

CONFIDENTIAL

ACADEMIC BOARD

**AB17/52
CONFIRMED**

Minutes of the meeting held on 24 April 2018

Present: J Mennell (Chair), T Bampouras, T Barry, J Brown, C Coghill, J Colclough, D Cox, S de Freitas, A Fletcher, K Fox, A Hampson, R Harrison-Palmer, S Henderson, R Hunter, A Lane, M Leek, E Lees, L Mansfield, A Marshall, L Nelson, N Rourke, F Sapsford, K Small, K Watson

In attendance: J Whitfield (Committee Secretary), Mr T Best (for item 17:54), R Casson (for I Sinker), D McGregor (for J Robinson)

17:49 Apologies for absence: L Bates, L Kenward, J Robinson, C Rouncefield, I Sinker, K Stuart, T Livsey. Verbal

17:50 Minutes of the meeting held on 15 March 2018: AB17/40
The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as an accurate record.

Actions from the meeting:

The action log was reviewed and noted.

17:39: It was noted that the Vice Chancellor and Professor Trish Livsey had met with Social Work colleagues to discuss the issues raised by students and to progress resolutions.

Actions agreed:

- The action log to be updated to reflect an update on this activity.
- The Administration & Governance Manager to work with action leads to identify closed items and revised deadlines.
- It was agreed that Academic Board and committees business planning should be arranged to focus on data, the Learning Teaching & Action Plan, driving improvements to student outcomes in terms of the current position, areas of essential focus, how to achieve key objectives and any subsequent impact on the schedules of deliberative committees.
- The leads for implementation of the communication plan for the R&E Strategy to meet to discuss next steps.

17:51 Vice Chancellor's Report: Verbal
A summary of the key items contained within the Vice Chancellor's report was presented.

WhatUni Survey Outcomes

It was confirmed that the University had moved from 95th to 35th position – an outstanding result of which the University could be rightly proud. The excellent responses in terms of student outcomes were highlighted, and the Vice Chancellor offered thanks to Academic Board colleagues and all staff for their work and efforts to achieve this.

It was confirmed that the University's position within the Complete University Guide, due for publication shortly, would remain unchanged, in part due to previous poor NSS outcomes. This would be the case for a time to come, and was reflective of a point in time. It was hoped that improved outcomes would be seen from the NSS 2018 survey, which would feed through into the Times/Sunday Times League Table placement.

Planning Round 2018-19

The planning round was currently in progress and would conclude in May 2018.

Targets and budgets for departments and services are being set under the process and presented to the Board of Directors alongside forward financial forecasts. A very strong emphasis on the student experience, environment and outcomes will run throughout.

Reporting on the agreed Annual Operating Plan 2018-19 would progress to Academic Board in June 2018.

Ambleside Strategy Update:

As it had not been possible to finalise the report prior to papers circulation, an update paper was tabled for information.

A number of workshops had been held by the Vice Chancellor with Ambleside colleagues to understand the positioning, challenges and daily operation of the Ambleside Campus.

A steering group comprising VCE and SLT members, a range of Ambleside campus-based Principal and Senior lecturers and professional services staff had been established to lead the development and implementation of the Strategy. The first meeting of the group would take place May 3.

The key strands of the project were outlined, and it was confirmed that a formal update would be provided at the next meeting of Academic Board in June 2018.

17:52 Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic's Report:

AB17/41

A summary of the key items contained within the report was provided by the Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic.

An update was provided on the current status of the Academic Infrastructure Project, and it was confirmed that a proposal would be presented during the meeting regarding the reduction of student entry point start dates for new programmes from 97 to 13.

It was confirmed that the Portfolio Review Project had now been moved on to second stage under the Portfolio Development Programme. Working groups had been established and were now meeting to progress individual programme strands. An update would be provided under item 6 of the agenda by the Portfolio & Programme Development Manager.

News and operational updates across academic areas were presented by Heads of Department, as outlined in the Academic Departments' report.

During discussions, a student-led conference on mental health was suggested, to take place both across the University campuses and more widely throughout the region for students of other institutions. Recently held student conferences were confirmed by the Departments of Nursing, Health & Professional Practice and Education.

It was confirmed that an executive lead had been assigned to each of the University's main campuses in Carlisle (Mr D Chesser, Chief Operating Officer), Lancaster (Professor S de Freitas, Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic), Ambleside and London (Professor J Mennell, Vice Chancellor). A further update would be provided as part of a report on the Annual Operating Plan for 2018-19 at the next meeting.

Academic Board formally congratulated all staff who had recently gained their PhD status.

17:53

Students' Union Report:

AB17/42

An update on recent developments and activity was provided by the UCSU Academic Officer.

The recent Salute Awards dinners had been successful, and a full report on the nominees and winners would be provided in the UCSU publication *The Squealer* shortly.

Funds were still available to assist students wishing to volunteer overseas during the summer break.

Academic Board noted the breadth and volume of ongoing activities, as outlined in the report.

17:54

Portfolio Review Project:

AB17/43

a) Background and Terms of Reference:

The Terms of Reference and stated aims of the Portfolio Review Project were noted, as provided in the paper.

b) Outcomes and Recommendations:

Key highlights were presented by the Portfolio & Programme Development Manager as follows:

- A 3-year portfolio development plan 2018-2021 had been devised, to include new provision.
- All existing provision had been categorised under four key headings of growth, maintenance, consolidation and rationalisation and divestment.
- All outcomes were feeding into the current AOP and business planning round.
- Work was ongoing to plan for the implementation of new programme areas identified.
- Work was ongoing to ensure appropriate connections with collaborative provision and Apprenticeships.
- A refreshed academic planning cycle had been developed.

Meetings were now taking place with Heads of Department to develop student number forecasting to inform projections for 2019-20 and 2020-21, and would be presented to VCE shortly.

A number of consistent themes had emerged as a result of the review activity, with regard to distinctiveness of offer and key institutional strengths. As a result, key curriculum themes had been identified for progression and incorporation into forward curriculum design, and were currently being agreed with Heads of Department. This activity would also feed into the forward development of the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy.

The Vice Chancellor confirmed that academic department plans and projections would in turn feed in to the executive's consideration of the future size and shape of the University. An overview of this forecasting would be presented to University Board in July, and would return to Academic Board in September 2018.

c) Targets, Key Actions, Leads and Milestones for Implementation:

It was confirmed that scoping was ongoing to identify key project strands and activity under the action plan, as presented.

d) Communications Plan:

An outline of the planned communications of the outcomes of the project was also provided.

The Vice Chancellor expressed thanks to the Portfolio & Programme Development Manager for his work and efforts to achieve the outcomes of the review.

The UCSU Academic Officer sought clarification of plans to involve the Students' Union in forward developments in order to ensure their issues and concerns could be addressed, particularly with regard to placements and facilities. The Deputy Vice Chancellor reported that a student representative would be sought to attend the meetings of the Portfolio Development Programme working group.

The Director of SAAS confirmed that work was ongoing to align programme timings and deadlines with the work to prepare for the Office for Students institutional registration submission.

The Director of Student and Staff Services confirmed that the assessment of staffing resource and capability would align with the executive review of the forward size and shape of the University, under the refreshed and realigned HR Strategy.

The Head of Academic Partnerships & Skills confirmed that the conclusions of the Portfolio review would be presented to FE and collaborative partners to communicate the content and style of the revised portfolio and to involve partners in the development of new programmes.

Clarification was sought regarding lobbying activity to inform the governmental Fees and Funding Review. The Vice Chancellor confirmed that the executive were engaging in scenario planning, and were feeding in to consultations being undertaken by sector bodies, advisory and networking groups. The outcomes of this planning would inform the Portfolio Development Programme as appropriate.

17:55 Academic Infrastructure:

AB17/44

a) Proposed changes to Academic Regulations:

The Dean for Student Success reported on work undertaken during the previous eighteen months leading to the outcomes and recommendations within the presented report. The key focus of all considerations had been the improvement of student experience and opportunity.

Academic Board approval was sought of the following proposals outlined, for progression to formal student consultation during May 2018, in line with CMA and OfS guidance:

- Regulation change 1: A move to one reassessment opportunity at undergraduate level.
- Regulation change 2: Allowing students, when they fail both the original assessment and the reassessment for a module, to retake the module(s) on one occasion. It was confirmed that this was in line with sector practice and prevented the trailing of failed assessment into forward modules.
- Regulation change 3: To extend condonement (the term 'condonement' will be replaced with 'compensation' from September 2018) at Level 3 and Level 4 from 20 credits to 40 credits.

- Regulation change 4: To increase progression requirements from Level 4 to Level 5 and from Level 5 to Level 6, from 80 to 100 credits.
- Regulation change 5: To remove prescribed limits on reassessment for postgraduate taught awards.
- Non-Regulation change: To streamline the Extenuating Circumstances (EC) Panel and associated processes. Changes would be reflected in the process document, and the focus of this operational change was to make the process better understood by students and staff, and to ensure that the outcomes of EC panels were communicated to students in a timely and supportive way.

The Vice Chancellor commented that the changes outlined were not significant when compared to existing good practice within the sector, against which all proposals had been scoped.

Academic Board stressed the timely and appropriate communication of the consultation process and proposals to students. It was reported that a series of partner staff and students had been identified under an associated Communications and Engagement Plan in order to progress appropriate communication of the initiative.

It was confirmed that only in truly exceptional circumstances would students be expected to re-take a module alongside an existing full-time module allocation and that these instances would be considered on a case by case basis, with any financial implications for students carefully assessed.

The outcomes of the student consultation would be reported to Academic Board in June 2018, and any revised package changes proposed at that time. Individual opt-out from the revised regulations was a statutory requirement, which would be considered in full.

It was reported that academic staff were highly supportive of the regulation changes with regard to module reassessment.

Outcome: Academic Board approved the proposals subject to the outcomes of the student consultation process. Final formal approval would be sought at the June 2018 meeting, together with the presentation of the full Communications Plan and a Transition Plan to cover the interim period and arrangements for opt-out students.

b) Proposed changes to Programme Design Principles:

The revised and refreshed rules governing programme construction, pedagogical guidance, and materials promoting good practice in learning design were presented by the Dean for Student Success, as outlined in the paper.

It was confirmed that the implementation of the full suite of recommendations would be introduced on a rolling basis over a long time-frame.

Clarification was sought as to why 80/20 splits and 10 credit modules had been removed from the principles. It was reported that the reduction of complexity was a key objective of the Academic Infrastructure Project, and formed the basis of these recommendations.

In exceptional circumstances, approval of 10 credit modules could be sought from the Deputy Vice Chancellor, dependent on critical academic need, however the 30 credit module standard for undergraduate programmes was not part of the design parameters.

Collaborative partners would be required to have due regard for the design principles for future programme development.

The UCSU Academic Officer sought clarification on the following points:

- Whether the proposed amendments would be written into the Academic Regulations.
It was confirmed that as design principles, the proposals were not a regulatory matter for inclusion in the Academic Regulations.
- At which levels optional modules were being removed.
Under the new design parameters options were permitted at L5, but no optional modules were permitted at Levels 3 and 4, in line with sector practice.

Outcome: Academic Board noted the work conducted and the desired aims of the activity. They endorsed the principle of greater specificity and steer around programme design. It was agreed that wider consultation with academic staff and the Students' Union should be conducted in light of the comments raised, with outcomes and resulting proposals to return to the June meeting.

c) Approach to Start Dates 2018/19:

It was reported that the academic year and intakes formed a key strand of the Academic Infrastructure project. Recommendations from this strand were not yet available and therefore not implementable for academic year 2018/19. However, a first-stage position for 2018/19 was proposed to more efficiently manage University start dates for 2018/19 and to reduce complexity associated.

It was proposed to reduce intake points for credit bearing taught courses from 97 in 2016-17 to 13: one per calendar month and two during September when two intakes were required. Any start dates already published outside the schedule proposed would be observed for the 2018-19 academic year.

The proposals had been discussed with and had the support of the Deputy Vice Chancellor, Dean for Student Success, Heads of Academic Departments, Director of AQD, Director of London Campus, the Students' Union, and colleagues across enterprise functions.

Outcome: Academic Board approved the approach as presented for implementation.

The Vice Chancellor stressed that in any cases of approval by exception by the Deputy Vice Chancellor, that onward reporting to the Committee on at least an annual basis was needed.

Action: On an annual basis, all instances of the Deputy Vice Chancellor's approval by exception to be collated and the outcomes reported, to feed into continual review. The Dean for Student Success, Director of SAAS and the Deputy Vice Chancellor to agree an appropriate recording and reporting system.

a) Research, Enterprise & Innovations Strategy:

The Director of Research and Graduate School presented the final Research, Enterprise and Innovation Strategy, which had been reviewed in detail and approved by the Research & Enterprise Committee on 22 March.

The four key themes of the Strategy were aligned closely to the institutional Strategic Plan, and full engagement had been undertaken with Heads of Department during its development.

Clarification was sought by Academic Board members regarding plans for the communication of research activity with the public. It was confirmed that detailed debate had taken place during the development phase of the Strategy, and the resulting document contextualised the materials and messages to be presented to external stakeholders. Work was now ongoing to ensure the successful implementation of this activity.

Comments raised around the alignment of strategic indicators were noted by the Chair.

The benefit of the Strategy to leadership team monitoring activity was stressed by departmental heads.

The Deputy Vice Chancellor offered thanks to the Director of Research & Graduate School for her work and efforts to finalise the forward strategy.

Outcome: Academic Board approved the Strategy for implementation.

b) Collaborative Working in Research Brief Guide:

The Director of Research & Graduate School reported on enhancements to the existing Guide, undertaken following a recent case review of collaborative research with external parties, and scrutinised and approved by the Research & Enterprise Committee.

It was confirmed that a link to the institutional approvals documentation for funded research had been added to the revised and expanded document.

The accompanying Communications Plan was also presented for information.

Outcome: Academic Board approved the changes to the Guide.

17:57 Collaborative Provision Relationship Management Strategy:

The background and context to the Strategy document was provided by the Head of Academic Partnerships and Skills, and it was confirmed that the Strategy reflected changes of approach in the management of relationships with FE college partners.

The Strategy had been developed in consultation with college partners, with the purpose of clarifying the University's approach to FE College Partnerships in terms of guiding principles, mechanisms for the prioritisation of individual FE Colleges, the nature of respective relationships, and the roles and responsibilities of University staff in developing, managing and sustaining those relationships.

The Vice Chancellor confirmed the alignment of the Strategy with the aims and objectives of the institutional Strategic Plan.

Actions agreed:

- It was suggested that hyperlinks to related institutional policies and documents could be included within the Strategy document, for example the Collaborative Working in Research Brief Guide.
- The HEA accreditation of academic staff at partner institutions was discussed, and it was suggested that commitment could be sought through the Strategy document for partners to develop their HEA accreditation status.
- It was suggested to distinguish within the Strategy document between relationship management and individual roles and responsibilities with regard to the development of academic programmes.

Outcome: The final Strategy document to be revised and provided to the Vice Chancellor for approval via Chair's Action, with the outcomes reported to the next meeting in June 2018.

17:58

Library Resources Review:

AB17/47

An overview of proposed changes following detailed review and consultation with regard to library resources was presented by the Learning Resources and Research Manager, as follows:

1. Reading lists" to be re-named "reading and resource lists."
2. Annual reading list review to be completed between May and end July.
3. Reading list categories to be reduced from three (Set, Essential and Further) to two (Essential and Recommended).
4. The suggested limit of texts in each category to be changed from 1, 10 and unlimited to 6 and 10 – although some disciplines would require more.
5. The change of ratio of texts to students from 1:15 for all three old categories to 1:8 for Essential and 1:25 for Recommended.
6. Emphasising the importance of using the Library scanning service to enable key chapters and other documents to be accessible electronically to all students, properly catalogued and copyright assured.
7. Releasing 60% of funding from 1st August, based on student FTE, to bring forward purchasing of materials by 3-4 months (already implemented).
8. Allocation of the remaining 40% more strategically, based on factors such as NSS, PTES, PRES, SSF, AMR and strategic University development.
9. Journal subscriptions to be purchased at Department rather than Subject Group level.
10. Removal of the strict 50/50 split between book and journal spend to allow Heads of Department and Library subject experts additional discretion.
11. The ring-fence for Programme Initiation Process (PIP) seed corn funding to be reduced from five years to three. Departmental Leadership Teams and Information Services to review academic impact and return on investment for PIP subscriptions via business planning.

It was confirmed that, as a result of the changes proposed additional resources could be provided to students earlier, and a better balance of resources ensured across departments.

Academic Board offered thanks to the Learning Resources and Research Manager for his work to develop the proposals, and UCSU offered thanks for the high levels of student engagement with the initiative.

Outcome: Academic Board approved the proposals as presented for implementation.

- 17:59 Debate Session – TEF and Subject Rating – What this means for HE and us:** Verbal
It was agreed to defer this item to the next meeting.
- 17:60 Deliberative Committees:** AB17/48
- a) REF Steering Group Terms of Reference and Membership:**
- Outcome:** Academic Board approved the revised Terms of Reference and Membership. Any further changes resulting from the first cycle of meetings to return to Academic Board as appropriate.
- b) Recommendations from the Committee Effectiveness Review 2018:**
It was agreed to defer this item to the next meeting.
- 17:61 Admissions Review and Complaints Procedure:** AB17/49
Following a student request to review an Admissions decision, a review of the Admissions Appeals and Complaints Policy & Procedure had been conducted and proposals were presented to simplify the process and policy for applicants in line with the policy and procedures for student complaints.
- Outcome:** Academic Board approved the proposals for immediate implementation.
- 17:62 Minutes from Academic Board Committees:** AB17/50
- Agreed:** The following minutes and associated key points were noted:
- Student Success & Quality Assurance Committee 1 March 2018 a)
 - Academic Strategy & Planning Committee 20 March 2018 b)
 - Research & Enterprise Committee 22 March 2018 c)
- 17:63 Next meeting:** 27 June 2018, Carlisle Verbal