



University of the  
West of England

**CONFIRMED**

## **ACADEMIC BOARD**

Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Board held on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> May 2007

Present: Sir H Newby (Chair), Dr G Attwood, Professor A Bensted, Professor M Boddy, J Bradley, Professor G Channon, N Clough, Professor R Cuthbert, Professor J Duffield, S Grive, A Habib, Dr J Harrington, T Harrison, B Hawkins, G House, N Khurana, R Lawton, Professor J Longhurst, T McGoldrick, F Mertens, Dr S Newby, D Passfield, C Rex, Professor R Ritchie, Dr J Rogers, J Rushforth, B Senior.

Apologies: Professor C Aitchison, Dr K Foreman, Professor C Fudge, Dr R Gillibrand, Professor I Gow, W Jones, M Keppel-Palmer, G Mann, J Thomas, Professor S West.

In attendance: R Conlon (for minutes AB07.05.6.2 – AB07.05.6.2.3), C Croudace, D Francombe, Professor S Hagen, K Hicks, Professor S Neill (for minutes AB07.05.6.2 – AB07.05.6.2.3), E Smith, M Wheeler.

### **AB07.05.1 WELCOME**

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting, and particularly George House, who had been elected to replace Katy Phillips as one of the SRC representative for the remainder of the academic year.

### **AB07.05.2 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 14<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2007**

The Board approved the minutes of the meeting of 14<sup>th</sup> March 2007.

### **AB07.05.3 VICE CHANCELLOR'S REPORT**

Paper AB/07/5/2 was received.

AB07.05.3.1 The Board noted updates on recruitment, faculty restructuring (including the current process for the appointments of Associate Deans and Faculty Academic Registrars), services restructuring, a possible UWE presence in Swindon, presences in central Bristol, NHS contracts, sponsorships and financial matters. The Board also noted that the recent Board of Governors Away Day had discussed underlying principles for a general policy regarding ethical and responsible conduct across the institution. The University's capacity to respond to serious incidents and emergencies had been reviewed, resulting in a revised procedure, for which a programme of training had taken place.

AB07.05.3.2 Deputy Vice Chancellor Rushforth reported that a forum on voluntary activity by staff and students would be arranged by the Centre for Student Affairs. One possible outcome of such a forum could be a twinning arrangement with a region in the developing world, facilitating exchange opportunities. There was enthusiasm for such an exciting development

and potential funding was being investigated.

AB07.05.3.3 The Vice Chancellor further reported that: he had been appointed to the Hong Kong Quality Council; the Research Strategy would be submitted to the June 2007 meeting of Academic Board; the HEFCE letter expressing confidence in UWE's institutional arrangements had been received; the institutional visit from HEFCE would take place on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2007; the new Head of Human Resources would be announced in the near future.

AB07.05.4 **ACADEMIC BOARD GOVERNANCE**

The item was deferred to the June 2007 meeting of Academic Board.

**Action: Academic Registrar and Clerk to the Board of Governors**

AB07.05.5 **REGULATORY FRAMEWORK**

AB07.05.5.1 **REGULATORY FRAMEWORK REVIEW**

Paper AB/07/5/4 was received.

AB07.05.5.1.1 The Academic Registrar presented the paper, which outlined the three stages of the review. As part of stage two of the review, there had been wide consultation with faculties, professional services and the Student Representative Council on a paper setting out recommendations in respect of the University's regulations on resits and the operation of examining boards. Feedback received during the consultation round informed the set of recommendations presented to Academic Board. The Board agreed that consultation with external examiners should take place during the summer 2007 examining board process.

AB07.05.5.1.2 There was widespread discussion of the paper and the recommendations. There was support in principle for the direction in which the review was proceeding. The Board expressed serious concerns that the unavailability of resources required to implement new regulations in the student record system would impact on the speed of progress. Concerns were also expressed about running two sets of regulations in parallel, about training issues, about working practices and the possible impact on retention rates.

AB07.05.5.1.3 The Board agreed to approve the following recommendations, and invited the Academic Registrar to submit to the June meeting of Academic Board enhanced proposals, which would serve the University's educational philosophies and goals, and would inform a costing exercise within ITS on recommendations (a) and (b):

(a) to reduce the number of resits to a maximum of two with the first one to be given as an automatic right (uncapped for those with extenuating circumstances) and the second at the discretion of the examining board (capped or uncapped).

(b) to accord students with the responsibility for active indication (via a registration process) of when they intend to take resits. The default position would be that students will undertake the resit at the next available opportunity.

(c) to invite the Steering Group to revisit the issues of condonation for marginal failure and discretion available to examination boards and to bring forward recommendations forthwith

(d) to invite the Academic Registry to review the notes of guidance to

faculties on the operation of field and award boards and to develop training for chairs and secretaries of examination boards and to review the way in which results are presented to examination boards in time for the January 2008 boards

- (e) to invite faculties to discuss the proposed changes with their external examiners during the summer 2007 examination board process.

**Action: Academic Registrar**

AB07.05.5.1.6 It was suggested that the Steering Group should also give consideration to implications of all recommendations for UWE Federation partnerships, CPD, and in-company programmes.

AB07.05.5.2 **AWARD OF TITLE OF PROFESSOR**

Paper AB/07/5/5 was received.

AB07.05.5.2.1 The Board noted that the Professorial and Honorary Degrees Committee had recommended that the current application process for Professorial title be updated, in order to bring the criteria relating to the title into alignment with the University's mission, and to ensure greater predictability over the timing of the process. A proposed timetable for the annual round had been included in the paper. The recommendations had been broadly approved by Associate Deans, and the Joint Policy and Resources Committee, and would be considered by the Personnel Committee on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2007.

AB07.05.5.2.2 The Board agreed to approve the following recommendation:

- (a) the amendment of the terms of reference and membership with effect from September 2007 of the current Professorial and Honorary Degrees Committee to ensure it is fit for purpose. This would include the inclusion of the Head of Personnel Services (or nominee) and the Executive Deans in attendance at meetings of the Committee and the involvement of Governors for consideration of Honorary Degrees' nominations only.

AB07.05.6 **STUDENT EXPERIENCE**

AB07.05.6.1 **STUDENT EXPERIENCE PROGRAMME**

Paper AB/07/5/6 was received.

AB07.05.6.1.1 The paper provided an update on activities, including some of the main highlights of the SEP to date: the involvement of large numbers of staff in the programme of activity; further development of links with student representatives at all levels; specific outputs including UWE Welcome and the Graduate Development Programme.

AB07.05.6.1.2 The Dean of Students informed the Board that the NSS2007 had recently concluded and that results would be available in August 2007. The Board noted that the response rate from UWE students had increased by more than the sector average.

AB07.05.6.2 **GRADUATE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME**

Paper AB/07/5/7 was received.

AB07.05.6.2.1 The Chair welcomed Roger Conlon and Steve Neill to the meeting.

AB07.05.6.2.2 The paper provided a progress report on the Graduate Development

Programme (GDP), a Programme Specification, a 'GDP Description, Design, Delivery' paper outlining details of the GDP aims and activities, and how the GDP is adapted to operate within subject programmes and processes of delivery, and a list of ongoing work and next steps for implementation in September 2007.

- AB07.05.6.2.3 The Board welcomed the paper and congratulated all involved with the Development, particularly Mr Conlon and Professor Neill for the excellent collaborative approach to the project. The Board noted that training was in place for academic staff.
- AB07.05.6.2.4 The Board agreed to approve the programme specification and the academic recommendations for the implementation of the GDP. Responsibility for the implementation of the GDP would fall to the faculties, under the leadership of a Programme Director who would shortly be appointed.
- AB07.05.6.3 **EMPLOYABILITY STRATEGY**  
Paper AB/07/5/8 was received.
- AB07.05.6.3.1 The Board warmly endorsed the strategy.
- AB07.05.6.4 **STUDENT MATTERS**  
Paper AB/07/5/9 was received.
- AB07.05.6.4.1 The recent Student Representative Council meeting had been attended by the Dean of Students, the Academic Registrar, the Head of the Centre for Student Affairs and Dr Jane Harrington (BBS). There had been positive engagement with the issues discussed at the meeting, including the UWE Charter, the Complaints Review, the Regulatory Framework Review, assessment feedback, the GDP and student representation restructuring.
- AB07.05.6.4.2 The Board congratulated all concerned on the constructive and collegial approach to issues during the academic year, resulting in progress towards the best possible outcomes for all students.
- AB07.05.7 **INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION**
- AB07.05.7.1 The Board noted that the paper had been withdrawn in light of ongoing discussions with INTI Hong Kong over the provision of library services. The Board agreed to delegate endorsement of the agreement to the Vice Chancellor.
- AB07.05.7.2 The Board noted that Professor Ian Gow would represent the Vice Chancellor at the inauguration of INTI Malaysia on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2007.
- AB07.05.7.3 The Board noted that the Board of Governors had discussed the Internationalisation Strategy at the Away Day on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2007. An Implementation Plan would be submitted for consideration by the International Group and Academic Board.
- AB07.05.7.4 The Vice Chancellor confirmed that, in order to ensure greater corporate focus of effort and resources, the resourcing of international collaboration would be managed from within Admissions and International Recruitment; resources would be released in accordance with a central policy. A centralised approach would result in better researched partnerships, with improved co-ordination of information and evidence on the status of a

proposed partner. There would be a review of all groups involved with international matters so that revised arrangements could be in place for the start of the new academic year.

AB07.05.7.5 The Vice Chancellor reported that the South Asia Group would stand down with immediate effect and thanked Dr Stephen Ryrie for his work as chair of the group. The group's work would be assumed by Admissions and International Recruitment.

AB07.05.7.6 Professor Hagen expressed concern that income generation developments should not be constrained by such an arrangement; RBI would wish to be able to progress bids and agreement of knowledge exchange partnerships in a timely fashion, in order to continue to develop its innovative approach to meet the UWE Mission.

AB07.05.8 **ITEMS TO NOTE**

The Board received the following for information:

AB07.05.8.1 Reports from April and May 2007 Faculty Boards. The Chair reported that the issues highlighted to Academic Board would be forwarded as appropriate.

AB07.05.8.2 Minutes of the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee of 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2007

AB07.05.8.3 Minutes of the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee of 16<sup>th</sup> February 2007

AB07.05.8.4 Minutes of the Joint External Affairs Committee of 13<sup>th</sup> February 2007

AB07.05.8.5 Minutes of the Joint Student Affairs Committee of 5<sup>th</sup> February 2007

AB07.05.8.6 Minutes of the Joint Diversity Committee of 21<sup>st</sup> February 2007

AB07.05.9 **DATE OF FUTURE MEETING**

13<sup>th</sup> June 2007, 2.00 pm