to the Board of Governors that Academic Board had discharged the responsibilities assigned to it, and that the systems for which Academic Board was responsible, enhanced the student academic experience and outcomes; thereby contributing to the evidence base of the Board of Governors' assurance statement to HEFCE.

AB17.10.10.3 The Deputy Head of Student and Academic Services, in his capacity as Secretary to Academic Board, led Members through the report.

AB17.10.10.4 Members noted that the annual report had an increased focus on enhancement and quality metrics and would include more detailed statistics and reference to the University's academic regulations and the direction of travel with regard to the regulations review.

AB17.10.10.5 Members also noted that any necessary further revisions would be undertaken and Academic Board was requested to delegate approval of these revisions to the Vice-Chancellor for Chair's Action.

AB17.10.10.6 Members **approved** the delegation of signing off additional revisions to the Vice-Chancellor for Chair's Action.

ACTION: Secretary to Academic Board/Chair

AB17.10.10.7 Members suggested the following amendments:

- i. A stronger narrative on Academic Board's role as the custodian of the University's academic quality and standards, and the risks that were being managed during the year;
- ii. Rename Section 6 'Research *and Enterprise Activity*' and include a reference that the University was working towards a successful submission to the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021; the Pro Vice-Chancellor Research and Business Engagement would provide the commentary;

ACTION: PVC, Research and Business Engagement

- iii. The inclusion of a statement on student complaints and discipline;
- iv. To consider the inclusion of some detail around any growth or changed student recruitment and details of the frameworks in place to manage these changes, e.g. Foundation years.

AB17.10.10.8 Members noted that the Board of Governors would be provided with a wider pack of data in addition to the Annual Report.

Academic Board noted that the final draft and the wider data pack would be circulated via email to Members.

ACTION: Secretary to Academic Board/Clerk

AB17.10.11 Terms of Reference – Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee and Academic Standards and Quality Committee

Paper AB17/10/07 was received

AB17.10.11.1 Members noted that the new processes for curriculum approval being developed within the new Enhancement Framework had necessitated a review of the terms of reference of the following:

- i. Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee
- ii. Faculty Academic Standards and Quality Committees.

And new terms of reference for:

- i. Validation Panels
- ii. Programme Enhancement Review Panels.

AB17.10.11.2 Members **agreed** that, given the forthcoming meeting to address concerns raised with regard to PERs (as noted earlier in Min. AB17.10.6.2), the terms of reference would be subsequently reviewed and approved through Chair's Action.

ACTION: Deputy Head of Student and Academic Services/ DVC Provost/Chair

AB17.10.12 Guidance for Security Sensitive Research

Paper AB17/10/08 was received

AB17.10.12.1 Members noted that HE bodies were required to comply with the Prevent Duty, i.e. to 'have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism' and that compliance with the duty was monitored by HEFCE.

AB17.10.12.2 Members also noted that the objective of the guidance was not to block security sensitive research, but to ensure that such projects were considered in the context of the Prevent Duty.

AB17.10.12.3 The Pro Vice-Chancellor, Research and Business Engagement led Members through the guidance and Members noted the following:

- i. The guidance had been considered by the University Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee (URKEC) and the Safeguarding Steering Group;
- ii. The guidance related to all staff and students of all types, including UG students undertaking projects;
- iii. The scope of security sensitive research and indicative list of what might be considered as such.

AB17.10.12.4 Members referred to the final bullet point in the section 'The Scope of Security Sensitive Research' and questioned how individuals would know that "unintended purposes" existed for which their research could be used. Members noted that this was part of the 'sensitisation' process and Chairs should consider such possibilities, as for example, whether encryption could help extremist activity, etc.

AB17.10.12.5 Members noted the critical importance of training for Ethics Chairs.

AB17.10.12.6 Members made the following suggestions:

- i. Page 2, penultimate bullet point wording to be refined;
- ii. that, whilst a process such as this was absolutely required, caution should be taken to avoid the process being so difficult that it deterred individuals from notifying the University of the work they are doing and created the risk of activity going 'under the radar'. Members noted that this was a risk with

all ethical regulations and that this particular guidance was a requirement and would be put in place;

- iii. it would be useful to reference the Lone Working Policy and to make reference also to the Good Research Conduct Concordat;
- iv. The need to be mindful of the balance of 'heavy' ethical regulations and the limited timeframes within which UG students had to undertake their research;
- v. When approved, the guidance should also be shared with Professional Services staff.

AB17.10.12.7 Subject to the suggested amendments, Members **approved** the Guidance for Security Sensitive Research.

AB17.10.13 Academic Calendar

Paper AB17/10/09 was received

AB17.10.13.1 Members noted that the draft calendars related to the 2018/2019, 2019/2020, 2020/2021 and 2021/2022 academic years.

AB17.10.13.1 With the caveat that other considerations may arise and necessitate further review, Members:

- i. **Agreed** the 2018/2019, 2019/2020, 2020/2021 academic calendar;
- ii. **Agreed** the 2021/2022 academic calendar, subject to the outcomes of the Enhanced Year review in 2019/2020; and
- iii. **Agreed** to support the development work aimed at modelling the flexible calendar, the outcomes of which would be shared with the Enhanced Year Project Board.

REPORTS AND UPDATES

AB17.10.14 Update from UWE Student Representatives

Paper AB17/07/1 was received

AB17.10.14.1 The VP Education provided Members with the key highlights of the report.

AB17.07.14.2 Members noted:

- i. The Students' Union (SU) Presidents had attended 60 induction lectures across all campuses, to encourage students to get involved in SU activity;
- ii. Two successful Welcome Fairs had been held at Bower Ashton Studios and the Glenside campus;
- iii. The University's Registration Fair had been excellent; the SU had its own stall at the event, which proved useful to talk to students about how they were feeling. A ball drop poll taken indicated that the majority of students were 'excited' about being at university;
- iv. HallsLife – a new scheme, the aim of which was to help students become part of a supportive and vibrant community. Activity included the hosting a successful non-alcohol event on Wallscourt Lawn, which was attended by over 400 students;
- v. International Students' Orientation – SU Presidents hosted a British-tea-party themed event and the SU President and VP, Education joined the DVC and Provost at the welcome evening, which was also attended by the Mayor of Bristol;
- vi. New priorities for the SU Team included:

- a. World Mental Health Day and the launch of the Student Wellbeing Survey,
- b. a variety of events during Black History Month,
- c. the SU's Sexual Health, Awareness and Guidance Week would run again during the year,
- d. Anti-Islamophobia Awareness Month would start in November; the SU President had successfully engaged the University of Bristol and Bristol City Council to support the raising of awareness of the issue. The SU wished to record its thanks to the Pro Vice-Chancellor, Student Experience for providing funds to support the campaign;
- e. Student Engagement – strengthening effective communications.

AB17.07.14.3 Members also noted that the SU had signed the Sustainable Development Goals Accord – the first Students' Union ever to do so – and were mapping activity as an SU to those goals.

AB17.07.14.4 Members further noted that 10% of new students had signed up to become members of The Green Team.

AB17.07.14.5 Members also noted that meningitis information posters had been displayed in student accommodation and similar advice would be published on the SU website.

AB17.07.14.6 Academic Board commended the very positive start that the SU had made to the year.

ITEMS TO NOTE

AB17.10.15* Academic Board Chair's Actions

Members noted that on behalf of Academic Board, the Chair had approved the following:

- i. Hartpury Variant Regulations;
- ii. Two variants relation to the UWE Common Credit Framework.

AB17.10.16 Posthumous Awards

This agenda item was unstarred at the request of the HAS Faculty.

AB17.10.16.1 Members noted the decision of the HAS Award Board to posthumously award the following:

- i. Diploma of Higher Education in Criminology
- ii. Bachelor of Arts in Sociology.

AB17.07.16.2 Members also noted that the Faculty wished to thank Simon Phillips, Head of Student Support and Wellbeing and Alyssa Willis, Student Communications Manager for their support, not only to Faculty colleagues but also to the bereaved families.

AB17.10.17 Any Other Business

West of England Green 50 Awards

Members were urged to cast their vote in support of the University in the West of England Green 50 Awards, using on the Bristol Post and South West Business websites.

Dates of future meetings

All meetings scheduled to be held from 14:00 – 17:00.

Wednesday	6 December 2017
Wednesday	28 February 2018
Wednesday	16 May 2018
Wednesday	4 July 2018