

ACADEMIC BOARD

CONFIRMED

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 14 December 2021

- Present:** Julie Mennell (until item 21:32 inclusive; Chair until item 21:32), Rob Trimble (Chair from item 21:33), Emma Bales (until 21:40), Victoria Barbe, Jean Brown, Colette Conroy, Alex Dittrich, Tom Grimwood, Lucy Haddath, Karen Hadley, Alison Hampson, Richard Harrison, Ruth Harrison-Palmer, Signy Henderson, Amanda Lane, Helen Manns, Jessica Robinson, Nigel Rourke, Ian Sinker, Mike Toyn, Brian Webster-Henderson
- In attendance:** Jan Ashbridge (for item 21:42)
- 21:22 Introduction and Apologies for absence** Verbal
Apologies were received from Karen Shaw, Tom Davidson, Tina Harvey and Elizabeth Bates
- 21:23 Minutes and actions of the previous meeting** AB21/15
The minutes of the 7 October 2021 meeting were approved as an accurate record. a)
- The Chair commented that the majority of the actions in the action log were complete, however three actions had been open for some time: 19:63, 19:76 and 18:49. It was agreed that these actions would all be closed off in some way by the end of January 2022. **Action:** DSS, Uni Sec and UCSU SO. b)
- 21:24 Vice Chancellor's Report** Verbal
Received An update from the Vice Chancellor
- The Vice Chancellor commented that the University's position, progress and plans had been shared at recent question and answer sessions. In summary she set out how the University was in a positive place, which was due to the significant work of staff across the University. The need to continue to be aware of the work entailed to deal with the pandemic, the challenges of improving student outcomes and other matters, such as dealing with pinch points due to increase student numbers, was noted.
- AGREED:** To receive the update.
- 21:25 Institute Representatives** Verbal
The Vice Chancellor thanked the new Institute Academic Representatives for joining Academic Board commenting that it was a real privilege to be a member of Academic Board for all involved. She noted that it was very important that Academic Board was informed and engaged, hearing different views and realities from across the University, with the representatives having a key role within this. The representatives were asked to comment as to why they put themselves forward for the role and to share what they were seeking to achieve through representing their areas.
- The four Institute Academic Representatives present spoke in turn, the reasons for putting themselves forward included a desire to support the Institutes to work collaboratively and to facilitate two-way communication. Things that they wanted to achieve included representing their colleagues

and bringing a different perspective to University wide matters and how they may apply in their Institute.

The Vice Chancellor commented that all views and perspectives were welcome, with all members of Academic Board equal, albeit that the Chair may need to make the final decision on occasions. The focus into 2022 would be for all to work to ensure that the University could be the best it could be, focusing on the right things to achieve this. The importance of reporting against objective, actions and targets was noted, however the Vice Chancellor emphasised the need for all to challenge themselves on what had been learnt from different activities, what was to be actioned following the learning and how this would inform future thinking.

One of the representatives had feedback from their Institute as follows:

- With respect to NSS action planning, the representative noted that it was agreed that it had to be undertaken, but that there needed to be some creativity with regard to what the NSS meant for students and the resource implications. An example was where the balance was between RAG rating of Blackboard sites and wider dialogue.
- Whether there had been any evaluation of Enhancement weeks was asked with it commented that they had consequences for the assessment calendar and marking time.
- They noted that there was a welcome week in September but not in January.
- The proposal for there to be a policy of removing an activity when a new one was added was suggested, with the example of the addition of mid-module evaluations given, with the benefit of these agreed, but then the need for the end of module evaluation questioned.
- Issues with reliability of computer equipment was commented to be an issue in some areas, with new laptops not due until the end of January.

The Vice Chancellor commented that there was a national shortage of laptops, and that IT were aware of issues with some hardware and had responded in the past. If there were ongoing issues these should be raised with IT.

The other representatives were asked if they had any additional points to raise. In response a representative commented that staff were keen to make improvements but with this came with additional stress. The mid-module evaluations were commented to have worked very well, providing an opportunity to action points raised. However, one representative commented that although the principle was sound there could be a challenge with respect to how they worked around placements.

The representatives were thanked for their feedback, which would be responded to through the meeting, or if a local issue would be picked up by the relevant Institute Director.

21:26 Students' Union Matters

AB21/16

Received A report from the UCSC

The Academic Officer commented that there had been further appointment of representatives since the report was written, with there now being over 90% in place in the Institutes of Health and Arts, and over 80% in total. The training for the representatives had been completed, with a mechanism created for those not able to attend the training to take it virtually. In addition, one to one meetings had been scheduled where these had been

possible. Additional resources had been created for the representatives which were accessible via the web-site. With respect to student support she noted that more standard questions were now being asked, with fewer students coming forward with complex questions.

The expansion of the clubs and societies on offer was commended. It was noted that there were fewer new groups formed in Lancaster. The Academic Officer responded that this was as there was a larger base there already. To what extent there was cross-fertilisation between the different Institute's clubs and societies was asked. The Academic Officer responded that this was something that the Activities Officer was working on. She was encouraged to engage with the Institutes if they could help with this.

It was commented that at SSQAC the Study Smart campaign had been discussed, with the Students' Union needing to link up with the Dean for Student Success (DeanfSS) on this.

Following a comment it was agreed that the Director of AQD (DAQD) would work with the Academic Officer on what could be done to nuance opportunities for apprentices to engage with the Students' Union and increase the engagement of representatives. **Action:** DAQD / UCSU. The Academic Officer commented that there had been work undertaken with the paramedic apprenticeship team, with a video recorded targeted to these students on how they could benefit from engagement with the Students' Union. The Vice Chancellor commented that if there was an appetite from the representatives for these programmes to come to Academic Board that would be welcomed. It was agreed that the Academic Officer would consider and liaise with the Uni Sec as appropriate. **Action:** UCSU.

It was agreed that a list of programmes that did not have a representative so far be shared with the DeanfSS so that she could support the process of recruitment. An update on areas where recruitment of representatives remained an issue was requested by the Vice Chancellor for the end of January. **Action:** DeanfSS / UCSU.

The Academic Officer was thanked for her report.

AGREED: To receive the report.

21:27 Director Updates

Verbal

Received Feedback on the Towards 2030 Strategy

The Director of the Institute of Science and the Environment (DISE) reported that she and the Director of Student Services (DSS) had been asked to consult with their academic and professional service peers on Academic Board, respectively, on the T2030 strategy. The ask had been to identify opportunities, challenges, questions and fit with the current position and plans. It was noted that there were areas of similarity in the two sets of feedback.

The DISE provided the feedback from academic colleagues, following which the DSS provided the feedback from professional service colleagues represented on Academic Board. **Secretary's note:** This feedback has been provided to the Vice Chancellor in full.

Feedback on the draft strategy was requested from other members of Academic Board. The need to attract research active academic staff was emphasised. In the KPIs the percentage of staff with PhDs was proposed for inclusion.

The Vice Chancellor thanked all involved for the very comprehensive list of feedback, which VCE would take on board in developing the final draft of the strategy. In relation to the implementation of the strategy, the Vice Chancellor reported that there was a framework of enabling plans etc being developed. If anyone had further points to feed in they were encouraged to contact members of VCE.

AGREED: To receive the feedback on the draft T2030 strategy.

21:28 Towards 2030 Strategy

AB21/17

Received Towards 2030

AGREED: This item had been covered within the item above.

21:29 Policy Update

Verbal

Received A verbal update on key policy changes

The Director of the Institute of Education briefed the meeting on the Initial Teacher Training (ITT) Market Review. She reported that the government had now responded to the feedback received through the consultation and all but one of the fourteen recommendations had been accepted. The main recommendation was that prospective accredited providers of ITT needed to go through an accreditation process, including existing providers. The process and timeline for this was detailed. The University had submitted an expression of interest and was going to submit its application by 7 February 2022, in the first round of applications. The process was in two stages, the first being paper based, following this, if a provider had been accredited they would be in a developmental stage to ensure they could meet the provider quality requirements by September 2024. It was noted that the Vice Chancellor was now the Chair of the Cathedrals Group of universities, all of which had similar roots and a strong history of teacher training. The Group was engaging with government on the review.

The Director of the Institute for Science and the Environment provided an overview of Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs), which were part of the framework of standards that the government were gradually introducing. The HTQs were being introduced in cycles following the introduction of the relevant T levels. They had the same standards as apprenticeships other than the student did not need to be employed and operated at levels 4 and 5 – they covered 60% of the knowledge skills and behaviours of apprenticeships. She reported that there had been two cycles that the University had not bid for, with a bid to be submitted to the third cycle that opened in mid-February 2022, for delivery to commence in 2024. The subject areas in scope were set out. In parallel with scoping areas of provision for the University, work had been undertaken in relation to partner institutions, however none had approached the University to date.

The Vice Chancellor thanked the Directors for their updates. She proposed that once the post Augar outcomes were known and the new T2030 strategy approved there would be a further discussion at Academic Board.

Action: Uni Sec.

AGREED: To receive the updates.

The order of the agenda was changes at this point in the meeting – items are minuted as received.

21:30 Student Outcomes Reporting

AB21/19

Received Student Outcomes Overview

The paper was noted. It was agreed that an executive summary be added that summarised where the University was compared to where it wanted to be and what that meant for actions, who was responsible for the actions and the timescales. **Action:** DeanfSS.

AGREED: To receive the report.

21:31 External Examiners Summary AB21/20

Received Annual Summary of External Examiner Reports 2020-21

The paper was noted and the positive reports were welcomed. It was agreed that the reporting templates would be reviewed to determine in any changes were needed to maximise the range of feedback provided.

Action: DAQD.

AGREED: To receive the report.

21:32 Annual Review of Validation AB21/21

Received Annual Review of Validation (taught programmes) 2020/21

The report was received.

AGREED: To receive the report.

21:33 Academic Calendar AB21/18

Received Academic Calendar 2022/23

The DAQD spoke to the paper, starting by noting that each year Academic Board's approval was sought for the forthcoming year's Academic Calendar. The Calendar requires approval in time to notify the SLC so that students can apply for funding. The Calendar was worked up through discussions with a range of staff, particularly in IBIL and IoH as they had more non-standard provision than the other Institutes. The proposed Calendar had no major changes for September starts, however it did look to formalise a January start. Two enabling calendars had also been included within the paper for potential future markets. The DAQD reported that only the Calendar for 2022/23 had been proposed, further work to define principles and address pinch points was required before a more forward-looking approach could be taken.

The DAQD went on to set out how, once the 2022/23 Calendar was approved, the programme initiation process would require programmes to identify which standard academic year would apply / if there was to be an exception. This would allow further oversight of which programmes fell within the standard academic years. The DSAAS added that the paper looked to solve a problem encountered with January starts, to improve the student experience and progression and staff workload management.

The DeanfSS addressed the matter raised earlier in the meeting regarding induction / welcome weeks. She reported that these don't occur in the same way in January and April / May as in September, however the Induction Working Group was mindful of this. A reduced scale event was being created for January, taking feedback from the September Welcome week into account.

With respect to the questions relating to Enhancement weeks, the DeanfSS set out that these were run for the first time in 2020/21, with the students in scope for the weeks not allowed to be on campus when they were run

due to the pandemic. It was hoped that the University would be able to offer in-person activities in 2021/22 which should increase engagement. The impact of the weeks on academic staff marking time would be picked up with the Institute Director to understand further. **Action:** DeanfSS.

The Calendar was welcomed; a comment was made that ideally it would be agreed for the coming three years to support arrangement of placements.

Whether there would be benefits for some bespoke programmes to start shortly after the standard September start date, to ease the administrative functions, was asked. Alongside this, whether there was any flexibility around the May entry dates when Easter was early was asked, as the budgets of businesses were often from 1 April each year. The DAQD responded that thirteen additional alternative start dates existed to provide some flexibility, and applications for other start dates could be made. The points would, however be fed into a planned admissions workshop for apprentice programmes. **Action:** DAQD.

In confirming Academic Board's approval of the 2022/23 Academic Calendar, the Chair concluded:

- That two enabling calendars had been proposed that were largely Institute driven; before these were used viable cohorts needed to be in place.
- That, if possible, from 2023/24 a three year cycle would be introduced.
- That the approved exceptions were noted on the calendar and that the thirteen alternative start dates would be looked at again to confirm that they were still required (**Action:** DAQD)

AGREED: To approve the 2022/23 Academic Calendar and to add the exceptions and alternative start dates.

21:34 Student Services Annual Report

AB21/22

Received The Student Services Annual Report

The Director for Student Services (DSS) spoke to the report setting out how it had been written to provide an overview of the scope and range of delivery within the Service. The flexibility of the team in response to the pandemic was noted.

The DVC(A) asked for confirmation that the hardship funds in the paper included both the OfS and University funding; the DSS confirmed that it included both.

It was noted that it was good to see that the new Student Engagement Coordinators had started. It was agreed that at the end of the year an evaluation of what they had delivered and their impact would be undertaken and reported to SSQAC and Academic Board. **Action:** DSS.

It was commented that the number of students with reported disabilities was very significant, with the associated increased support required by the Service and academics needing to be understood and factored into planning. Which students the numbers covered and what the majority of the disabilities were was asked. The DSS responded that the numbers included apprentices and the majority of the students had Specific Learning Disabilities. It was noted that CAPE put on training and development sessions to support academics.

Whether there had been a dramatic increase in referrals for mental health and wellbeing, following the return to campuses and the decrease in the referrals in 2020/21, was asked. The DSS responded that referrals had increased in number and complexity, in line with elsewhere in the sector. The waiting list was back to circa three weeks, this was lower than support from the NHS, but ways were being looked into to see if students could be moved through and seen faster.

The DSS was thanked for the comprehensive report.

AGREED: To receive the report.

21:35 National Student Survey

Received	a) Progress overview on implementation of NSS Framework	AB21/23
	b) Institute presentations from the Director of IBIL on the NSS results and actions for enhancement	Presentation
	c) An operational update on the NSS 2022	Verbal

Progress overview on implementation of NSS Framework

The DVC(A) introduced the paper commenting that many of the actions were things that should be being done by everyone all of the time; the aim was to bring consistency with these being documented as ongoing operational requirements.

The DeanfSS responded to a question raised earlier in the meeting regarding potential survey fatigue and associated work following the introduction of mid-module evaluations. She noted that the mid-module evaluations were a priority as they allowed for the feedback to inform changes that the students could benefit from immediately; it was noted that they had been undertaken prior to 2021/22 in a number of areas with the requirement now being to standardise their use.

In response to a question regarding the RAG rating of Blackboard sites, the DeanfSS noted that the detail on the sites mattered to students so the RAG rating of individual sites, and building this up to provide a full picture, was a useful exercise.

Institute presentations from the Director of IBIL

The Director of the Institute of Business, Industry and Leadership gave an overview of the Institute's NSS 2021 results, noting that they were both disappointing and not as expected based on the conversations that had taken place with students through the year. The actions taken in response to the results were set out, with it noted that at least half of the Institute actions were complete, with some ongoing and some related to uptake of staff development opportunities.

The Director and her staff were thanked for their work to improve the student experience.

Operational update on the NSS 2022

The DeanfSS reported that the NSS would launch at the University in the week of 7 February 2022, with briefings to all staff via the Global with further information provided to academic staff. Students would be briefed via a video. She noted that there were no significant changes to the survey for 2022. The need to continue to be very careful to avoid inappropriate influence was emphasised.

Whether the Covid19 questions used in 2021 would be repeated was asked. The DeanfSS responded that her understanding was that they were not going to be included, but that this could change.

AGREED: To receive the report and updates

21:36 Update on Teaching and Learning Matters Verbal

Received A verbal update

The DeanfSS and DVC(Academic) provided an update on the position in relation to the ongoing Covid19 pandemic. It was reported that the University continued to follow the DfE guidance, which was to continue with face-to-face teaching. The Teaching and Learning Group had met and plans were in place if there was a need to revert to on-line learning.

AGREED: To receive the update.

21:37 Access and Participation Plans AB21/24

Received An update on activity relating to the Access and Participation Plan 2021/22

The DeanfSS reported that a new Director for Access and Participation had been appointed at the OfS and the monitoring process for 2020/21 paused. She noted that the University was in a good position when the detail of the monitoring reporting was published. It was expected that some new and changed priorities would come through in due course, with the University continuing to work to the existing action plan in the meantime.

Whether there was anything more that could be done to close the BAME attainment gap at the University was asked. The DeanfSS responded that the 2020/21 data was not as yet available to see if any progress had been made. Although the gap was of concern, she commented that the numbers of Black students were small making it more difficult to identify trends.

It was agreed that once the outcomes data was available Academic Board would be informed if there were to be any changes to the actions, and that the narrative would be added to so that it provided the number of students.

Action: DeanfSS.

AGREED: To receive the report.

21:38 Postgraduate Research Experience Survey Results AB21/26

Received The Postgraduate Research Experience Survey Results

The DVC(HE&I) reported that RKEC discussed the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey Results and Research Degree Programmes Annual Monitoring Review (AMR) 2020-21 in detail. The PRES results were noted as having been good, with useful work done in planning actions in response to the results and the AMR.

AGREED: To receive the report

21:39 Graduate School Annual Monitoring Report AB21/27

Received Research Degree Programmes Annual Monitoring Review 2020-21

AGREED: To receive the report

21:40 Honorary Awards Nominations AB21/28

Received Honorary Awards Committee – Nominations for Honorary Fellowship

The University Secretary spoke to the paper, encouraging members of Academic Board to nominate people for awards and detailing the nomination that had been recommended to Academic Board for approval by HAC.

AGREED: To recommend approval of the Honorary Fellow nomination to University Board.

21:41 Knowledge Exchange Concordat Feedback

AB21/29

Received Knowledge Exchange Concordat Feedback

AGREED: To receive the report

21:42 Ofsted Inspection

AB21/25

Received To approve the Apprenticeships SAR and QIP and the Primary and secondary SED and QIP, and to receive an update on Ofsted preparedness

a)
b)
Verbal

Apprenticeships SAR and QIP

The DVC(A) noted that the documentation had been discussed at SSQAC; whether the actions agreed at that meeting had been taken was asked. The DAQD confirmed that they had, however there was more work to do. The DAQD reported that the documentation was required, however it did not have to be submitted to Ofsted in a proactive manner; a recommendation would be made to the DVC(A) on whether or not to do so. She noted that the document included some student outcome data that would not be included in the version provided to Ofsted.

The DAQD set out that this was the first time that documentation had been required that covered all apprenticeship provision. Work was ongoing with the Institutes to ensure all statements made could be evidenced, if required, and to provide additional position statements and case studies. This was a key element of the Apprentice Steering Group's work.

Input from the Vice Chancellor was provided, which included a request for more to be added with respect to the long-term strategic focus relating to apprenticeships and the T2030 strategy. The staff and student numbers, including relating to disability, were asked to be checked. **Action:** DAQD.

It was agreed that the documentation be approved, subject to ongoing enhancements and the points raised in the discussion.

Primary and secondary SED and QIP

The Director of the Institute of Education spoke to the documentation noting that the Institute expected to be inspected between January and June 2022. The inspections were being run under a very different methodology to that used previously, with a focus now on the curriculum. She noted that the QIP had been combined with the SED to support the inspectors. The Director introduced the Head of ITE Quality and Curriculum (HITEQ&C), who had been seconded into the post to lead the reaccreditation of the University following the ITT review and Ofsted preparedness.

The HITEQ&C detailed some of the changes to the Ofsted process and assessment framework. She reported that the University was assessing against the 'good' criteria, however it was felt that in some areas it was

better than 'good'. Some of the work undertaken in response to the new criteria was set out, including communication of the new frameworks to mentors in schools so that they could align their work with that which the students were doing at University. Further work was noted to be required with mentors, for Ofsted but also for the reaccreditation process.

Whether there were any concerns with respect to the documentation or evidence was asked. The HITEQ&C responded that the evidence was aligned to the QIP through a Blackboard site, with sense checking ongoing to ensure that there were no gaps.

Whether there had been any external verification, from critical academic peers rather than stakeholders, was asked. The HITEQ&C reported that the Institute had representatives on the Cathedrals Group's Education Group, Million Plus and USET, and through these means had regular contact with peers. Now that the reaccreditation process was not seen to be competitive there was greater openness to sharing information.

In response to a question as to whether the data had been checked the HITEQ&C reported that work was ongoing to check and update the data, working with the data team in SAAS. When the documentation was treated as final from this perspective was asked; it was reported that the data would be updated until the point that Ofsted attended the University, as they would ask for a spreadsheet of all students with a range of information for each from which to choose their sample. Data such as that from assessment boards was updated as it was finalised.

It was noted that the Vice Chancellor wished to make comment on the documentation in due course.

It was agreed that the documentation be approved subject to further amendments between the meeting and Ofsted's attendance and input from the Vice Chancellor.

Update on Ofsted preparedness

The Director of the Institute of Education gave a brief overview of the current position and ongoing work; the changes to the methodology were the focus for the majority of the ongoing work.

The Chair thanked all involved in preparing for Ofsted inspections for their work to date.

- AGREED:**
- To approve the Apprenticeships SAR and QIP and the Primary and secondary SED and QIP subject to ongoing enhancements and feedback from the Vice Chancellor being taken on board;
 - To receive the update on Ofsted preparedness.

21:43 Academic Governance Committee Annual Report

AB21/30

Received Academic Governance Committee Annual Report to the University Board 2020/21

AGREED: To receive the report

21:44 Senior Academic Board Committees

Received Minutes of Student Success & Quality Assurance Committee 23 November 2021; Academic Strategy and Planning Committee 23 September 2021 and 18

SSQAC21/44
ASPC21/11
ASPC21/24

AGREED: To note the minutes

21:45 University Board Minutes

Received Minutes of the University Board meetings held on 15 July and
14 October 2021

UB20/85a
UB21/21a

AGREED: To note the minutes

21:46 Matters for Onward Communication

To be agreed outside the meeting.

Verbal

21:47 Forward Meetings

Tuesday 8 March 2022
Tuesday 14 June 2022

Verbal