

ACADEMIC BOARD

Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Board held on Wednesday 20 May 2015.

Present: Steve West (Chair), Martin Boddy, Noel Burchell, JJ Clark, Jon Dovey, Benjamin Drew, Manuel Frutos-Perez, Alex Gilkison, Bernhard Gross, Jane Harrington, Catherine Hobbs, Dylan Jones-Evans, Lynne Lawrence, James Lee, Mandy Lee, Helen Lloyd Wildman, Glenn Lyons, Lamine Mahdjoubi, Jo Midgley, Chris Moore, Paul Olomolaiye, Callan Powers, Darren Reynolds, Jeanette Sakel, Rachel Sales, Aniko Varadi.

In attendance: Jason Briddon, Gaynor Attwood, John Clarke, Chris Gledhill, Gerry Rice (representing Steven Neill), Rebecca Smith, Tracy Willis, Sue Yilmaz (Clerk).

Apologies: Lauren Conen, Rachel Cowie, Clayton Davies, John Deane, Paul Dowdall, Arwa Flemban, Sarah Green, Theda Hlaing, Steven Neill, Alastair Osborn, Glenn Parry, Adam Pinfold, Peter Rawlings, Charlie Roper, Rosie Scott-Ward, Patricia Voaden.

AB15.5.1	Membership The Chair thanked the outgoing Student Union President and Vice President Education for all their hard work and noted that the outgoing Student Union President would continue to have a role in the HER Review as Student Lead Reviewer.
AB15.5.2	Minutes and matters arising <i>Paper AB15/05/1 was received.</i>
AB15.5.2.1	<u>Minutes</u> The minutes of the meeting held on 4 March 2015 were approved.
AB15.5.2.2	<u>Visiting titles</u> Members noted that a full report on visiting titles would be provided to the July meeting of Academic Board.
ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION	
AB15.5.3	Sector Outlook
AB15.5.3.1	Following the General Election and Ministerial Appointments Members received an update from the Vice-Chancellor on possible repercussions for the higher education sector and the strategic positioning of the University and noted that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. delivering the 2020 strategy remained a priority, with the primary focus on excellence in teaching and learning supported by creative and confident staff and students; ii. over the next two to three years, the Government would want to push through as much of the Conservative manifesto as possible; iii. universities were not seen to be efficient or productive in competition with other markets; iv. universities would be expected to make savings and were likely to see real reductions in funding above the current savings they were required to make; v. there may be an HE Bill in the Queen's Speech, but this would be high risk with a small majority and the Government could still do a lot without further

	<p>legislation;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> vi. it was very likely that universities would be expected to be more creative on programme design, developing more technology enhanced learning, two-year degrees, learning in work for work; vii. the case had yet to be made for increasing fees. The fee cap may be lifted, but this was likely to be conditional on universities taking responsibility for the student loan; viii. the Government was very interested in university enterprise zones (UEZ) and supportive of FE and HE working together through the establishment of University Technical Colleges; ix. there would be no cap on undergraduate places; x. further devolved powers for Scotland could have an impact in Wales; xi. a new national accountability framework designed to recognise excellence in teaching quality was in development; xii. a National Scholarship Programme would support the top 200 most talented undergraduates if they attended a UK university and stayed on graduation for a further three years; xiii. the EU referendum could take place as early as 2016, potentially impacting on international students and EU research funding; xiv. universities would be expected to play a part in tackling extremism.
AB15.5.3.2	The Vice-Chancellor concluded by noting that UWE was well connected into the influencing groups and should make use of these links, supported by the strategy, to help shape the future of HE.
AB15.5.3.3	Members were advised that the full presentation would be available on the <u>Academic Board SharePoint site</u> .
AB15.5.4	NSS/SES Taskforce <i>Paper AB15/05/2 was received.</i>
AB15.5.4.1	The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) introduced the paper, noting the link between this and the Outstanding Learning Manifesto that was included at item 5.2 on the agenda for approval. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) advised that the proposal for an NSS/SES Taskforce had been informed by the experience of a number of other institutions that had seen a consistent and systematic improvement in their NSS scores, such as Coventry University and Oxford Brookes University, by adopting a proactive approach where programmes failed to meet the threshold for publication. At UWE, the SES scores did not reflect excellence and UWE did not manage poor performance. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) emphasised that the review meetings would be an opportunity to engage in discussion with programme teams in the widest sense. It would be for faculties to decide who should attend.
AB15.5.4.2	Members noted that the University would be reviewing the effectiveness of the SES as a tool in its own right.
AB15.5.4.3	Members welcomed the focus on programmes and the fact that the establishment of the Taskforce was not about naming and shaming. However, the specific reference in paragraph a) to the programme leader being replaced as a result of consistently poor programme performance was queried. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) advised that the list of actions was indicative not exclusive. It was accepted that any action taken should be at the right level. Members expressed broad support for the proposed approach which was evidence based but with intervention and robust decision making where required.

AB15.5.4.4	<p>During discussion members noted the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. the link between programmes and services should be more transparent; ii. the timing of the proposed satisfaction survey (paragraph 2 of the paper) in the autumn term would be important; iii. a review of the SES was overdue; iv. programme leader roles and level of authority should be more clearly defined. For example, they should have more input into who leads which modules; v. the idea of intervention was broadly welcomed, but more detail was needed and how would the University get buy-in from staff? vi. it was suggested that the membership of the Taskforce should be extended to include academic colleagues; vii. how would the university make this an enabling approach? There should be clear routes to promotion; viii. was there a consistent programme of continuing professional development for programme leaders? ix. work was ongoing to link this into Performance 2020.
AB15.5.4.5	<p>The Chair drew the discussion to a close noting that currently it was within the University's gift to address the issue. There may come a time where Government-led intervention could be imposed. Students wanted a quality learning experience and any areas that were consistently below 75% for overall satisfaction were not providing this.</p>
ITEMS FOR APPROVAL	
AB15.5.5	<p>Proposal to include two new award titles in the Regulations <i>Paper AB15/05/3 was received.</i></p>
AB15.5.5.1	<p>The paper was presented by the Deputy Head of Learning and Teaching Enhancement, Academic Services. Members welcomed and approved the recommendations set out in the paper as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. the introduction of a new postgraduate taught award of Masters in Research (MRes) to replace the existing award of MSc/MA by Research which was to be phased out. Students on the existing award were to be consulted on whether they would wish to transfer to the new award in accordance with Academic Regulation B3.2; ii. that the award should appear on the Award Certificate as 'Masters in Research (MRes)'; iii. an amendment to the Academic Regulations to enable UWE to award a research degree of Masters degree by Research jointly with the University of Bristol, exclusively and only as an interim of the Joint PhD Autonomous Systems.
AB15.5.5.2	<p>Members thanked the Deputy Head of Learning and Teaching Enhancement for her attention to this matter.</p>
AB15.5.6	<p>Outstanding Learning Manifesto <i>Paper AB15/05/4 was received</i></p>
AB15.5.6.1	<p>The Deputy Vice-Chancellor tabled a diagrammatic representation of the Manifesto which included the Learning 2020 Programme Project strands.</p>
AB15.5.6.2	<p>Based on discussion at the previous meeting and noting the tabled paper, Members formally approved the Outstanding Learning Manifesto.</p>

AB15.5.7	15/16 Academic Governance Calendar <i>Paper AB15/05/5 was received.</i>
AB15.5.7.1	Members approved the 2015/16 Academic Governance Calendar subject to final confirmation of dates for the Faculty of Health and Applied Sciences departmental committees and the research committees.
AB15.5.8	Research Matters <i>Paper AB15/05/6 was received.</i>
AB15.5.8.1	Members noted that a revised version of the UWE Research Strategy would be presented to the July meeting of Academic Board. The focus for this meeting was to consider for approval the 'Guidelines on Ethical Review of Evaluation Studies and Evaluation Research' proposals which had been endorsed by the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee. The Guidelines applied to all staff and students at the University carrying out surveys as outlined in the paper.
AB15.5.8.2	Members approved the Guidelines for publication with a recommendation to monitor the impact on the amount of business requiring ethics review by a Research Ethics Committee. ACTION: Chair of the University Research Ethics Committee
AB15.5.9	Weston Partnership Agreement <i>Paper AB15/05/7 was received.</i>
AB15.5.9.1	The Pro Vice-Chancellor: Student Experience introduced the paper. Members noted that designating University Centre status to Weston College represented a commitment to a strategic and reciprocal partnership through which to develop a shared strategy as outlined in the paper. This strategic agreement would be separate from the existing Academic Agreement that was already in place. HEFCE had identified gaps in higher education provision ('cold spots') across England and the establishment of a University Centre at Weston offered the opportunity to further expand higher education within the region through the partnership. It may be that UWE would want to consider working with some of its other partners in this way.
AB15.5.9.2	Academic Board approved the Agreement designating University Centre status to Weston College.
AB15.5.10	UWE Bristol's International College (UWEBIC), update on transfer from the validation to the articulation model of partnership. <i>Paper AB15/05/8 was received.</i>
AB15.5.10.1	The Deputy Head of Learning and Teaching Enhancement introduced the paper which was an update on a paper presented to the December 2014 meeting of Academic Board. It was noted that under Action Line 3: Sponsoring of Tier 4 students, discussions were still ongoing to clarify how the UKVI guidance for Sponsors (April 2015) would impact on the changing relationship in terms of sponsoring students attending UWEBIC.
AB15.5.10.2	Academic Board approved the approach outlined in the paper with the proviso that if changes were required once the sponsorship issue had been clarified this should be signed off by Chair's action. ACTION: Deputy Head of Learning and Teaching Enhancement

REPORTS AND UPDATES	
AB15.5.11	Update from UWE Student Representatives
AB15.5.11.1	Members received an oral update from the Vice President Education highlighting the success of the Student Representative and Staff Teaching Awards which was a wonderful evening giving staff and students the opportunity to share achievements. Members also noted the increased response rate to the Student Experience Survey that could be attributed in part to the You Said We Did campaign which had been a collaborative UWE/UWESU activity.
AB15.5.11.2	The Vice President Education further reported that the Students' Union was looking at how training for student representatives could be developed to improve engagement and attendance, including working more closely with faculties and departments. It was reported that a workshop on Academic Personal Tutoring had been held with 35 members of staff and 8 students attending out of which a paper had been submitted to the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee.
AB15.5.11.3	The Vice President Education noted that this would be his last Academic Board meeting and thanked Members for their support.
AB15.5.12	Preparations for the QAA Higher Education Review
AB15.5.12.1	The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) gave a verbal update on the University's preparations for the forthcoming QAA HER noting that the outcome of the trial review had been positive in the sense that it had not revealed any surprises, but there was still a lot of work to be done. It had been intentional that no briefing or training had been provided prior the trial review, but training would now be rolled out, including some provided by an outside consultancy. A programme of mock events would be set up and another trial review would be held just prior to the HER itself. Briefings would include sessions on QAA definitions and key terms.
AB15.5.12.2	Members were advised that one of the trial reviewers had agreed to work with the University as an external consultant for two days a week on the preparation for the HER while the Director of Academic Services was absent from the University.
AB15.5.12.3	It was noted that the final draft of the SED would be presented to the July meeting of Academic Board for sign off.
AB15.5.12.4	The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) thanked the Vice President Education for his work on the preparations for the HER.
AB15.5.12.5	The Chair thanked colleagues for the huge amount of work that had been done to date on the SED and requested that the papers for the July meeting be circulated in good time to enable Members to read it prior to the meeting.
AB15.5.13	Updates from Faculty Boards <i>Paper AB15/05/9 was received.</i>
AB15.5.13.1	Members noted that: the Faculty of Arts, Creative Industries and Education wanted to use its Board to radically review the SES; i. the Faculty of Environment and Technology had utilised its Board to reflect on the student experience from a programme perspective. It was also looking to review the SES in the light of the improvement in the faculty's NSS response rates which was due in part to appointing an NSS champion; ii. the Faculty of Health and Social Care Board had decided to focus on

	<p>Strategy 2020 to explore how this fed into a range of activities across the faculty;</p> <p>iii. the Faculty of Business and Law had utilised its Board to refocus on programmes and responsibilities and accountability of different roles such as module and programme leaders.</p>
AB15.5.13.2	The Chair welcomed the updates.
ITEMS TO NOTE	
AB15.5.14	<p>Chairs Actions</p> <p>To note that on behalf of Academic Board, the Chair granted Professor Emeritus/a status to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Professor Penelope Harnett ii. Professor Andy Danford iii. Professor Ron Richie
AB15.5.15	<p>Minutes of Sub-committees</p> <p>Members noted the availability of subcommittee minutes, including Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee were available on the Academic Board SharePoint Site.</p>
AB15.5.16	<p>Dates of future meetings</p> <p>All meetings scheduled to be held from 14:00 - 17:00 in the Dartington Suite.</p> <p>Wednesday 8 July 2015</p>
ANY OTHER BUSINESS	
AB15.5.17	<p>Release of marks</p> <p>A request was made for Academic Board to look again at the decision to release unconfirmed marks as soon as they were available. Students were reported to be confused and scared because they could see assessment failures without being able to see whether or not this meant they had failed a component or module. The Chair advised that this should be taken outside of the meeting. The current policy on releasing marks had been developed in response to student feedback and this should not be undermined without further investigation into what was a very complex issue. It was suggested that this be referred to the Student Voice Working Group.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">ACTION: Chair of the Student Voice Working Group</p>