

ACADEMIC BOARD

Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Board held on Wednesday 8 July 2015.

Present: Steve West (Chair), Noel Burchell, Lauren Conen, Clayton Davies, Benjamin Drew, Manuel Frutos-Perez, Alex Gilkison, Sarah Green, 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, Glenn Parry, Adam Pinfold, Callan Powers, Peter Rawlings, Darren Reynolds, Jeanette Sakel, Rachel Sales, Rosie Scott-Ward.

In attendance: Richard Bond (for item AB15.07.06), Chris Gledhill (Secretary), Tracey Horton (for item AB15.07.08), Julie Kent, Lucy Meredith (representing Steven Neill), Patrick Nolan (for item AB15.07.10), Alastair Osborn, Rebecca Smith, Tracy Willis, Gail Wilson (for item AB15.07.08).

Observers: Edd Burrell (SU); Kate Dawson (SU).

Apologies: Martin Boddy, Jason Briddon, Rachel Cowie, Jon Dovey, Paul Dowdall, Lucy Dumbell, Theda Hlaing, Steven Neill, Jack Polson, Aniko Varadi.

AB15.7.1 Membership

AB15.7.1.1 The Chair welcomed the Vice President, Education and the two observers from the Students' Union to the meeting.

AB15.7.1.2 Members noted that the Deputy Vice Chancellor, Academic's membership of the Board of Governors as Academic Board nominee would end on 31 July 2015.

The Chair proposed that Professor Steven Neill be nominated to replace Professor Harrington.

The Academic Board **endorsed** the nomination.

ACTION: Secretary to ensure that the nomination of Professor Neill is presented to the Board of Governors on 21 July 2015.

AB15.7.2 Minutes and matters arising

Paper AB15/07/01 was received.

AB15.5.2.1 Minutes

The correction to Min. AB15.05.12.2 to read: "...while the Director of Academic Services was *absent from the University*" was noted.

Subject to this amendment, the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 20 May 2015 were **approved**.

AB15.5.2.2 Visiting titles

Members noted that a full report on visiting titles would be provided to the September 2015 meeting of Academic Board.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

AB15.7.3 Sector Outlook

Paper AB15/07/02 was received.

AB15.7.3.1 Members received an update from the Vice-Chancellor on HEFCE's consultation on approaches to quality assessment in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

AB15.7.3.2 Members noted in particular:

Quality Assessment

- i. The key principles for a future quality assessment system, namely:
 - a. Institutional autonomy and co-regulation
 - b. A focus on student outcomes and academic output standards, not systems and processes
 - c. The fostering of excellence and innovation through continuous improvement
 - d. Acknowledgement of the diversity of the HE sector and respect for providers' own strategic decisions and investment choices
 - e. A risk-based and proportionate approach
 - f. Minimal burden and cost to institutions
 - g. Meaningful and informed externality;
- ii. Three things for UWE to consider:
 1. Is it able to engage within the University as well as externally?
 2. The potential need to 'push' External Examiners harder
 3. Is it content that its systems and processes are fit for the future, noting the intention for governing bodies to seek assurance on academic standards and quality?

Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)

- iii. The consultation document referred to the introduction of a Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF);
- iv. BIS and HEFCE would work together to address the challenge of creating a quality assessment system and TEF that were complementary, not conflicting processes;
- v. The focus was very much about identifying high quality teaching and learning, student experience, innovation and value for money;
- vi. The deadline for responses to the consultation was 18 September 2015; a meeting of the Academic Board was scheduled for 16 September and there was therefore an opportunity to consider the University's response.

It was **agreed** that the Directorate prepare a draft response for email circulation to Members via the Secretary over the summer break, requesting comments.

ACTION: Directorate to prepare the University's draft response to the consultation for circulation to Members by the Secretary.

It was also **agreed** that the final draft response be considered by the Academic Board at its meeting 16 September 2015.

ACTION: Secretary to ensure that the University's draft response to the HEFCE QA consultation appears on the next agenda.

AB15.7.4 Learning 2020

AB15.7.4.1 The Deputy Vice Chancellor, Academic provided Members with an update on progress.

AB15.7.4.2 Members noted that:

- i. A relatively contained group of colleagues was charged with scoping out projects and an away day would be arranged to take place after the QAA visit in October 2015;
- ii. A Heads of Department Group would be established and, depending upon projects, would report through the ASQCs, the Academic Board itself or through a more local level for contextualisation;
- iii. National Teaching Fellows would provide 'critical friend' support, with others drafted in as projects developed;
- iv. The NSS Taskforce project would commence in September 2015; this was a much broader group, involving programmes and the sharing of good practice across the University;
- v. Professional expectations for teachers – minimum standards and inspirational targets – had been produced;
- vi. A group would be set up to examine the University's learning infrastructure: extended years, alternative forms of delivery, assessment, providing training and development in a systematic manner, VLE/Blackboard, etc.;
- vii. A research stream was also embedded as it was imperative not to lose sight of the influence that research had upon teaching;
- viii. The Student Union would be invited to the various forums and the intention was to extend this to the creation of student groups for each Faculty.

AB15.7.4.3 The Academic Board noted in particular that Learning 2020 was a key priority, given that less than 7% of income now came from HEFCE and the vast majority from student fees and that getting learning and inspirational teaching right was hugely important therefore not only to the University but more so to the students who were putting a heavy investment with UWE into their futures.

AB15.7.5 Higher Education Review (HER)

AB15.7.5.1 Draft Self Evaluation Document (SED)
Paper AB15/07/03 was received.

AB15.7.5.2 The Deputy Vice Chancellor, Academic provided Members with an outline of the content and format of the draft SED.

AB15.7.5.3 During full and considered discussion of the document, Members noted:

- i. the structure followed was partly determined by the QAA, was based upon the QAA UK Quality Code and the terms used were therefore very specific;
- ii. content was a mixture of description and evidenced, evaluative data;
- iii. there were over 900 pieces of evidence and these would be simultaneously provided online as the SED was electronically submitted;
- iv. commentary on progress made in relation to recommendations from the 2009 QAA audit was detailed in section 2;
- v. UWE's Quality Management & Enhancement Framework (QMEF) constituted in effect the University's interpretation of the QAA code;
- vi. Summaries were provided at the end of each chapter to explain how UWE complied with practice;
- vii. It was usual practice for reviewers to split the document and it was therefore important to have repetition of key messages throughout;
- viii. The University's students had played a pivotal role as 'critical friends' in the production of the document;
- ix. Evidence discovered after the submission should be kept as the QAA may request further information;
- x. The pleasing breadth of documentary evidence supporting the document.

- AB15.7.5.4 Members also noted that edits from colleagues would cease on 12 July 2015 and the final draft would undergo a final proofread before submission on 20 July 2015.
- AB15.7.5.5 The Academic Board **endorsed** the draft SED and **agreed** to delegate the final sign-off to the Chair for submission to the QAA.
ACTION: Chair of the Academic Board
- AB15.7.5.6 Members also received a detailed overview of preparations for the HER from the Deputy Vice Chancellor, Academic.
- AB15.7.5.7 Members noted in particular that a series of very detailed briefings would take place to explain the way in which the SED was written and the areas of emphasis within it.
- AB15.7.5.8 Draft Student Written Submission
Paper AB15/07/04 was received.
- AB15.7.5.9 The VP, Education provided Members with a brief outline of the preparation of the submission and expressed thanks on behalf of the Students' Union to the HER team for working in partnership in seeking student opinion for the SED throughout the writing process.
- AB15.7.5.10 The Deputy Vice Chancellor, Academic responded that the partnership signified the strength of student opinion at the University and reflected the good relationship between the institution and the Students' Union.
- AB15.7.5.11 The Chair informed Members that in terms of continuity, the previous Students' Union President would lead the process from the perspective, supported by the current President, the Vice President, Education and other Students' Union colleagues.
- AB15.7.5.12 On behalf of the Academic Board, the Chair thanked the Students' Union for the comprehensive submission.

ITEMS FOR APPROVAL

AB15.7.6 Research Strategy *Paper AB15/07/05 was received.*

- AB15.7.6.1 The Associate Dean, Research & Knowledge Exchange (RKE) outlined the content of the strategy to the Academic Board.
- AB15.7.6.2 In doing so, he informed Members that the strategy:
- i. was founded upon the over-arching UWE Bristol Strategy 2020
 - ii. provided a framework for the Faculty Implementation Plans that were in place and reflected current practice within those plans;
 - iii. highlighted the challenge of sustaining a healthy turnover of research staff and allocating the right level of time to research;
 - iv. emphasised that all academic staff had a part to play in research and scholarship;
 - v. included a Research Impact Strategy as an annex.
- AB15.7.6.3 During full and considered discussions, Members noted:
- i. that success against the strategy's objectives was dependent upon the on-going work being undertaken on research KPIs and metrics, as referenced in the strategy;
 - ii. the importance of KPIs as clear measures for keeping individuals to account;
 - iii. that, as written, the strategy was inclusive but did not describe the

- University's strategic ambition in terms of research and how this would be achieved;
- iv. that a clearer articulation of what was involved to shape the institution to secure this ambition and the investment needed was also required, although it was acknowledged that this may sit within the Faculty Implementation Plans;
 - v. that there were some contradictory statements which on the one hand suggested selectivity and on the other, the enabling of 'all staff';
 - vi. that teaching and learning was missing from the Research-Impact Cycle (p.3 of the annex);
 - vii. the challenge of providing a strategy for a single institution that had four faculties, each executing research and which:
 - a. allowed for interpretation at faculty level and
 - b. empowered staff to use their contractual allowance for scholarship activity whilst helping others to contribute to REF activity;
 - viii. the importance of the visibility of research activity to the student body;
 - ix. the challenge in meeting the objective to move 11 places in the headline THE league table whilst simultaneously addressing Learning 2020 and the areas for improvement in the quality of the student experience.

AB15.7.6.4 It was **agreed** that the Chair reflect the observations of the Academic Board to the Research Strategy to the Pro Vice Chancellor, Research.

ACTION: Chair of the Academic Board to speak to Pro Vice Chancellor, Research

AB15.7.7 Research Ethics Committees: Policy and Procedures for Research Ethical Approval

Paper AB15/07/06 was received.

AB15.7.7.1 The Chair of the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) outlined the key amendments to the policy and procedures as detailed in the report.

AB15.7.7.2 Members noted in particular:

- i. Any research proposal that raised ethical issues could now be submitted for ethics review and approval (previously the procedures had been designed around research involving human participants);
- ii. Research involving the re-use of data may require review – there was now a distinction for anonymised data, which may only require a 'light-touch' review;
- iii. The REC composition to include a staff member and a PhD student from the Graduate School;
- iv. Terms of office of members to be of a maximum of 5 years, with the possibility of extension with the UREC's authorisation;
- v. Additional section on animal research.

AB15.7.7.3 Members noted in particular the potential vulnerability of single supervisors of research projects and were informed that supervisors could seek advice from an appropriate Faculty Research Ethics Committee Member or refer the project to the UREC.

AB15.7.7.4 The Chair reminded the Academic Board that ethical matters potentially presenting a reputational risk to the University could require a higher level of scrutiny and would be considered by the Governing Body's Ethics Committee.

AB15.7.7.5 It was **agreed** that the Governance team would liaise with the Chair of UREC to discuss the format and content of the terms of reference.

ACTION: Head of Governance

AB15.7.7.6 It was also **agreed** that a separate appendix relating to the Prevent agenda would be added to the policy and procedures.

ACTION: Pro Vice Chancellor, Student Experience and Chair of UREC

AB15.7.7.7 Subject to the above amendment, the Policy and Procedures for Research Ethical Approval were **approved**.

AB15.7.8 Academic Regulations and Procedures

Papers AB15/07/07, AB15/07/08, AB15/07/09, AB15/07/10 and AB15/07/11 were received.

AB15.7.8.1 The Academic Regulations & Policy Manager led Members through the changes made to the regulations for 2015/2016.

AB15.7.8.2 Members' attention was drawn in particular to the following:

Extenuating circumstances

- i. 'early intervention' (previously 'fit to sit') – approved by Academic Board in June 2014, deferred for implementation in September 2015;
- ii. Additional categories of extenuating circumstances where a student had the chance to take part in a national or international sporting or artistic/cultural event, or in a unique career enhancing opportunity.

It was **agreed** that the specification of particular activities be reworded to "participation in activities at national or international level".

ACTION: Academic Regulations & Policy Manager to amend the relevant section of the regulations

Five day working extensions

- i. The permanent embedding in the regulations of the five working day extensions, with some updates from the 2014/2015 pilot.

Members **agreed** that further refinement to the category 'victim of crime' was required.

ACTION: Academic Regulations & Policy Manager to liaise with student advisers for examples of cases in order to reword the regulation.

Integrated Masters

- i. Change in method of calculation for all integrated masters awards;
- ii. Variance due to professional body requirements that the full project mark be included in the calculation for: BEng/MEng Mechanical Engineering, BEng/MEng Automotive Engineering and BEng/MEng Motorsport Engineering;

Midwifery/Nursing

- i. Variance to allow for new module registrations to be entirely removed from a student's record, to avoid the potential loss of an attempt.

AB15.7.8.3 Members noted with pleasure the clarity and comprehensive nature of the review document.

AB15.7.8.4 Subject to the further amendments identified above, the revised Academic Regulations & Procedures to take effect from September 2015 were **approved**.

AB15.7.9 Policy on the Tier 4 Sponsorship of International Students

Paper AB15/07/12 was received.

AB15.7.9.1 Members received from the Pro Vice Chancellor, Student Experience, an overview of the new policy which had been developed following extensive consultation across the institution.

- AB15.7.9.2 Members noted that the policy drew together processes that were already in place at the University in order to:
- i. Provide greater clarity and transparency to prospective and current international students
 - ii. Provide staff members with confidence in decision making in this area
 - iii. Mitigate the risk of the University failing to meet its requirements as a Tier 4 sponsor.

AB15.7.9.3 The new Tier 4 policy was **approved**.

AB15.7.10 Review of Accredited Learning

Paper AB15/07/13 was received.

AB15.7.10.1 Members received an overview of the new policy from the Head of Business Improvement.

AB15.7.10.2 Members noted in particular the proposed creation of Faculty- and Graduate School-based Accredited Learning Panels in order to provide a formal structure for the good practice already in place across the University.

AB15.7.10.3 Members also noted the imperative for the panels to be distinguishable, auditable and transparent and for the membership to possess the appropriate skills and expertise.

AB15.7.10.4 Members **agreed** that membership should include Programme Leaders.

ACTION: Head of Business Improvement to amend the terms of reference of the Accredited Learning Panels to include Programme Leaders in the membership.

AB15.7.10.5 Subject to the above amendment, the Accredited Learning Policy and recommendations as outlined in the report were **approved**.

AB15.7.11 2016/2017 Academic Calendar

Paper AB15/07/14 was received.

AB15.7.11.1 Members noted that the calendar was a roll-over of the current year.

AB15.7.11.2 Members also noted that an evaluation of the timing proximity of resits and award boards would be undertaken which may impact upon the later part of the calendar and that the calendar was therefore presented for approval 'in principle'.

AB15.7.11.3 The Academic Board **agreed** to approve in principle the 2016/2017 Academic Calendar, subject to the proviso as discussed.

REPORTS AND UPDATES

AB15.7.12 Updates from Faculty Boards

Paper AB15/07/15 was received.

AB15.7.12.1 Members noted that a reporting template indicating suggested standard content would be developed to assist Faculty Boards in providing a written update to the Academic Board.

ITEMS TO NOTE

AB15.7.13 Chairs Actions

To note that on behalf of Academic Board:

- i. The Chair granted Professor Emeritus status to Professor June Hannam.

Although the award was granted some time ago, this required formal recording in the minutes;

- ii. The Chair approved a number of Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR) awards and student prizes.

AB15.7.14 External Peer Review Annual Report

Paper AB15/07/16 was received.

AB15.7.14.1 The Chair opened up this item to Members for comment and endorsement.

The Academic Board **endorsed** the current activity in the appointment and management of all External Peer Review roles, including external examiners.

AB15.7.15 Bristol Social Marketing Centre – Change of Name

Members noted the change of name of the Bristol Social Marketing Centre to the 'Bristol Centre for the Study of Behaviour Change and Influence', approved by the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee on 10 June 2015.

AB15.7.16 Minutes of Sub-committees

Members noted that the latest available minutes of subcommittees, including the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee were available from the SharePoint Site.

AB15.7.17 Aegrotat Posthumous Award

Members noted that a CertHE in Psychology had been awarded in accordance with regulation H22.2 by the award board held on 18 June 2015.

AB15.7.18 Dates of future meetings

All meetings scheduled to be held from 14:00 - 17:00 in the Dartington Suite, unless otherwise stated.

Wednesday	16 September 2015	Room 4Q69, Frenchay Campus
Wednesday	16 December 2015	
Wednesday	2 March 2016	
Wednesday	18 May 2016	
Wednesday	6 July 2016	