

## ACADEMIC BOARD

Minutes of a meeting of Academic Board held on Wednesday 19 December 2012.

- Present:** Jenny Ames, Gaynor Attwood, Jadeon Bascome, Martin Boddy, Andrea Cheshire, Oelna Doran, Alex Gilkison, Paul Gough (Deputy Chair), Selena Gray, Jane Harrington, Lisa Harrison, Philip Jones, James Longhurst, Julie Mcleod, Jo Midgley, Emmanuel Okon, Paul Olomolaiye, Philippa Regan, Olly Reid, Catherine Rex, Kathryn Ross, John Rushforth, Bruce Senior, Fiona Tolmie, Stephen Waite
- Apologies:** Dave Allen, Paul Catley, John Clarke, Manuel Frutos-Perez, Trevor Goodhew, Helen Langton, Glenn Lyons, Patrick Nolan, Matthew Partington, Peter Rawlings, Ron Ritchie, Jackie Rogers, Rosie Scott-Ward, Steven West (Chair)
- In Attendance:** Rachel Cowie (Secretary); Beryl Furey-King (Clerk) Emma Brown, Tracey Horton

### AB12.12.1 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

*Paper AB12/12/1 was received*

Academic Board approved the minutes of the meeting of 31 October 2012.

### AB12.12.2 MATTERS ARISING

#### AB12.12.2.1 ITS and Shutdown Weekends - *Minute AB12.10.2.1. refers*

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Resources, Planning and Infrastructure) confirmed that research was on-going into the operation of the shutdown calendar in order to find a long term resolution. It was confirmed that short term solutions look prohibitive due to cost. This was still under review.

**ACTION: The Deputy Vice Chancellor to report to a future meeting the results of discussions with ITS around Shutdown weekends**

#### AB12.10.2.2 Proposed Change in Regulations (FET) - *Minute AB12.10.3.1 refers*

*Paper AB121202 was received*

This had been discussed at some depth in the Faculty informed by a review of sector practice undertaken by Anne Moggridge. Having done so, the Faculty have resolved to approach this issue without recourse to a regulatory change and therefore would not be submitting a request to Academic Board for a change to the regulations. The Faculty consider that they can achieve an equitable treatment of all candidates for an Integrated Masters award via the existing discretionary powers of the Board. In due course, a note for guidance of FET Award Board would be drafted.

#### AB12.12.2.3 Membership of Honorary Degrees Committee - *Minute AB12.10.5.2 refers*

*Paper AB121203 was received*

Nominations had been received for membership of the Honorary Degree Committee. Voting was carried out during the meeting and the successful candidates were noted as Nicholas O'Regan, Professor of Strategy/Innovation and Enterprise FBL and Aniko Varadi, Professor in Biomedical Research, HLS.

**ACTION: CAS (Governance team) to advise the successful candidates accordingly**

**AB12.12.2.4** Systems Integration - *AB12.10.6.1.10 refers*

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Resources, Planning and Infrastructure) advised that HP Consulting Services were undertaking a cross institution project into systems integration. The main strategic drivers had been identified and the project was now going to the second phase. The third phase would be a road map for development. It was expected that there would be a Report in the middle of February 2013. The Director of Corporate and Academic Services commented that operationally the start of year had been difficult. The aim was for online registration for all students, sorting out the fee schedule, and online module choice for all students which had a knock-on effect on timetables. This would be carried out over the next two years.

**ACTION: Report to be made available to a future meeting**

**AB12.12.2.5** Attendance and Engagement Policy - *Minute AB12.12.10.6.1.10 refers*  
*Paper AB121204 was received*

**AB12.12.2.5.1** The Pro-Vice Chancellor (Learning Teaching and the Student Experience) drew the attention of the meeting to the discussion paper and advised that this had been drawn together from a from a small group of interested parties across the institution. The work had included a review of the sector looking at the policies of other HEIs and had resulted in the establishment some key principles. Any policy would include all students and there was a strong view that both PG taught and PG research students should be included. It was noted that the monitoring of engagement and attendance was needed and there was more work to be done in that area, which might include the establishment of some models and engagement in pilots. The institution needed to be able to identify students who might be at risk in order to pull together some intervention. The table on page 24 gave some indication of the expectations on students which would be a base line and on top of this there would be any requirements for compliance and attendance by the UK Border Agency and professional bodies.

**AB12.12.2.5.2** The Director of Corporate and Academic Services welcomed the paper and suggested that the university might want to look at other institutions which were ahead of UWE in putting together an early warning system. Institutions such as Wolverhampton were using SITS to pull together a model of student entry against behaviour which meant they could look at the complete profile of a student. It was noted that colleagues in ITS and the Faculty of Environment and Technology (FET) had drawn together some statistics in order to identify whether Blackboard engagement was linked to withdrawal. This had resulted in a report which indicated that the link was significant and that there was an optimum time of disengagement. If a student had not logged on to Blackboard for two weeks it would be suitable to intervene. It was noted that peaks in withdrawal occurred just after Christmas, the end of teaching and at the January start.

**AB12.12.2.5.3** The Associate Dean LTSE (FET) welcomed the paper and the identified principles but suggested that attendance at lectures could be low and wondered if there would be consistent capture of such information. Blackboard could be a first touchpoint to identify students at risk but other indicators might be needed.

**AB12.12.2.5.4** The Associate Dean LTSE (HLS) advised that the Health side of HLS were piloting a prediction tool which would identify students at risk which was used by De Montfort University. A swipe system would be introduced based on ARC as there was a professional and contractual requirement that students needed to attend in order to become competent in practice.

**AB12.12.2.5.5** The Students' Union agreed that monitoring was a good idea, although they were not convinced that swipe was the best way of proving attendance. Students needed to see the value of attending, even though it had been identified that students who attend have higher marks than those students who do not attend. Students need to see that engagement and attendance were part of the learning experience.

**AB12.12.2.5.6** It was acknowledged that putting the policy together was fairly straight forward but that implementing it was a big challenge. It was agreed that the recommendations in the paper would be taken forward and a report made to the March meeting.

**ACTION: PVC TLSE to take forward suggested recommendations and report progress the March meeting**

**AB12.12.2.6** Student-led teaching awards - *Minute AB12.10.6.1.10 refers*

The Chair reported that the awards should identify best practice and areas that are really working and would culminate in a student led conference which would use those members of staff winning the teaching award. This would enable what occurred last year to be consolidated and enable those staff who had been nominated to be recognised. The Vice-Chancellor's Executive were keen to endorse this activity as there had been 200 nominations, with 40 staff short listed for the seven awards. It was noted that the details would be discussed during January.

**AB12.12.2.7** People focused action - *Minute AB12.10.6.1.10 refers*

The following statement was put forward by the Associate Dean LTSE (FET) to enable the encouragement good practice and challenge poor practice:

“The university needs to shift the culture of expectation in a positive direction by legitimising, empowering and enabling positive change by staff, through restoring a sense of ownership, by demonstrating trust in colleagues' ability to deliver, thereby building competency, confidence and connectivity.”

### **AB12.12.3 UNIVERSITY POLICY**

*Paper AB121205 was received*

**AB12.12.3.1** The meeting was advised that there was currently no policy or guidance which dealt specifically with bullying and harassment of or by students. The document presented provided guidance to students and staff on how to deal informally with instances of bullying and harassment, where to go for further guidance and support and specified which of the university's procedures would be used for formal action. This policy would replace 'Sexual and Racial Harassment: Notes of Guidance for Staff and Students' published in April 1999.

**AB12.12.3.2** The meeting asked whether the university would be involved in assisting a student who was, for example, being harassed by their partner and it was stated that the university would have a duty of care towards both students and staff and where there was a clear danger the university would take appropriate action, including expulsion where necessary. It was noted that Human Resources were looking at how to pull together the staff Dignity at Work policy with a policy on Bullying and Harassment. It was suggested that there might usefully be a clarification of what constituted bullying.

**AB12.12.3.3** It was noted that there were other policy gaps at the institution and that the exercise to start documenting where those gaps might be was to take place as part of the preparatory work for Institutional Review.

**AB12.12.3.4** The policy was approved.

**AB12.12.4 UPDATE ON UNIVERSITY STRATEGY**

*Paper AB121206 was received.*

**AB12.12.4.1** The paper provided an update to the Board on the development of the university's strategic plan for 2013-20. The paper set out the context of the plan and outlined what we believe we do well. It indicated the stakeholder feedback being received and the core purpose of the university, what we stand for and how we are different from other institutions, in an attempt to define our academic character.

**AB12.12.4.2** It was suggested that as an institution, UWE had to further define its focus as it was evident that we did not currently have a strong narrative around our core purpose. The strategy tried to provide this by clarifying what was important and where our strengths lie. One key way the institution would be judged would be on our achievements and the capabilities of the graduates we produced. It was important to engage in research which informed teaching. It was suggested that the values described in the workstreams might be rearticulated with a student audience in mind.

**AB12.12.4.3** It was noted that there was a strong focus on original partnerships but that our international image was underplayed and perhaps a notion of global citizenship should be emphasized as our international provision could well grow. The plan could be more aligned with the projection of Bristol and the city-region in the future and should be a living document to give the institution focus, stretch and ambition.

**AB12.12.4.4** The question was asked about what the UWE vision was for the Students' Union and whether alumni should be included in the plan. Postgraduate research students were also not mentioned.

**AB12.12.4.5** It was noted that action plans would be put in place early in January for the senior team and then broader consultation would take place. The full plan would then be brought to the Board in March.

**AB12.12.5 UPDATE ON DISCUSSION AREA FROM PREVIOUS MEETING**

*Papers AB121207a and AB121207b were received*

**AB12.12.5.1** The attention of the meeting was drawn to the abstract from the Board of Governors' discussion which indicated key issues that were emerging from the Student/Governor Forum and to the paper which collated comments from the 280 student representatives who were members of the Student Representative Council.

**AB12.12.5.2** The agenda of the latter meeting had focused on assessment and teaching and learning with some of the feedback already having gone through to other meetings. There was concern that such feedback should go to the Student Representative & Staff Forums (SRSF) rather than coming directly to Academic Board, in order to go back to those Forums. The Board made the following observations:

- i. Assessment; There were issues around assessment bunching where it was requested that staff should look at programmes as a whole and not just look at the assessment structure of individual modules. It was suggested that this occurred because the institution was module focused. Assessment dates should be reviewed early and not changed, but there was an issue with some schedules coming in late. It was suggested that part of the problem was around assessment strategies and the number of

weeks that could be used for assessment. An experiment had been undertaken at Hartpury with students setting assignment dates which had been an interesting exercise which it might be useful to duplicate.

- ii. The Pro Vice Chancellor and Executive Dean (FET) asked whether there was an improvement in feedback to students on assessment from the previous year. The faculty had instigated a feedback week and felt this should have led to an improvement, although this would not have been university wide.
- iii. Essay writing; there could be better signposting of what was already available as the online delivery of academic writing skills was already offered to international students and could be made available to first year students in general.
- iv. Referencing techniques; there should be one simple message about referencing and it should be clear to academic staff where this was signposted so that they can tell students.
- v. Written feedback on some exams was being provided but it seemed that this was not generally available across the institution.
- vi. It appeared that students were confused about the word count policy and were ringing around for interpretation. It was noted that it had been difficult to get a policy which reached across all the different disciplines but it was thought the current policy was clear. This would be evaluated by AQEC later this year.
- vii. Teaching and learning materials were being put on Blackboard in good time, but there were still concerns over the inconsistency of material. It was noted that there was a minimum expectation of material on Blackboard.
- viii. Contact hours; there was university guidance around this which should be added to the student pages as there seemed to be a lack of clarity for students over what constituted contact hours.
- ix. Personal Tutor role; student feedback on the Personal Tutor role would be valued and a suggestion was made that more FAQs might be useful.

**AB12.12.5.3** It was noted that some of these comments had already been made at Faculty ASQC meetings and that Faculties needed the opportunity to look at the issues and respond in detail. It was suggested that a table of issues was put together to go to the next ASQC meetings and responses would be provided to Academic Board in March.

**AB12.12.5.4** With regard to the Board of Governors discussion around the Student Experience it was noted that internal communication was being considered and that there should be a report from that within the next couple of months.

**AB12.12.5.5** It was agreed that such feedback from students was valued and that the issues would be put in a format so that it was easy to identify how they were being answered.

**ACTION: Deputy Academic Registrar to ensure issues are fed into Faculty ASQCs and request a response to the next meeting**

#### **AB12.12.6 ACADEMIC CALENDAR**

*Paper AB121207Cc was available through sharepoint*

**AB12.12.6.1** The PVC (TLSE) advised that a series of meetings of the Academic Calendar Working Group had taken place which had looked at two main models. It had been acknowledged that one calendar would not suit everyone in the university and that further flexibility was being sought. Following consultation it had been agreed that model 2 was the preferred option which had resits at the earliest possible time. However, as this needed further testing across the Faculties, the group were recommending

to Academic Board that the calendar for the next academic year (2013-14) would be rolled forward from this year with minor amendments such as the vacation times and a further set of examination boards in October for PG taught programmes.

**AB12.12.6.2** Further testing on model 2 would take place with a view to reporting back to Academic Board in March. The paper would be made available and any feedback should be submitted to the Deputy Academic Registrar in order to be taken to the next meeting of the Group.

**AB12.12.6.3** The Academic Calendar for 2013-14 was approved.

**AB12.12.7 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS & PORTFOLIO REVIEW**

*Paper AB121208 was received*

**AB12.12.7.1** The paper provided an update on the performance of UWE and its Faculties in relation to the key performance indicators in order to support a discussion on performance and future focus of priorities. A headline summary of achievements against targets was included. It was noted that the institution was performing really well against its own targets, with the exception of the NSS and separate discussions had already been undertaken around that. However, in a comparison to the wider HE market there were still gaps in terms of performance.

**AB12.12.7.2** Faculties had been working hard at identifying opportunities that were available as the institution needed to be aware of where the areas for growth are. The documentation included a good practice example for Economics, although it was noted that this was a confidential document and should not be made publicly available. Although it was difficult to see too much detail at Faculty level, it was possible to identify an individual Faculty with problems. The portfolio review enabled the University to:

- i. look at the subject level and look at year on year performance in order to identify where a big impact could be made.
- ii. look at programme level to identify modules with a low pass rate and where this has been identified in previous years.
- iii. identify the profile of students against results to can see where perhaps a low tariff was used when students come in. That could lead to additional support being provided for those students.
- iv. find programmes with little engagement and balance that against the numbers of students withdrawing.

**AB12.12.7.3** The tools allowed the university to hone in at the lower level where the actions could be taken even though the areas could be different from programme to programme. What was needed now was a way for programme teams to come together and engage with students in that identification, in order to find ways of working through what had to be done in order to move things forward. It was acknowledged that few institutions were capable of preparing such statistics and that the Board needed to agree how this data could be used.

**AB12.12.8 REGULATORY REVIEW**

*Paper AB121209 was received*

**AB12.12.8.1** The meeting received a summary of the changes to the academic regulations for 2013/14 and 2014/15 from the Academic Regulatory Framework Manager. It was confirmed that consultation had taken place with the Students' Union, Faculties and Services. The main themes were indicated in the paper submitted but it was noted that supplementary changes would be needed in due course. Following approval a plan of implementation would be brought to the March 2013 meeting of the Board and the re-drafted regulations would be submitted to the May 2013

meeting.

**AB12.12.8.2** The Students' Union were concerned how students might be affected by the fit to sit policy if a problem arose subsequent to assessment. It was confirmed that this had already been discussed but that the Students' Union would be able to contribute to further discussions which would take place before the regulations were finalised.

**AB12.12.8.3** The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Resources, Planning and Infrastructure) stated that although this was a project that was coming to an end the activity had not yet finished. He suggested that there would be benefit in reflecting on why this had been such a successful project and on identifying the impact the changes would have. It was also suggested that item 10. in the chart should include clarification of the terminology around final results. The Chair of the Board who had also been chair of the Group agreed to take that forward.

**AB12.12.8.4** The meeting thanked the Academic Regulatory Framework Manager for the work that had been undertaken so far and suggested that there was now a sensible set of proposals to take forward. The proposals were approved for development into new regulations for 2013/14 and 2014/15.

#### **AB12.12.9 VARIANT REQUIREMENTS**

*Paper AB121210 was received*

The Board was asked to approve and / or note the changes to variant regulations in order to ensure that they are up to date for the 2012-13 academic year. These would then be brought together so that all regulations were available for staff and external examiners in one place. There were a few outstanding variants which would be brought to a future meeting. The updates to existing variants were noted for:

- i. Graduate Diploma in Law
- ii. BSc(Hons) Midwifery

and changes made to the Academic Regulations and Procedures for 2012-13 as a result of Professional Body requirements (F9.15R and G1.2R) These were approved.

#### **AB12.12.10 UKBA REGULATIONS**

*Paper AB121211 was received*

The Board was advised that the institution was required to comply with the UKBA requirements in order to sponsor students who required a Tier 4 visa. Currently academic regulations did not make it clear which reasons are and are not acceptable to grant a 3<sup>rd</sup> exceptional attempt at a module under the UKBA regulations. The Board was asked to approve a change to the UWE regulations giving the following reasons as NOT acceptable to allow a 3<sup>rd</sup> exceptional attempt in order to protect the institution's Tier 4 licence:

- i. Cultural adjustment / assimilation
- ii. Difficulty with the English language
- iii. Different teaching methods in the UK to home university
- iv. Anxiety from visa issues.

This was approved.

#### **AB12.12.11 REVISED ACADEMIC APPEAL PROCEDURE**

*Paper AB121212 was received*

The paper set out a revised Academic Appeal procedure designed to expedite consideration of academic appeals and streamline the administration involved. The revised procedure involved two stages and was a small adjustment to the current system which would enable simple appeals to achieve earlier resolution. This was approved for implementation in the 2012-13 academic year.

## **AB12.12.12 ANNUAL REPORT TO THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

*Paper AB121213 was received*

**AB12.12.12.1** The meeting received the Annual Report to the Board of Governors which gave a brief overview of the role and business of Academic Board during 2011-12. It was noted that there had been concern around the effectiveness of Academic Board, but that the recent structural reform was now in place and was now effectively dealing with those issues identified last year.

**AB12.12.12.2** It was suggested that some information could be added to section 8.2 around the review of progress of the Graduate School. It was also suggested that section 7 should be reworded as programme level information was not provided to Academic Board but that any issues were dealt with by Faculty ASQCs.

**AB12.12.12.3** It was noted that the document should not yet be publicly available. The meeting suggested that some revisions should be made to the report for it to be recirculated to the Board for final approval.

**ACTION: Deputy Academic Registrar to revise the document and recirculate.**

## **AB12.12.13 PROFESSORSHIPS**

**AB12.12.13.1** The Board was asked to consider the appointment of Professor Jane Arthurs and Professor Rob Cuthbert as professors Emeritus. This was approved.

**AB12.12.13.2** The Board was asked to note the change of title for Professor Nicholas Ryder from Associate Professor in Commercial Law to Associate Professor in Financial Crime which had already been agreed by Chair's Action.

## **AB12.12.14 ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

### **AB12.12.14.1 Report from the Students' Union**

*Paper AB121207a was received*

Paper received and discussed under item 6. AB12.12.5 refers.

### **AB12.12.14.2 Research Excellence Framework**

*Paper AB 121214*

**AB12.12.14.2.1** The paper provided a brief updated on progress towards the university's submission to the Research Excellence Framework (REF). The paper was an adaptation of the submission intentions document which had recently been submitted to HEFCE. It was noted that by November 2013 it was likely that 280 members of staff would be included in the submission, which was similar to the submission for RAE in 2008. There was also an indication on page 110 of the units of assessment that were likely to be submitted. This also provided the number of staff as FTE, useful data around research income per year and PhD completions.

**AB12.12.14.2.2** It was noted that evidencing the impact of research and explaining the significance of the work was causing a lot of work for staff. Staff leaving the University was also making completion of the REF complicated but it was noted that the institution was quite well placed in terms of preparedness. Although it was acknowledged that the environment was tougher this time and so the receipt of research funding as a result of the exercise was not expected to be as significant as under the RAE2008, an outcome in terms of reputation would be a useful result of the exercise.



**AB12.12.14.2.3** It was suggested that it would be useful for the university to put some priority in revising the current website as, although this was underway, it had not yet been rolled out across the institution. In addition, MySite did not have sufficient space for all research activities and could not be amended by ITS.

**AB12.12.14.2.4** A 'rehearsal' of the REF was to take place in the future and the outcome of that would be brought to an appropriate meeting of the Board.

**ACTION: Deputy Vice Chancellor: Academic to contact ITS to discuss the provision of more space for research activity in MySite**

**AB12.12.14 ITEMS TO NOTE**

**AB12.12.14.1 Visiting Professor**

The decision to appoint Professor Yukio Gunji Kobe to the position of Visiting Professor for the Faculty of Environment and Technology, which had previously been agreed by Chair's Action, was noted.

**AB12.12.14.2 Minutes of Academic Board Sub Committees**

*Paper AB121215a and AB12215b were received and noted*

**AB12.12.15 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

A member of the Board asked to discuss the outcome of the Elementa review of the changes that had taken place in the university over the last calendar year. It was suggested that the report had looked back on where we had been and that there was a good set of actions identified but that the Board wishes to focus on the future. It was suggested that an update on the review could be combined with an update on the staff survey.

**AB12.12.16 DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

13 March 2013

1 May 2013

26 June 2013

**ACADEMIC BOARD**

**Meeting date: Wednesday 19 December 2012**

**ACTION SHEET FROM THE MEETING HELD 19 December 2012**

<b>Minute</b>	<b>Substance</b>	<b>Actioning Officer</b>	<b>Reporting Deadline</b>
AB12.12.2.1	Report to a future meeting the results of discussions with ITS around Shutdown weekends	DVC (Resources, Planning and Infrastructure)	Future meeting
AB12.12.2.3	Advise successful candidates of result of election to the Honorary Degrees Committee	Governance Team, CAS	January 2013
AB12.12.2.4	Report on systems integration to be made available to a future meeting	DVC (Resources, Planning and Infrastructure) and Director of CAS	Future meeting
AB12.12.2.5	Take forward suggested recommendations for the Attendance and Engagement Policy and report progress the March meeting	PVC (TLSE)	March 2013
AB12.12.5	Issues identified by the Student Representatives Forum distributed to Faculty ASQCs with a response requested for the March meeting	Deputy Academic Registrar	March 2013
AB12.12.12	Revise the Report to the Board of Governors and recirculate	Deputy Academic Registrar	February 2013
AB12.12.14	Contact ITS to discuss the provision of more space for research activity in MySite	DVC (Academic)	March 2013

## **ACADEMIC BOARD**

**Meeting date: Wednesday 19 December 2012**

### **\*EXECUTIVE SUMMARY FOR BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

- A safeguarding policy for Bullying and Harassment of or by students was approved
- The Board discussed issues raised by the Student Representative Council and the Board of Governors around assessment and teaching and learning issues. The meeting has asked Faculty Academic Standard and Quality Committees (ASQC) to discuss the issues raised and report back to the Academic Board in March

### **\*EXECUTIVE SUMMARY FOR AQEC**

- Nicholas O'Regan, Professor of Strategy/Innovation and Enterprise FBL and Aniko Varadi, Professor in Biomedical Research, HLS have been appointed as members of the Honorary Degree Committee
- A safeguarding policy for Bullying and Harassment of or by students was approved
- The Board discussed issues raised by the Student Representative Council and the Board of Governors around assessment and teaching and learning issues. The meeting has asked Faculty Academic Standard and Quality Committees (ASQC) to discuss the issues raised and report back to the Academic Board in March
- The revised academic calendar for 2013-14 has been approved and is available on the CAS website. Further testing of a proposed future model will take place.
- A revised academic appeals procedure was approved
- The university's submission to the Research Excellence Framework was discussed
- The Board approved the appointment of Professor Jane Arthurs and Professor Rob Cuthbert as professors Emeritus
- The Board confirmed the change of title for Professor Nicholas Ryder from Associate Professor in Commercial Law to Associate Professor in Financial Crime
- Professor Yukio Gunji Kobe was confirmed to the position of Visiting Professor for the Faculty of Environment and Technology