

**ACADEMIC BOARD**

Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Board held on Wednesday 16 December 2015.

**Present:** Jane Harrington (Chair), Martin Boddy, Clayton Davies, Lucy Dumbell, Robert Elvin, Manuel Frutos-Perez, Alex Gilkison, Callum Gladwish, Sarah Green, Bernhard Gross, Lynne Lawrance, Mandy Lee, Helen Lloyd Wildman, Glenn Lyons, Lamine Mahdjoubi, Jo Midgley, Chris Moore, Steven Neill, Paul Olomolaiye, Glenn Parry, Peter Rawlings, Jeanette Sakel, Rachel Sales, Rosie Scott-Ward, Fiona Tolmie, Donna Whitehead.

**In attendance:** John Clarke, Chris Gledhill (minutes), Alastair Osborn; Tracy Willis.

**Observers:** Delia Bean, Sarah Hickie (SU), Gem Heywood (SU), Emma Youde.

**Apologies:** Jason Briddon, Lauren Conen, Rachel Cowie, Catherine Hobbs, Adam Pinfold, Jack Polson, Steve West.

**AB15.12.1 Welcome and Introductions**

AB15.12.1.1 The Chair welcomed the new student representatives, Callum Gladwish (UG) and Robert Elvin (PGT) to their first meeting.

The Chair also welcomed the Students' Union Vice President, Societies and Communication, who was attending on behalf of the Students' Union President and Vice President, Education.

**AB15.12.2 Minutes and Matters Arising**

*Paper AB15/12/01 was received*

AB15.9.2.1 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 15 September 2015 were **approved**.

AB15.9.2.2 Min AB15.9.1 refers: 'Membership and Terms of Reference'

Members **approved** the FBL Faculty Board's nomination of Patricia Voaden as a member of Academic Board.

AB15.9.2.3 Min AB15.9.4.3 refers: 'Draft Response to HEFCE QA Consultation'

Members noted that the University's response to the consultation was submitted by the deadline of 18 September 2015.

AB15.9.2.4 Min AB15.9.5.4 refers: 'Research Strategy'

Members noted that the suggested change to the Research Strategy was now complete.

AB15.9.2.5 Min AB15.9.7 refers: 'Update on the Higher Education Review'

Members received an update from the Deputy Vice Chancellor and Provost and noted that:

- The outcome letter and draft report had been received and that the final report would be published on 15 January 2015;
- UWE Bristol had met UK standards in all four categories and only one recommendation had been made, advising that all PhD students involved in teaching should be trained before doing so;
- Three areas of good practice had been identified:

- widening participation: outreach and work with under-represented groups
- peer assisted learning – the breadth and strength of the relationship with the individual
- employability.

AB15.9.2.6 Members also noted this very good outcome and the fact that the new Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) would require institutions to have a recent positive QAA outcome to form level 1 TEF and thereby have access to specific financial incentives in the first year of the TEF, including an uplift in fees.

AB15.9.2.7 Min AB15.9.1 refers: 'Membership and Terms of Reference'  
Members noted that the decision to roll over the tenure of Faculty Board memberships had been communicated via Faculty Business Managers.

## ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

### AB15.12.3 **Draft Response to the HE Green Paper Consultation** *Paper AB15/12/02 was received*

AB15.12.3.1 The Deputy Vice Chancellor and Provost outlined the key features of the Green Paper, as detailed in the report.

AB15.12.3.2 Members noted the following in particular:

- there would be two preconditions to qualify for a TEF award:
  1. fulfilling widening participation expectations
  2. observing the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) guidance on how consumer protection law applied to higher education providers. UWE Bristol would be able to satisfy both of these preconditions;
- HEFCE would be disbanded and the majority of its functions transferred to a new Office for Students (OfS);
- The role and functions of the Director of Fair Access and OFFA would also transfer to the OfS;
- The possible removal of Freedom of Information requirements for HEIs.

AB15.12.3.3 Workshop Activity  
Members split into four groups to discuss the provisions for the TEF and in particular:

- Should the TEF go to subject level and what could that mean?
- What experience do we have from the REF that we can draw upon?
- Are there any metrics that we would/ would not want to see included?

Members were also invited to examine one of the following areas as part of their discussions: social mobility, opportunities, risks and research.

Feedback would inform the University's response to the consultation.

AB15.12.3.4 Group Feedback  
*Should the TEF go to subject level and what could that mean?*

- Whilst UWE Bristol would want all subjects to provide good TEF results, subject level assessments were felt to be a risk as they could influence the manner in which subjects operated and could be potentially harmful to international recruitment, as subject league tables were the primary source of information for international students
- Others felt that subject level assessment would prevent the masking of both good and poor teaching practice and the risk of vicious and virtuous circles being created

- Subject level assessments would reinforce the need to measure in terms of subject outcomes.

*What experience do we have from the REF that we can draw upon?*

- Current REF information systems were heading towards a less burdensome approach
- The importance of relative weighting of criteria.

*Are there any metrics that we would/ would not want to see included?*

- All metrics were felt to be acceptable, with the exception of graduate earnings
- Not clear who the metrics were aimed at and there could be a bureaucracy burden if these were to be applied at subject level
- Metrics need to be consistent across the sector to avoid ‘gaming/playing the system’
- Metrics should be simple and understandable for students
- Graduate earnings were not a good indicator because of the many variables
- Others felt that graduate earnings may be a more helpful measure if collected 2 years post-degree
- Members endorsed the view that value lay in graduate “professional readiness” rather than graduate “employment” per se
- Staff-student ratio was felt to be an unfair metric and contact time an outdated measure
- The 20% increase in BME student numbers was felt to be crass and unsophisticated
- Student satisfaction – students could be happy and not achieve and vice versa.

*General comments*

- There was ambiguity in how postgraduate study fitted into the TEF.

AB15.12.3.5 The Deputy Vice Chancellor and Provost informed Academic Board that the draft response to the HEFCE Green Paper consultation would be shared with Members prior to submission (deadline: 15 January 2016).

**ACTION: Deputy Head of Academic Services via the Head of Governance**

## ITEMS FOR APPROVAL

### AB15.12.4 Nominations for Membership of the Governors’ Ethics Forum

AB15.12.4.1 Members noted that 3 nominations were required from the academic colleagues and 3 nominations from professional services and **approved** the following nominations:

- Mandy Lee and James Lee (Academic)
- Alastair Osborn (Professional Services).

AB15.12.4.2 The Chair requested colleagues interested in also serving on the Governors’ Ethics Forum to contact the Head of Governance.

**ACTION: Members to contact Head of Governance**

### AB15.12.5 Change of Name Proposals

*Papers AB15/12/04 and AB15/12/05 were received*

AB15.12.5.1 Department of Biological, Biomedical and Analytical Sciences  
Members **approved** the change of name to the Department of Applied Sciences.

AB15.12.5.2 Department of Education

Members **approved** the change of name to the Department of Education and Childhood.

AB15.12.5.3 Members agreed that each of these departments liaise with IT Services to ensure both requests were aligned and clear timescales agreed.

**ACTION: Dept of Applied Sciences and Dept of Education and Childhood and the Director of IT and CIO (in the first instance)**

**AB15.12.6 Annual Report of Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee**

*Paper AB15/12/06 was received*

AB15.12.6.1 Members received an outline of the annual report's highlights from the Pro Vice Chancellor, Research and Business Engagement.

AB15.12.6.2 Members noted the following in particular:

- REF 2014 –
  - the University had had a very strong result and was rated 54<sup>th</sup> nationally on 'research power' (based on quality and the number of researchers submitted)
  - this result led to a significant increase in Quality Research (QR) funding, which was now being invested in a number of ways (post-CSR) including new academic appointments;
- a number of notable successes in terms of bids for external funding;
- Postgraduate Research – UWE was in the top quartile out of 124 HEIs in the 2014/2015 Postgraduate Research Experience Survey;
- The University was managing down the total amount of research and introducing more effective progression processes;
- Innovation and Enterprise – the Innovation for Growth Project – funded by the Regional Growth Fund – provided grant funding to 38 high growth, innovative businesses across the South West, secured further private investment and promoted collaborative working with UWE researchers, endorsing the view of UWE as an 'anchor university', that helped to drive growth;
- University Enterprise Zone (UEZ) – one of four nationally, this secured £8.5m funding from BIS and the West of England Local Enterprise Partnership and was under construction in T Block. UEZ would be a focus for UWE/business collaboration;
- UWE Research Strategy was approved by Academic Board in September 2015, following the implementation of revisions suggested at the July 2015 meeting;
- Monthly reports of the grants received were reported to the Directorate and the Pro Vice Chancellors Group, which reflected the intention to ensure that Research and Knowledge Exchange was integrated in all University activity and linked to its wider objectives.

AB15.12.6.3 During discussions, Members suggested for inclusion in the next annual report:

- an appendix containing a list of the research contracts carried out
- the championing of equality and diversity metrics.

**ACTION: Pro Vice Chancellor, Research and Business Engagement**

*The Head of Research Administration arrived at the meeting.*

## **AB15.12.7 Research Misconduct Procedure**

*Paper AB15/12/07 was received*

AB15.12.7.1 The Head of Research Administration provided Academic Board with a brief outline of the Research Misconduct Procedure.

AB15.12.7.2 Members noted that the procedure:

- applied solely to staff research misconduct, not that of students
- had been substantially revised using the UK Research Integrity Office model to ensure compliance with the UUK Concordat to Support Research Integrity
- was an investigatory procedure, not disciplinary.

AB15.12.7.3 Members also noted that an annual report on research misconduct was provided to the Board of Governors; the next due to be presented in March 2016.

AB15.12.7.4 Academic Board discussed the fact that where misconduct was proven, matters would be referred to the Conduct Procedures and would enter at Formal Stage 3 and some unease with this approach was expressed.

AB15.12.7.5 Members noted the wording of the procedure (section 3.4.13): “Referrals to the Conduct Procedures will *normally* enter those procedures at Formal Stage 3”.

AB15.12.7.6 Members **agreed** that this aspect of the procedure be reviewed to mitigate the suggestion that entry to Formal Stage 3 was the norm.

**ACTION: Research Governance Manager**

AB15.12.7.7 The Pro Vice Chancellor, Student Experience advised of the need to ensure that the procedure met the requirements of the new Prevent Duty from a safeguarding perspective and the need to have clear policies and procedures for students and staff working on sensitive or extremism-related research.

**ACTION: Research Governance Manager to add appropriate wording**

AB15.12.7.8 Members **agreed** the approval of the Research Misconduct Procedure in principle, subject to the two changes outlined above being approved by Chair’s Action.

**ACTION: Research Governance Manager to seek approval**

## **AB15.12.8 Annual Report of the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee**

*Paper AB15/12/08 was received*

AB15.12.8.1 Members received an outline of the areas of focus for the Committee from the Deputy Vice Chancellor and Provost and noted the following in particular:

- Key enhancement activities including the development and monitoring of policies for the enhancement of pedagogy and the delivery of learning and teaching;
- Achievements and developments such as:
  - the identification of good practice and areas for improvement arising from quality and standard procedures including external examining and complaints and appeals
  - the Academic Literacy Forum – designed to develop a more consistent approach across the University – provided regular updates to LTSEC
  - the development of a formal Plagiarism Policy
  - a Lean Review of Award Boards which had led to a pilot during the 2015 round of Award Boards, due to be reviewed by LTSEC in 2015/2016.

AB15.12.8.2 The Chair expressed her thanks to LTSEC Members for their work undertaken during the 2014/2015 academic year.

**AB15.12.9 Faculty Boards – Revised Terms of Reference and Proposed Election Schedule**

*Paper AB15/12/09 was received*

**AB15.12.9.1 Revised Terms of Reference**

Members noted that the fact that the Faculty Board Vice Chairs were members of Academic Board ex-officio would be added to the terms of reference.

**ACTION: Head of Governance**

Subject to this amendment, Members **approved** the revised Faculty Board terms of reference.

**AB15.12.9.2 Schedule of Faculty Board Elections**

Members **agreed** that the nominations period be extended in light of academic staff absence over the Christmas holidays.

**ACTION: Head of Governance**

**AB15.12.10 Emeritus Appointment**

Members **approved** the appointment of Professor John Greenman as Emeritus Professor.

**ACTION: Head of Governance/Vice Chancellor's Office**

**REPORTS AND UPDATES**

**AB15.12.11 Vice Chancellor's Report**

*Paper AB15/12/10 was received*

AB15.12.11.1 Members noted the following in particular:

- Times Higher Award – UWE Bristol was shortlisted for 2 awards:
  - o Outstanding Support for Students
  - o Outstanding International Student Strategy – which it won, based on the highly successful GradLink UK initiative.

Academic Board wished its congratulations to be formally recorded and relayed to the team.

**ACTION: Deputy Vice Chancellor and Provost**

- Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) –
  - o Student Opportunity Funding would be reduced and retargeted
  - o Funding of healthcare education – grants and bursaries for nurses, midwives and allied health students would be replaced with student loans
- Strategic Planning – UWE Bristol remained alive to the external environment and the Board of Governors would be examining market analyses and projections during the course of the coming months. The outcome of discussions would be relayed back to Academic Board.

**AB15.12.12 Report on the Awards Conferred on Behalf of Academic Board in 2014-2015**

*Paper AB15/12/12 was received*

AB15.12.12.1 Members noted the distribution of undergraduate degree classifications awarded by Award Boards during 2014/2015 and the comparative data for the previous two years.

AB15.12.12.2 Members' attention was also drawn to the following:

- The formation of a group in the new year, to bring together this data and the work undertaken by the Associate Dean, ACE;
- FBL: the data in the report related to the first cohort to complete following a refresh of provision three years ago.

- AB15.12.12.3 Members agreed that:
- The same scale be used for all graphical summaries
  - Differences at programmatic level be provided for future reports.
- ACTION: Deputy Head of Academic Services to liaise with Head of Business Intelligence**

**AB15.12.13 Update from UWE Student Representatives**  
*Paper AB15/12/13 was received*

- AB15.12.13.1 The Vice President, Societies and Community provided Members with the key highlights of the report.
- AB15.12.13.2 Members noted in particular:
- Sustainability – the Students’ Union continued to embed this in all its activities and was working towards the NUS Responsible Futures Award accreditation in March 2016;
  - Academic Societies –
    - an Academic Societies Co-ordinator had been recently appointed and 10 (of a target of 14) societies had been established so far this year;
    - bi-monthly working group meetings continued with the Deputy Vice Chancellor and Provost and the Pro Vice Chancellor, Student Experience;
  - the recent meeting of the Student Representative Committee had been very well attended;
  - the Postgraduate Research Representatives Committee was operating more effectively;
  - there were some issues in relation to the student representatives at Plymouth and Exeter who were part-time students and discussions were ongoing as to how improvements could be made.
- AB15.12.13.3 Members discussed the challenges in ensuring students understood the representation system and noted that reporting methods were currently being refined.

**AB15.12.14 External Examining – Interim Report of External Examiners’ Findings**

- AB15.12.14.1 It was reported that LTSEC was in the process of conducting a thematic review of External Examiner reports.
- AB15.12.14.2 Members noted that although there were no systemic areas of concern, External Examiner grades were slightly lower for the University’s collaborative provision.
- AB15.12.14.3 Members also noted that a presentation on the administration relating to External Examiners would be shared with academic colleagues and other interested parties in the coming months.
- AB15.12.14.4 Members noted that LTSEC would provide feedback to Academic Board on the thematic review, once completed.

**ACTION: Deputy Head of Academic Services**

**AB15.12.15 Updates from Faculty Boards**

- AB15.12.15.1 Members noted that:
- Faculty of Engineering and Technology (FET) – the Faculty Board had invited the Faculty’s various constituencies to a Q&A session, which had been very well received and which had highlighted some operational issues and other, more global matters such as non-attendance, NSS, etc.;
  - Faculty of Arts & Creative Industries and Education (ACE) – the Faculty Board was a meeting out of sequence but would report to the next Academic Board;

- Faculty of Business and Law (FBL) – the Faculty Board had discussed the HE Green Paper, a review of research centres and the development of enterprise across the faculty and its contribution to the University as a whole;
- Faculty of Health and Applied Sciences (HAS) – the Faculty Board had discussed the NSS results and action plan. The PVC and Executive Dean, HAS also reported that the value of the Faculty Board itself had also been discussed and questioned and he sought the views of all other Faculty Board members present on the matter.

AB15.12.15.2 During a full and considered discussion, Members noted that:

- HAS had a large number of technical staff who were not fully represented on the Faculty Board;
- The success and effectiveness of the Faculty Boards were entirely dependent upon the existence of a clear relationship with Academic Board and clear terms of reference;
- The ACE Faculty Board held bi-annual faculty conferences in addition to the formal meetings;
- Faculty Board meetings enabled the coming together of engaged, committed colleagues and provided the opportunity to discuss matters such as the Prevent Duty;
- The importance of ensuring that the concerns of different campuses were also discussed and addressed;
- The intention that Faculty Boards could bring matters to Academic Board and vice versa;
- Faculty Boards allowed the opportunity for issues that had been ‘trapped’ at departmental level to be resolved;
- It would be useful for the draft Academic Board agenda to be shared prior to the Faculty Board meetings in order to assist and inform discussions.

**ACTION: Head of Governance to share the draft Academic Board agenda via the Faculty Business Managers**

## ITEMS TO NOTE

### **AB15.12.16 Honorary Degree Committee**

*Paper AB15/12/16 was received and noted.*

### **AB15.12.17 Annual Report of Complaints and Appeals**

*Paper AB15/12/17 was received and noted.*

### **AB15.12.18 Student Conduct Annual Report 2014/2015**

*Paper AB15/12/18 was received and noted.*

### **AB15.12.19 Academic Board Chair’s Actions Undertaken since the Last Meeting**

Members noted that on behalf of Academic Board the Vice chancellor had agreed changes to wording of the terms of reference of the Faculty Accredited Learning Panels and the Graduate School Learning Panel to provide clarity of responsibility.

### **AB15.12.20 Any Other Business**

There was no further business.

### **AB15.12.20 Dates of future meetings**

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

Wednesday	2 March 2016
Wednesday	18 May 2016
Wednesday	6 July 2016