

ACADEMIC BOARD

CONFIRMED

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 24th June 2021

Present: Rob Trimble (Chair from 20:88), Julie Mennell (Chair until 20:87 inclusive), Emma Bales (until 20:85 inclusive), Jean Brown, Colette Conroy, Karen Hadley, Signy Henderson, Amanda Lane (from 20:85), Helen Manns, Kath Norris, Steven McCarthy-Grunwald, Nigel Rourke (from 20:88), Ian Sinkler, Elizabeth Bates, Rachel Lowthian, Susie Wilson

In attendance: Nicola Wilson, Tom Grimwood (20:90)

- 20:78 Apologies for absence:** Verbal
Apologies were received from Jeremy Colclough, Lucy Haddath, Alison Hampson, James Hodge (Rachel Lowthian attending in his place), Brian Webster-Henderson, Ian Todd, Ruth Harrison-Palmer (Kath Norris attending in her place), Kaz Stuart, Katie Walker-Small and Jessica Robinson.
- 20:79 Minutes and actions of the previous meeting** AB20/56
The minutes of the 8th March 2021 meeting were approved as an accurate record. (a)
- The action log was noted. The University Secretary noted that a number of actions were on hold due to the pandemic. The Dean for Student Success (DfSS) noted that she was working with the Students' Union, to progress with the Equality Impact Assessment action. (b)
- 20:80 Vice Chancellor's Report** Verbal
Received An update from the Vice Chancellor.
- The Vice Chancellor started by setting out that the year could be summarised as tough but positive, not just with respect to what had been achieved as seen in the headlines, but also the business as usual work undertaken often in difficult circumstances due to the pandemic.
- The Vice Chancellor noted that the outcomes of the University's hard work were increasingly being seen internally and externally. An example of the external recognition was given from the Complete University Guide league table; the University had improved 17 places overall to be ranked 100 out of 128, placing 18th in 'graduate prospects'. It was noted that many of the indicators lagged, with the 2021 National Student Survey results to be published in July and therefore feeding into the table next year. The Vice Chancellor hoped that everyone felt pleased and proud of their accomplishments going into the 2021-22 academic year.
- Looking towards the next academic year, the Vice Chancellor noted that the focus for the University was to continue to be Covid-informed rather than Covid-led, with the University needing to continue to progress whilst responding to the changing requirements of the pandemic.
- Following the Government's decision to delay the end of lockdown restrictions the detail of the return of staff to the campus environment was being worked through. Within this, the student environment, experience and outcomes would remain a top priority.

AGREED: To note the update.

20:81 Towards 2030 Strategy

Link to Draft
Strategy
provided

Received The draft T2030 strategy

The Vice Chancellor outlined the context in which the T2030 strategy was being drafted and noted the progress of a number of significant projects. It was observed that the Borderlands project, which had been ongoing for over three and a half years, had reached a key stage in terms of funding. Work with BAE in Barrow was progressing well, with a bid about to be made to the Town Deal fund. In addition, the University had recently hosted a visit from staff from Imperial College London as part of a proposed collaboration to address specific medical skills gaps in Cumbria. The project was part of a deeper strategic place-based approach to improve health and social care across the region, plug skills gaps and raise educational aspiration and attainment. The Vice Chancellor observed that the projects highlighted the positive direction of travel for the University and the need to balance the work on longer term aspirations with day-to-day operations.

The ambitions set out in the proposed strategy were noted, with it noted that the impact of the University was of importance. A focus on the role of the University and why it was created was critical, alongside its custodian role for future generations. It was noted that the draft needed further work, with feedback from staff consultation session being run over the coming weeks also to be included prior to discussions at University Board.

In the discussion that followed it was noted that strategy was ambitious, but that clear strategic direction had been provided. It was observed that the strategy focused on the diverse range of the University's students, along with the increasing number of students engaging with the University remotely. The references to Knowledge Exchange within the strategy were welcomed.

AGREED: To note the draft strategy.

20:82 Institute Representatives

Verbal

Received Updates and comments from the Institute Representatives

The Institute staff representatives were asked what their colleagues would need to be able to contribute to the delivery of the strategy.

It was noted that there was excitement with regards to the Citadels project and the opportunity to raise the University's profile in Carlisle and nationally. It was commented that the project provided evidence of the University planning for the future, however the availability of resource for future plans was a concern for staff. The Vice Chancellor agreed that appropriate resourcing was important. She set out how the University Board had an expectation for the University to move towards a surplus of 10% of income, which could then be invested back into the University. Increasingly the University was in a position to do this, with current surplus being circa 7%.

It was noted that the ITT market review had caused concerns that there would be threats to teacher education at the University. It was advised that staff needed to be confident that senior management were aware of the risks and that they understood the national situation.

The staffing to deliver quality academic provision was commented upon, with some specialist areas of provision having minimal experienced staff. The Vice Chancellor responded that the University spent more on staffing than other institutions, partly due to the campus and student mix that the University had and due to some areas of provision being very resource intensive. She explained the annual planning round, which was concluding for the year, looked at the anticipated income for the year ahead and resourcing at University and at the Institute / Professional Service level. Following conclusion of the planning round staffing budgets would be communicated. If staff had concerns they should raise them within their Institute as the senior team within the Institute had the flexibility to manage within the budget set for the year.

A representative commented that it was exciting to hear about the new projects and how they fit within the strategy, something that all staff would benefit from hearing to enhance their sense of belonging.

The Vice Chancellor thanked the representatives for their feedback.

AGREED: To receive the feedback from institute representatives.

20:83 Students' Union Matters

AB20/57

Received A report from the Students' Union Academic Officer

In the absence of the Students' Union Academic Officer the DfSS spoke to the report, noting that she had not had a briefing from the Officer, however she and the DVC(HE&I), as VCE lead for liaison with the Students' Union, met with the Sabbatical Officers on a regular basis.

The report provided an update on a range of business-as-usual matters. It was noted that the student foodbank had been supported financially by the Students' Union in 2020/21. The campaigns underway were noted, with the advantage this year of the continuity of campaigns as the Sabbatical Officers were all continuing in post for a second year. The DfSS reported that the University collaborated with the Students' Union on a range of joint campaigns, with the Expect Respect campaign being an example, with messaging aligned between the two organisations. In a similar manner, the Students' Union was supporting the development of the University Health and Wellbeing strategy.

With respect to the Students United Against Fees campaign the DfSS reported that the University was not collaborating with the Union, but had had an open conversation with them with respect to the campaign. The Union's focus was not anti the University, rather it was looking for the government to do something to support students.

The DfSS was thanked for her input.

AGREED: To receive the report.

20:84 Changes to Academic Regulations, Procedures and Processes

AB20/58

Received A paper with updates and a request to approve changes to Academic Regulations for 2021/22

The DVC(Academic) introduced four areas of focus of the paper, as set out on the cover paper. The first aspect requested Academic Board's approval of a revised timeline for implementation of the changes to the

Assessment Board processes approved in June 2020. Academic Board approved the revised timeline.

The second aspect related to proposed changes to Academic Regulations for 2021/22. The changes to Academic Regulations that had taken place since the start of the pandemic were outlined, with the proposal for 2021/22 that the University reverted to standard regulations. Elements of the Additional Regulations approved in March 2021 would therefore only apply for progression and award decisions up to October 2021, as set out in the paper. It was noted that provision to revise the regulations remained, if required as the pandemic progressed. Academic Board approved the proposed changes to the Academic Regulations.

The changes to the PGR regulations, approved by SSQAC, were approved.

Areas for focus for 2021/22, and other changes to academic procedures and process were then set out for Academic Board's information.

It was noted that as the University had a number of assessment related processes which were not detailed within the Academic Regulations these would also be clearly communicated to students and staff, as they would also be reverted to in line with the change back to the standard Academic Regulations.

- AGREED:**
- To approve the revised timeline for implementation of the changes to the Assessment Board processes;
 - To approve the proposal to revert to the Standard Academic Regulations for Taught Programmes, as set out in the paper;
 - To note the updates within the paper.

20:85 Academic Skills Framework

AB20/59

Received A paper on the Academic Skills Framework for approval

The Director of Student Services (DSS) spoke to the paper, noting that the Academic Skills Framework was intended as a dynamic resource linked to PebblePad. The respective student and staff focus in relation to the Framework were outlined as was how the Framework was designed to align with key student documentation and provide a dynamic accessible resource.

In response to a question it was confirmed that, if approved, the Framework would be implemented for 2021/22, with a communications plan delivered to raise awareness.

The Framework was welcomed, whether there would be training for staff to support students to make the most of the resource was asked. The DSS respected that training would be provided with work already ongoing with academic teams.

It was agreed that Academic Board would approve the Academic Skills Framework for implementation, with a session to be arranged to take the DVC(Academic) through the Framework in more detail. **Action:** DSS.

- AGREED:** To approve the Academic Skills Framework for implementation.

20:86 Degree Outcomes Statement

Verbal

Received An update on the Degree Outcomes Statement

The DfSS reported that the Degree Outcome statement needed to be updated with new data prior to being approved for publication by the end of 2021. Advice from the QAA was to reference the pandemic within the statement.

It was agreed that the updated Statement would be received in 2021/22 for approval by the Board following consideration by Academic Board.

AGREED: To note the update with the updated Degree Outcomes Statement to be received in 2021/22.

20:87 Student and Staff Charter

AB20/60

Received A proposal relating to the renewal of the existing Charter and future consultations

The DVC(Academic) and DfSS introduced the paper, noting that the Student Charter was due for its annual review. The opportunity to review it in parallel with a review of the Student Code of Conduct was noted, providing the opportunity to include other areas of focus.

It was agreed that it was important to ensure that the University's expectations in with respect to areas such as anti-Semitism, Black Lives Matter, Sexual Harassment, cyber-bullying and communications within social media was clear.

The involvement of EDIW Committee in relation to the review was asked. The DfSS responded that the Committee had not had input to date, however it would need to in future, with a holistic view required.

The Vice Chancellor asked that some updates be made to the Charter for 2021/22, with input at a minimum from the Chair of EDIW and the Students' Union, with a fuller review to be undertaken when time allowed. **Action:** DfSS.

Concerns around the balance between freedom of expression and ensuring that staff and students felt protected were raised. It was agreed that this aspect needed consideration when the fuller review was undertaken.

Other comments included:

- The principle of working with students was noted as potentially needing to be more explicit within the Charter;
- The Charter needing to reflect the diverse student body;
- That the principle of having a joint staff and student charter may be worth consulting upon prior to consultation of what should be included within it.

The DVC(Academic) commented that the joint Charter had been proposed as a concept with work needed to determine if it would add value prior to any work being progressed.

AGREED: - That proposals for amendments to the Student Charter for 2021/22 be provided to the Chair to approve under Chair's Action;

- That there would be wider consultation on the Charter, and the proposal for a joint staff and student Charter for 2022/23.

20:88 Access and Participation Plan

AB20/61

Received The Access and Participation Plan (APP) monitoring report for 2019/20 and an update on the action plan for the APP 2020/21. a)
b)

The DfSS spoke to the papers. With respect to the APP monitoring report for 2019/20, this had been submitted on time with only confirmation of acceptance of the report received from the OfS to date. The majority of targets had been met; where targets had not been met they had either been historical or no longer priorities.

With respect to the 2020/21 APP, the DfSS set out how the University had worked hard to achieve the targets set. The targets were more holistic and ambitious, in line with the OfS expectations. She added that the 2021/22 action plan was in the process of being drafted.

The DVC(Academic) noted that the 2020/21 action plan appended to the paper was a high-level summary of the full plan. He added that in the next cycle updates as the data became available would be useful for Academic Board to receive.

AGREED: To receive the reports.

20:89 Annual Report of Assurance over compliance with OfS Academic Conditions of Registration

AB20/62

Received An overview of assurance reporting

The DVC(Academic) spoke to the paper setting out how there was a requirement to provide assurance to University Board that the University was meeting the Conditions of Registration with the OfS, with the paper setting out a range of assurance over the academic conditions of registration. The paper also provided an overview of a new condition, for awareness.

In the discussion that followed the report was welcomed and it was noted that it provided a good overview of the activity of Academic Board's committees in overseeing activity that related to compliance with the conditions of registration. It was agreed that a section on Condition A1 would be added and that further work would be undertaken on the summary outcome section of the report. **Action:** D of AQD / DfSS.

Thanks were given to those involved with creating the report.

AGREED: That subject to the changes outlined and approval by the DVC(Academic), the report was approved for progression to AGC.

20:90 Research and Knowledge Exchange Matters

AB20/63
a), b) & c)

Received Updates on a range of matters relating to research and knowledge exchange.

Update on REF2021 and KEF

The Interim Head of Knowledge Exchange spoke to the paper noting that the REF 2021 results would be published in the Spring of 2022 and feed into the QR allocation for 2022/23. A final Equality Impact Assessment remained to be completed and audit queries had been responded to. Work was now taking place to translate the impact statements into material for promoting research at the University.

With respect to the KEF she reported that the results had been received. The University's results were above the average for the cluster it was within. The highlights from the results, and areas of particularly low performance were detailed, as set out in the paper. Further work was ongoing to look at how the University's activities could be maximised for future submissions.

Outcome from Professorial Titles and Conferment Committee

The paper was noted and the DVC(Academic) congratulated the individuals on their promotions.

Changes to PGR Supervision Model

The Co-Head of the Graduate School joined the meeting and spoke to the paper, starting by providing the context to the changes proposed before detailing the proposal. The aim was to enhance the supervisory capacity and quality at the University.

How the approach would work in practice was asked, in relation to how the time was split between those involved. It was confirmed that this would be by discussion between the students and their supervisors, with it likely that there would be different requirements at different stages of a PhD.

Update on Research Degrees, Professional Doctorates

The Co-Head of the Graduate School provided an update on the development of research degrees and professional doctorates. He reported that the DBA was open for recruitment with significant interest. Leads were being established for the other professional doctorates.

The Chair thanked the Co-Head of the Graduate School for his work in this area and providing the updates to Academic Board.

AGREED: To receive and note the updates.

20:92 ITE Ofsted Inspection Self-Assessment

AB20/64

Received The Self-Evaluation Documents and improvement plans for primary and secondary teacher education

The Head of Teaching, Learning and Student Experience in the Institute of Education spoke to the paper starting by setting out how this self-evaluation document (SED) was different to those written previously as it was written for the new Ofsted framework. The SED had been designed around the criteria for a 'good' outcome and was a document for Ofsted and would be used as the basis for their inspection. She reported that the SED and Improvement plan (IP) were working documents put together by the programme teams.

The DfSS outlined SSQAC's view on the documents, which was that they were in line with the guidance and requirements. The accuracy of the data quoted in the documents was confirmed.

In response to a question it was confirmed that the documents would be updated as required.

AGREED: To approve the Self-Evaluation Documents and improvement plans for primary and secondary teacher education.

20:93 Student Achievement Strategy

AB20/65

Received A proposal to extend the current strategy, additional actions for 2021/22 for comment and an update on implementation to date

The DfSS spoke to the paper reporting that the first Student Achievement Strategy (SAS) was written to conclude at the end of 2020/21. Noting that the paper provided an update on implementation to date, she set out how Academic Board was asked to approve an extension to the strategy. The proposal was for a new SAS to come forward for approval in 2021/22 following a review of the strategy alongside the review of the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy.

AGREED: To approve the extension of the Student Achievement Strategy 2019-2021 to the end of 2021/22 academic year and note the updates within the paper

20:94 LTA Strategy Action Plan progress update

AB20/66

Received A paper on the implementation of the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy

a)

b)

The DfSS spoke to the papers, with the first providing a routine update on implementation of the strategy. The majority of the actions were green. The second paper provided the timeline proposed or the development of the new strategy.

It was agreed that the timeline needed to couple with the development of other strategies under the new institutional strategy.

AGREED: To receive the papers.

20:95 Institute Academic Representatives

Verbal

Received An update on the election of Institute Academic Representatives

The University Secretary set out that the nomination and election process had concluded with a requirement to go back out to nominations in some Institutes and to go to election in one Institute. The University Secretary would liaise with Directors of Institutes as required.

AGREED: To note the update.

20:96 NSS Update

Verbal

Received An update on the NSS 2021

The DfSS reported that the response rate to the 2021 NSS had been 77%, circa 930 students. The results were due to be published on 15 July, with no advance notice to the University prior to them going into the public domain. Following receipt of the results analysis and

reporting would be undertaken with the free text comments shared in a manner to ensure confidentiality. She added that the OfS had confirmed that the data was robust enough to be published but were still considering what they would authorise with respect to onward use of the data.

It was noted that it was a year in which the full impact of the pandemic had been felt and that the Covid19 specific questions should provide useful feedback.

AGREED: To receive the update.

20:97 Policy Updates

Verbal

Received An update on key areas of external policy

The Institute of Business Industry and Leadership Associate Professor provided an overview of the Institute of Technology being developed in partnership with the Lakes, Furness and Kendal Colleges. The Institute was an entity which could secure capital investment from government with the proposal being worked up being to build a hub in Barrow with spokes in the other areas. The portfolio themes were digital, health and engineering. There was no revenue funding associated with the bid. Feedback on the bid was anticipated in the Autumn.

The DVC(Academic) noted that the University was the Higher Education partner in the proposals which were a positive development for all parties. He thanked those that had worked on the bid to date.

AGREED: To receive the update.

20:98 Committee Effectiveness Review

Verbal

Received An update on the Committee Effectiveness Review

The University Secretary thanked those that had responded to the survey and reported that she would liaise with staff as relevant regarding the outcomes once the responses had been reviewed.

AGREED: To receive the update.

20:99 Senior Academic Board Committees

AB20/67
AB20/68

Received The minutes and associated reporting from the meetings of:
a) Student Success & Quality Assurance Committee
b) Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee

AGREED: To receive the minutes

20:100 University Board Minutes

UB20/52a

Received The minutes of the University Board meeting held on 18 March 2021

AGREED: To receive the minutes

20:101 Matters for Onward Communication

Verbal

It was agreed these would be collated following the meeting.

20:102 Any Other Business

The Chair thanked everyone for their time and input to the meeting and for their continued work through the year. The Institute representatives that were standing down were thanked for their input in what was an important role for the University.

20:103

Forward Meetings

Thursday 7 October 2021

Tuesday 14 December 2021

Tuesday 8 March 2022

Tuesday 14 June 2022

Verbal