

## **ACADEMIC BOARD**

Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Board held on Wednesday 7 December 2016.

**Present:** Steve West (Chair), Samira Abokor, Jenny Ames, Sarah Bennett, Martin Boddy, Jon Dovey, Ahmd Emara (SU), Olivia Evans (SU), Alex Franklin, Georgina Gough, Sarah Green, Jane Harrington, Nina Higson-Sweeney, Catherine Hobbs, Dylan Jones-Evans, Mandy Lee, Lamine Mahdjoubi, Stuart McClean, Steven Neill, Paul Olomolaiye, Jackie Rogers, Rachel Sales, Donna Whitehead (until AB16.12.10), Aylwin Yafele.

**In attendance:** Helen Clark (for AB16.12.7), Rachel Cowie, Chris Gledhill (Clerk), Philip Millington (for AB16.12.9), Alastair Osborn, Fiona Tolmie (for AB16.12.5), Maggie Westgarth (for AB16.12.14), Tracy Willis, Gail Wilson (for AB16.12.4.2 and AB16.12.11).

**Observers:** Elizabeth Cleaver.

**Apologies:** Hadi Abulrub, Jason Briddon, Tracy Chalk, John Clarke, Lucy Dumbell, Manuel Frutos-Perez, Jamie Jordon (SU), Timothy Kichwen, Lynne Lawrance, James Lee, Jo Midgley, Glenn Parry, Adam Pinfold, Darren Reynolds, Jeanette Sakel, Rosie Scott-Ward.

### **AB16.12.1 Membership**

AB16.12.1.1 Elected Faculty Board Representative  
Academic Board **ratified** the nomination of Hadi Abulrub as the elected Faculty Board representative for the Faculty of the Environment and Technology (FET).

Elected Student Representatives  
Members welcomed the recently elected Student Representatives to Academic Board.

### **AB16.12.2 Minutes and Matters Arising** *Paper AB16/12/01 was received*

AB16.12.2.1 Minutes  
The minutes of the meeting held Wednesday 12 October 2016 were **approved**.

AB16.12.2.2 Min AB16.10.5.3 refers: Revised Operating Model for Quality Assessment – Annual Provider Review  
Members received an update from the Deputy Head of Academic Services and noted that the draft data schedule was in development and would be shared with Academic Board once finalised.

**ACTION: Deputy Head of Academic Services**

AB16.12.2.2 Members noted that all other matters arising had been completed and there were no further items arising that were not to be dealt with in the business of the meeting.

## ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

### AB16.12.3 Vice-Chancellor's Update

*Paper AB16/12/02 was received*

AB16.12.3.1 Members received an update from the Vice-Chancellor and noted the following:

#### AB16.12.3.2 *Student Recruitment*

- i. Recruitment targets for both undergraduate and postgraduate home/EU students had been exceeded, but international student targets had not been met and there was a need to understand why these numbers were lower than had been expected;

#### AB16.12.3.3 *Leaving the EU*

- i. The University was working with Universities UK (UUK) to sway the Government to desist from presenting a bleak picture of the UK post-Brexit, which was impacting upon all universities;
- ii. Whilst the new Minister for Universities and Science understood the impact the government's stance was having, it continued to be a challenge for him, UUK and the Treasury. UWE would support UUK and continue to lobby the Government;
- iii. The Vice-Chancellor was not aware of any approach having been made to the University by the new Government departments;
- iv. The University would continue to endorse the message that Bristol was a very diverse community and to ensure that staff and students were updated regarding issues affecting them as Brexit plans unfolded;
- v. The impact of the decision to leave the EU was judged to be a strategic risk: 'UWE experiences a negative impact across its activities following the UK's decision to leave the EU' and a full risk descriptor had been developed, setting out the causes, controls and further actions required;
- vi. Confirmation that the University had not experienced a negative impact in terms of the recruitment of non-UK EU students, bidding/success rates for EU research funding or any ongoing tensions within the University;

#### AB16.12.3.4 *Strategic Planning*

- i. The University was gearing up for the planning process which would encompass:
  - a. A recognition of the environments within which Faculties and Professional Services were operating
  - b. Identification of strengths within those environments in terms of teaching and learning and research
  - c. Exploration of opportunities for inter-disciplinary or closer working across different areas of the University
  - d. Linking strategic planning across from Faculties to Professional Services to ensure work was supported; information was being shared with colleagues to assist in how to do this;
- ii. Planning proposals would ultimately be referred to Academic Board for deliberation per normal process;

#### AB16.12.3.5 *Annual Address*

- i. The Vice-Chancellor's annual address, held on 2 November 2016 was still available to view online;

#### AB16.12.3.6 *Inclusivity 2020*

- i. The launch of the University's Single Equality Scheme 2016-2020 took place on 9 November 2016 and was attended by staff, students and external guests;

AB16.12.3.7 *Economic Impact Assessment*

- i. The assessment was commissioned by the University and headline figures from the report included:
  - a. £347.9m contribution to the West of England economy in 2014/2015, equivalent to 1.1 percent of the economic output to the area
  - b. 7,160 jobs supported by the University and its students in the West of England in 2014/2015;
- ii. The University would promote the headline figures as part of the preparations for devolved administration;
- iii. The exercise would be refreshed for the 2015/2016 academic year;

AB16.12.3.8 *Green Capital Student Capital Project*

- i. The project – funded by HEFCE's Catalyst Fund – ended in October 2016;
- ii. Over 1200 UWE Bristol students had engaged with the project;
- iii. Green Gown Awards 2016 –
  - a. the University was nominated for 7 awards and won 4 in the following categories:
    - i. Continuous Improvement: Institutional Change
    - ii. Learning and Skills
    - iii. Student Engagement
    - iv. Leadership
  - b. and was highly commended in the following categories:
    - i. Student Engagement, for the SU's 'The Green Team #ThinkGreenBeGreat
    - ii. Built Environment;

AB16.12.3.9 *Risk Management*

- i. Risk registers were in place for all areas and projects across the University;
- ii. The Board of Governors was responsible for oversight of the University's risk environment;
- iii. Risks were being effectively managed and monitored.

**AB16.12.4 Regulatory Environment**

AB16.12.4.1 Mapping the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area

*Paper AB16/12/03 was received*

AB16.12.4.2 Members noted the contents of the report and in particular:

- i. From December 2017, the Annual Provider Review process would include the additional assurance from the Governing Body that the University continued to meet the standards of Part 1 of the 2015 European Standards and Guidelines (ESG (2015));
- ii. The summary of the exercise to map University practice against the ESG (2015) which had highlighted that the processes and procedures in place were largely compliant;
- iii. The University would seek confirmation from HEFCE that its quality assurance regime was sufficient to meet the ESG (2015)'s requirement 1.10 for "cyclical external quality assurance".

AB16.12.4.2 Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) Submission to HEFCE

*Paper AB16/12/04 was received*

AB16.12.4.3 Members were reminded that the Higher Education and Research Bill had had its second reading the previous day in the House of Lords.

AB16.12.4.4 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost reported the University's intention to participate in Year 2 of the TEF. She referred Members to the table 'Core Metrics'

and Members noted the imperative to achieve as many 'green' areas as possible, particularly within the core metrics:

- The teaching on my course
- Assessment and feedback
- Academic support
- Non-continuation
- Employment or further study
- Highly skilled employment or further study.

AB16.12.4.5 Members noted the requirement for providers entering Year 2 of the TEF to submit to HEFCE by 26 January 2017, 15 pages of additional evidence in support of and to give context to, their metrics. Whilst difficult to predict, based upon the metrics produced, the University was in a strong position to achieve a Silver TEF rating and the challenge would be how swiftly it could move to the top of that category. The TEF Steering Group would oversee the project plan in place to produce the submission document.

AB16.12.4.6 Members also noted that all contextual submissions would be published by HEFCE in the Spring of 2017, once TEF scores had been awarded.

AB16.12.4.7 Members further noted that the blue areas on the University's profile (i.e. 'the actual is below benchmark at the 1.96 standard deviation and 2 percentage point level' and 'the actual is below benchmark at the 3 standard deviation and 3 percentage point level') would be contextualised in order to begin building the case for the trajectory to Gold standard.

AB16.12.4.8 Members approved the delegation of authority to the Vice-Chancellor to approve on behalf of Academic Board the University's TEF submission to HEFCE.

**ACTION: Vice-Chancellor to approve the TEF submission on behalf of Academic Board.**

## **AB16.12.5 Learning 2020: Enhanced Year Principles**

*Paper AB16/12/05 was received*

AB16.12.5.1 The Chair of the Enhanced Year Project Steering Group led Members through the detail of the Group's proposals and stressed that this was an interim paper, with final proposals and an implementation plan anticipated to be brought to Academic Board by the end of the academic year.

AB16.12.5.2 Members noted that the principles described in the report were intended to enhance:

- i. Student understanding of the support available from UWE throughout the entire year and their perception of the UWE academic year as offering good value for money;
- ii. The support for students to develop the UWE graduate attributes;
- iii. The activities through which such attributes were developed and demonstrated.

AB16.12.5.3 Members also noted that there were 3 strands to the project: the Calendar, Futures Award and the UWE Week. Members noted:

### *Calendar – The UWE Year*

- i. Students would receive a clear description of the year, including details of activities offered throughout the whole period within the term dates;
- ii. The calendar introduced a minimum expectation in terms of attendance – current proposal was 27 weeks, excluding weeks of summative assessment, which would allow for 24 weeks of teaching and 3 weeks for additional co-curricular activity;

- iii. Offered a more flexible approach, which gave greater freedoms and opportunities for creativity for departments and programmes;

AB16.12.5.4 *UWE Futures Award*

- i. Whilst student engagement with the Futures Award had increased steadily since 2013, many still failed to engage with it and the Academic Personal Tutors (APT) scheme was not seen to be of value by some staff and students;
- ii. Proposal continued to be explored in developing the award and the possibility of framing APT supported activity within a 15-credit module upon which students would be automatically enrolled at the start of the first year;
- iii. There should be more done to obtain and publicise employer endorsement of the Futures Award.

AB16.12.5.5 *UWE Week(s)*

- i. Proposal that there should be at least one week in the academic calendar in which students could engage in cross-disciplinary activities across the University, e.g. 'grand challenges' – of particular interest to the research community – there would be an attempt to model this later in the academic year.

AB16.12.5.6 Members also noted the proposed consultation period and timescales, and the very detailed appendices supporting the proposals.

AB16.12.5.7 Student Members questioned the anticipated challenges and Members noted that the swift engagement of all programmes – through staff and student dialogue – was critical in ensuring the University delivered something that was valuable to all.

AB16.12.5.8 Members noted the value of working collaboratively with the Students' Union and student representatives to produce the proposals, as this would encourage engagement from the wider student community and enable students to challenge the University on their successful delivery.

AB16.12.5.9 Members discussed the suggestion from Student Members that consideration be given to opening the Future Award to Postgraduate as well as Undergraduate students. Members noted that currently PG students did not have APTs and areas of additionality could raise some questions in terms of resources.

AB16.12.5.10 Members noted the consultation exercise would gauge whether there was an appetite for this and an exploration of building resources would emerge from that consultation.

AB16.12.5.11 Members further noted the comments from the Student Members that students experienced different qualities of personal tutorship and that the Future Award could be a potential vehicle for standardising that experience.

AB16.12.5.12 The Chair invited comments from Members. Observations included:

- i. Numerous commendations of the report and its proposals;
- ii. Acknowledgement of the challenges in securing student engagement – the majority of the student body would need to see the value of it – and staff engagement;
- iii. There was an appetite for the proposal from programme teams;
- iv. Questions around the nature of the metrics that would be used to measure value for money and where the University was positioned compared to its competitors;
- v. The need to demonstrate that the UWE offer comprised more than the degree programme – as often perceived by students and external commentators – and was not simply a crude calculation of contact hours.

The UWE offer also included activities during the entire academic year as well as the times in between those activities – independent study, placements, conversations with peers, etc. – all of which had been lost in discourse over time. The proposals were an excellent starting point at which to rebalance that dialogue.

AB16.12.5.13 Academic Board **agreed** to endorse the proposals and formally recorded that it was an express requirement for staff to engage with the consultation.

#### **AB16.12.6 UUK: Dealing with Violence Against Women and Harassment**

AB16.12.6.1 Members received an update from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost and noted that updated UUK and legal guidance had been recently issued.

AB16.12.6.2 Members also noted that Bath Spa University had recently joined UWE Bristol, the University of Bristol, the Students' Unions of both UWE and the University of Bristol, as a member of the joint forum.

AB16.12.6.3 Members further noted:

- i. The Bystander Intervention Initiative:
  - a. Was created by Dr Rachel Fenton, Senior Lecturer in Law, and had been highlighted nationally as best practice
  - b. a compulsory eight-week course for first year students aimed at tackling sexual abuse on campus;
- ii. the intention to move away from a perspective of prevention to a focus upon healthy relationships, which would be incorporated into the Healthy University initiative once aspirations were fully captured.

AB16.12.6.4 Members also noted and endorsed the Vice-Chancellor's comments that mental health and wellbeing should be included in a positive way in the general induction on healthy living.

#### **AB16.12.7 Assurance Report on External Examiner Annual Reporting 2015-2016** *Paper AB16/12/06 was received*

AB16.12.7.1 Members were reminded that External Examiners were appointed on behalf of Academic Board. It was noted that this was the first Assurance Report on External Examiner Annual Report which replaced the thematic annual report previously presented to Academic Board.

AB16.12.7.2 Members also noted the following:

- i. Faculties would continue to monitor and respond to External Examiner feedback through departmental reports and would inform the departmental action plan. Academic Standards and Quality Committees (ASQC) had oversight of those action plans and would review them at the January and June meetings;
- ii. Feedback overall was positive and External Examiners were appreciative of improvements made to administrative processes; themes arising from the feedback included:
  - a. A request for samples to be available online before visits
  - b. Timely notification when work was available online
  - c. Samples not being forwarded in a timely manner;
- iii. The Lean Review would address these administrative issues
- iv. Feedback had been shared with Faculty Business Managers and support teams;
- v. The very high level of confidence expressed by External Examiners in the University's academic standards as expressed in Appendix A 'University Level Statistics';

- vi. The variance between UWE provision and Collaborative Provision in relation to the Chief Examiners' question 2.3 had been referred by the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee (LTSEC) for explanation to the Collaborative Committee. The outcome of that review would be reported to Academic Board via LTSEC.

AB16.12.7.3 Members further noted that any issues of significant substance would be referred to the attention of Academic Board.

AB16.12.7.4 Members also noted that many of the comments related to process would be addressed by the University's Continuous Improvement model and that the model would be presented at the next LTSEC meeting in March 2017.

#### **AB16.12.8 Update from UWE Student Representatives**

*Paper AB16/12/07 was received*

AB16.12.8.1 Members noted the contents of the report and the collaborative working between the student representative body and Academic Services in examining how student representatives could contribute to the providing a composite picture as part of the APR process.

AB16.12.8.2 Members also noted that the Director of Academic Services and the Director of Learning and Teaching had started discussions regarding the full 'working together' package.

The Director of the Bristol Institute of Legal Practice (BILP) joined the meeting.

#### **ITEMS FOR APPROVAL**

#### **AB16.12.9 LLM Bar Professional Training Studies – Variant Regulations**

*Paper AB16/12/08 was received*

AB16.12.9.1 The Director of BILP led Members through the contents of the report and detailed the proposed changes to the following:

- i. The Assessment Regulations for the Bar Professional Training Course 2016/2017 – the changes incorporated amendments required by the professional body and principal changes included:

- a. An additional resit attempt
- b. Extended period to the programme.

It was confirmed that students had been made aware of these changes, which were already incorporated in the course handbook in anticipation of approval;

- ii. The Bar Professional Training Course 2016/2017 – this Postgraduate Diploma Programme proposed to be reconfigured to a Masters Programme 'LLM Bar Professional Training Studies' (due to be considered for approval by the Curriculum Approvals Panel on 16 December 2016). The reconfiguration would facilitate postgraduate funding for students and provided an additional element preparing students for professional practice;
- iii. Advance Legal Practice Course 2016/2017 – the changes to the Assessment Regulations reflect the reconfiguration of the course to an LLM Award (as approved by the Curriculum Approvals Panel in June 2016). Students now had a large range of dissertation options. It was confirmed that past students could use their previous credits to take the new LLM award, but would be required to pay additional fees.

AB16.12.9.2 Members **approved** the proposed variant regulations.

The Director of the Bristol Institute of Legal Practice (BILP) left the meeting.

The Pro Vice-Chancellor and Executive Dean, FBL also left the meeting.

**AB16.12.10 Proposed Revision to PGCE Academic Regulations**

*Paper AB16/12/09 was received*

AB16.12.10.1 Members noted the proposed revision to the PGCE Academic Regulations. It was suggested that, given the very similar wording for much of the paragraphs 3.5.4 and 3.5.5, that these be merged and reworded.

AB16.12.10.2 Subject to the above amendment, the revised PGCE Academic Regulations were **approved**.

**AB16.12.11 Changes to Curriculum Approval Panels Terms of Reference**

*Paper AB16/12/10 was received*

AB16.12.11.1 Members noted that the terms of reference had been updated as part of the Quality Management Enhancement Framework and the changes reflected the introduction of special Curriculum Approval Panels to replace Programme Delivery meetings.

AB16.12.11.2 Members **approved** the updated terms of reference.

**AB16.12.12 Annual Report of the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee 2015-2016**

*Paper AB16/12/11 was received and noted.*

AB16.12.12.1 Academic Board **confirmed** that LTSEC had appropriately discharged its duties for the 2015-2016 academic year.

**AB16.12.13 Proposals from the University Research Knowledge and Exchange Committee**

*Paper AB16/12/12 was received*

AB16.12.13.1 Members noted that the proposals were the result of considered and detailed debate to drive more purposeful research within the Faculty of Business and Law and to establish a research centre structure that was capable of meeting the challenges of the Faculty as well as the requirements of UWE 2020 Performance in terms of research, partnerships and teaching.

AB16.12.13.2 Members further noted the following:

- i. Three new research centres were proposed:
  - a. Bristol Leadership and Change Centre (BLCC)
  - b. Bristol Centre for Economics and Finance (BCEF)
  - c. Centre for Applied Legal Research (CALR);
- ii. The centres had been designed to reach all agenda: REF, income generation and external engagement, were in line with the University's Research Strategy 2020 and the desire to focus resources and research effectively in the key strengths across the University;
- iii. The Pro Vice-Chancellor, Research and Business Innovation encouraged all Faculties to examine research centres to see if these were still fit-for-purpose and emphasised the particular importance of research and enterprise.

AB16.12.13.3 Members further noted that the proposal to establish the research centres had been considered in detail by the University Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee and was recommended for approval by Academic Board.

AB16.12.13.4 Members **approved** the proposal to establish three research centres in the Faculty of Business and Law, focused on Leadership and Change, Economics and Finance, and Applied Research.

The Deputy Director Student Services/Head of Employability and Enterprise joined the meeting.

## REPORTS AND UPDATES

### **AB16.12.14 UWE Graduate Destinations and Employment Performance Report 2016** *Paper AB16/12/13 was received*

- AB16.12.14.1 The Deputy Director Student Services/Head of Employability and Enterprise led Members through the details of the confidential report, which detailed the outcomes of the Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey of 2015 leavers.

The remainder of this item is recorded as a confidential minute.

The Deputy Director Student Services/Head of Employability and Enterprise left the meeting at the conclusion of this item.

### **AB16.12.15 Report on the Awards Conferred on behalf of the Academic Board in 2015-2016** *Paper AB16/12/14 was received*

- AB16.12.15.1 Members noted the contents of the report and in particular that the number of Masters distinctions awarded in the Faculty of Environment and Technology was comparable to that of other universities.

### **AB16.12.16 Updates from Faculty Boards**

- AB16.12.16.1 Members noted the following:

#### *Faculty of Health and Applied Sciences (HAS)*

- i. The Faculty Board had met in early November and had discussions had focused upon:
  - a. progress against the strategic plan', particularly student engagement and attendance, and accommodation
  - b. the enhancement of the role and visibility of Programme Leaders – acknowledged as a valued and crucial position – and how this could be recognised and rewarded (not necessarily monetarily).

#### AB16.12.16.2 *Faculty of Environment and Technology (FET)*

- i. The Faculty Board had discussed:
  - a. Internal staff survey which had been undertaken to inform the planning round, to which there had been a 20% response rate. The results included:
    - i. The majority of respondents could see how they contributed to the Faculty's identity
    - ii. There was a more straightforward split in responses to whether or not staff felt a part of the Faculty's research centres
    - iii. There was some tension in the development of programme identity
    - iv. The physical dispersal between departments and support was not helpful although there was much sharing of good practice across the Faculty;
    - v. The requirement for clear evidence that poor performance was being effectively managed and addressed;
- ii. The appointment of Hadi Abulrub as the Faculty Board's elected representative to Academic Board.

AB16.12.16.3 *Faculty of Arts & Creative Industries and Education (ACE)*

- i. The Faculty Board had discussed:
  - a. the new Student Journey System and received a presentation from the Deputy Head of Academic Services and Head of Student Systems and Process Development;
  - b. the TEF, with discussions then segueing to the NSS and its new questions;
  - c. the Faculty's learning community and being cross-site – each discreet area was performing well;
  - d. part-time study and how this did or did not work at Postgraduate level – there was a challenge in successfully creating a sense of community for part-time PG students when they had no actual physical space per se.

AB16.12.16.4 *Faculty of Business and Law (FBL)*

The Faculty Board Vice Chair reminded Members of the feed-forward lunch process and the staff suggestion box that had been installed in the Faculty post room, intended as a communications channel feed to the Faculty Board.

- i. As a result, the Faculty Board had discussed:
  - a. the role of the Programme Leader – a key issue arising from this process – recognition of and progression to this role and the workload involved;
  - b. the new process had highlighted the Faculty Board's aim to facilitate constructive discussion which in turn had provided a great deal of ideas for solutions. Updates would be shared with Academic Board;
- ii. the Faculty Board Vice Chair had met with the HAS Faculty Board Vice Chair to explain the operation of the discussion fora. Members welcomed the FBL Vice Chair's offer to also meet with his counterparts for the Faculty Boards of FET and ACE.

AB16.12.16.5 Members welcomed the suggestion that the Programme Director Student Information System and the Deputy Head of Academic Services and Head of Student Systems and Process Development present an update on the new system to Academic Board later in the year.

**ACTION: Director of Academic Services/Clerk**

**ITEMS TO NOTE**

**AB16.12.17 Honorary Degrees Committee**  
*Paper AB16/12/15 was received and noted.*

**AB16.12.18 Annual Report of Complaints and Appeals 2015-2016**  
*Paper AB16/12/16 was received and noted.*

**AB16.12.19 Annual Report on Student Behaviour 2015-2016**  
*Paper AB16/12/17 was received and noted.*

**AB16.12.20 Academic Board Chair's Actions**

Members noted that on behalf of Academic Board, the Chair had approved the following:

- i. Renewal of the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School Partnership for a further 5 years.
- ii. Global College of Engineering and Technology as an affiliated institution, with effect from 21 October 2016.

**AB16.12.21 Minutes of Sub-Committees**  
Members noted that the latest available minutes of subcommittees were available from the SharePoint Site.

**AB16.12.22 Any Other Business**

There was no further business.

**AB16.12.23 Dates of future meetings**

All meetings scheduled to be held from 14:00 - 17:00.

Wednesday	22 February 2017	to be confirmed
Wednesday	17 May 2017	to be confirmed
Wednesday	5 July 2017	to be confirmed