

ACADEMIC BOARD

CONFIRMED

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 7 October 2021

Present: Rob Trimble (Chair from 21:10), Julie Mennell (Until 21:10 - Chair until 21:09 inclusive), Emma Bales, Jean Brown, Colette Conroy, Alex Dittrich (from 21:08), Tom Grimwood, Lucy Haddath (until 21:09), Alison Hampson, Ruth Harrison-Palmer, Signy Henderson, Amanda Lane, Helen Manns, Jessica Robinson, Nigel Rourke, Ian Sinker, Brian Webster-Henderson

In attendance: Rachel Lowthian, Julie Taylor (from 21:08)

21:01 Introduction and Apologies for absence Verbal

The Vice Chancellor started the meeting by setting out that the expectation was that all present had read the papers with the focus of time at the meeting to be on issues, implications, actions and decisions.

The new members of Academic Board were detailed by the University Secretary. The Vice Chancellor welcomed Associate Professor Tom Grimwood to his first meeting of Academic Board. Nigel Rourke was congratulated on his re-election as an Institute Academic Representative on Academic Board, with the continuity in role helpful to the new members. It was agreed that the meetings dates would be checked to ensure the majority of the Institute Academic Representatives could make the meetings in 2021/22. **Action:** Uni Sec.

Apologies were received from Karen Hadley, Elizabeth Bates, Mike Toyn and Tina Harvey.

21:02 Minutes and actions of the previous meeting AB20/69

The minutes of the 24 June 2021 meeting were approved as an accurate record. (a)

The action log was noted. It was agreed that outstanding actions would be reviewed with the aim of bring them to a conclusion. **Action:** Uni Sec. (b)

An update was given to action under minute 19:04, with the student representatives being brought together in a phased way. The Vice Chancellor commented that it was important that the student representatives had some engagement at the most senior level of the University as part of work to ensure that they understood the significance of their role.

21:03 Terms of Reference and Membership AB21/01

Received

- a) The outcomes of the Committee Effectiveness Review 2021
- b) The Terms of Reference & Membership for Academic Board and its committees for 2021/22
- c) The Schedule of Business for Academic Board for 2021/22
- d) The Committee Structure Chart for 2021/22

The University Secretary introduced the paper emphasising the feedback from the committee effectiveness review, the importance of the role of being a member of Academic Board and the need to attend meetings wherever possible. An update was provided on the Institute Academic Representatives, with the five representatives confirmed as:

Academic Staff Representative IBIL
Academic Staff Representative IoE
Academic Staff Representative IoH
Academic Staff Representative IoSE
Academic Staff Representative IoA

Nigel Rourke
Dr Mike Toyn
Tina Harvey
Dr Alex Dittrich
Victoria Barbé.

(Secretary's note: Victoria Barbé was confirmed after the meeting)

In the discussion that followed it was agreed that at the start of the document it would state that observers could attend meetings of the Committees; and there would be statement to confirm that the term 'student' referred to all of the University's student body. **Action:** Uni Sec.

It was agreed that at every meeting it was important that there was clarity of scope and focus with respect to whether, for example, students included those at partner organisations.

- AGREED:**
- To approve the Deliberative Committees Terms of Reference and Membership document subject to the changes agreed;
 - To approve the Schedule of Business for Academic Board;
 - To note the outcomes of the Committee Effectiveness review.

The agenda order was changed at this point – items have been minuted as received.

21:04 Towards 2030 Strategy

Verbal

Received An update on the timeline and process for developing the enabling strategies

The Vice Chancellor reported that the new strategy was in its final stages, with work ongoing on milestones and targets. The strategy would be presented to University Board for approval in November along with the roll out schedule. The timing of work on the enabling strategies, including the Academic Strategy, would be completed in parallel with the approval. It was noted that there had not been substantial changes from the version previously reviewed.

AGREED: To receive the update.

21:05 Policy Update

AB21/02

Received Updates on significant aspects of external policy:
 a) OfS consultation on Quality and Standards
 b) ITT consultation

OfS consultation on Quality and Standards

The Dean for Student Success (DfSS) briefed the meeting on the consultation, which was happening in phases. The OfS were considering continuing with a metric driven approach to overseeing quality and standards, however the proposal to reduce the use of benchmarks was a concern for the University. There were also concerns over how the OfS could genuinely reduce administrative burden. Phase two of the consultation was concluding now with some outcomes to be communicated in November. There would then be a further consultation on the Condition B3 metrics and the TEF.

The DVC(A) added that there were also concerns with respect to where the B3 metrics would be set. It was expected that the changes would happen rapidly following the consultation outcomes.

ITT consultation

The Director of the Institute of Education (DIOE) gave an overview of the consultation and the University's input to it. She noted that engaging with schools had been a challenge, however a school stakeholder group had been engaged and a survey undertaken. The University had engaged with sector bodies and the One Cumbria Teaching Hub as part of its response. It had been expected that the government response to the consultation would be communicated in November, however with the changes to Ministers this could be delayed.

The DIOE set out how a key change was the proposal that all providers be reaccredited with evidence to be provided – with the key risk being that the University was not reaccredited. If this was to happen the University would need to join another provider that was accredited.

The Vice Chancellor noted the importance of the consultation at sector level and the place-based impact of the proposed changes. She reported that the University was able to give robust examples of how the proposals could impact on future supply of students into teacher training from isolated communities through two meetings at the highest level at the DfE.

AGREED: To receive the updates.

21:06 Students' Union Matters

AB21/03

Received A report from the Students' Union Academic Officer

The Vice Chancellor asked the Students' Union Academic Officer (SUAO) for the Students' Union's thoughts on the NSS results. The SUAO responded that the work to understand the results had not been undertaken to date, there would be a fuller update to the next meeting. From a personal perspective the SUAO commented that she was not surprised by the results.

Speaking to her report, the SUAO set out how it provided an overview of key activities from 2020/21 and a look ahead to the current year. She went on to provide an update on Welcome week, which had been a mix of face to face and on-line events. The Welcome Fairs had been very popular with many second and third year students also attending the events. On-line events had not been very well attended. The SUAO reported that a successful small event had been hosted in Ambleside that week, with a similar format to be replicated across the northern campuses.

Whether the Student Voice Facilitator post was being replaced was asked; the SUAO responded that it was, with the new postholder to start in late November.

The DIOE noted that it was positive that activities bringing students together on campuses were happening and well attended and that the SU Officers were welcome to join her sessions with students.

It was commented how important these activities were for the overall student experience, with the SU encouraged to keep organising the smaller sessions giving students the opportunity to meet up.

The DVC(A) commented on the reporting of how the representative system was working. It was agreed that he would work with the SUA0 to look to how it could be enhanced. **Action:** DVC(A) / SUA0.

Whether the University and Students' Union was doing enough and early enough to address student feedback was asked by the Chair. The SUA0 responded that being face to face helped, with issues picked up earlier. To help with the speed of response, Student Staff Forums (SSF) were taking place earlier in the semester this year, where possible, so that any changes impacted on students in-year. The Vice Chancellor commented that there was more that could be done by the University working with the Students' Union to pick up and respond to feedback, both formal and informal, in a more timely and joined up way. The DfSS endorsed this, setting out how the student feedback processes were being reviewed. It was agreed that the DVC(A) and the DfSS would work with the SUA0 to look at how it could be enhanced. **Action:** DVC(A) / DfSS / SUA0.

In conclusion the Vice Chancellor noted that it was encouraging to see the student dynamic on campus, with it emphasising the need to help students to connect with others.

AGREED: To receive the report.

21:07 Vice Chancellor's Report

Verbal

Received An update from the Vice Chancellor

The Vice Chancellor started by noting that at the end of the last Academic Board meeting in 2020/21 she rightly highlighted that colleagues should feel proud of all that had been achieved in the year despite the challenges. At that point, from what could be seen at that time, the University had had a good year.

She went on to set out how there had been a reasonably positive start to 2021/22, with, for example, the return of students and staff to campuses and student recruitment being broadly positive. Looking ahead the position also looked to be positive albeit that the University needed to continue to make progress and deliver financial results. With respect to the latter there were a range of potential or actual challenges, e.g., the known increased costs of National Insurance and the unknown potential outcomes from the Comprehensive Spending Review, which needed to be planned for now to ensure steady progress was made. Continued emphasis would be placed on delivery to targets, both financial and those that impacted on reputation. Although a lot had been achieved the Vice Chancellor set out how it was important not to be complacent.

Moving on to the NSS results, the Vice Chancellor set out how the biggest surprise had been that they were not as anticipated. Staff across the University had worked hard through the year, with feedback received in year not aligned with the results of the NSS. The reduction in the University's results compared to the sector was not good enough and the University needed to do better. The Vice Chancellor stated that everyone needed to continue to work with openness, honesty, accountability and support for colleagues to solve the issues together; while asking questions of ourselves and others as to how to improve experience for students.

The Vice Chancellor asked Academic Board what positives they were taking from the results of the NSS. Responses included that the University had supported students through challenging times and that the gap to the sector was closing for the Library and Learning Resources questions.

With respect to what the University wasn't doing well, Academic Board responses included:

- That the basics were still not being consistently delivered;
- That there was not a consistent experience;
- That opportunities for two-way communications at different levels of the organisation needed to be improved;
- That a partnership ethos needed to be worked on.

AGREED: To receive the update and to continue to challenge members' individual and collective roles in improving student experience.

21:08 Student Outcomes Reporting

AB21/04

Received Reporting on:
a) NSS Outcomes 2021
b) The Graduate Outcomes Survey

The DVC(A) introduced the report, noting that at this stage in the year the NSS and Graduate Outcomes data was included. The other data sets would be added when they became available, with the data broken down by different categories of students where this was possible to do. The role of data in supporting work to improve student outcomes was noted.

The DfSS spoke to the Graduate Outcome Survey data provided within the paper. There had been delays in the OfS issuing the data with the basic measure of graduates in any employment or further study being provided to date; further analysis would come to the next meeting. The University's data had shown a slight drop from 2020, however the position compared to the rest of the sector remained the same. The DfSS noted that the impact of the pandemic would show more strongly in next year's Graduate Outcome Survey results.

AGREED: To receive the report.

21:09 National Student Survey Institute Level

AB21/05

Received a) A paper on the University NSS Framework
b) Institute presentations from the Directors of IoA, IoE, IoH and IoSE on the NSS results and actions for enhancement

The DVC(A) introduced the item by setting out how the 2021 NSS results were disappointing as the gains in 2020 had not been built upon and as the results were not as expected from feedback received through the year. He noted that staff had worked hard but that this did not seem to have had the anticipated impact on students. He highlighted the drop in the results for the organisation and management theme, which was a greater drop than the sector, noting that this looked at matters that were fundamental to how the University operated. With respect to the Overall Satisfaction score, the DVC(A) commented that there was a lack of consistency across the University, with results between 25% and 100%, and with too many areas with results that were too low.

Moving on to speak to the paper, the DVC(A) set out how it outlined the framework adopted to guide actions following the survey, in coordination with the Institute Directors and DfSS. The Framework included cross University actions to increase consistency, institute actions, ways to include opportunities for students to provide feedback and enhanced monitoring of implementation. The DfSS added that the results being a surprise was as the people had not challenged themselves and others to see if things were right for students, with insufficient evidence base and that students alone were able to provide this feedback.

Four of the Institutes then set out their approach to improvement, with the fifth Institute Director to present to the December meeting of Academic Board.

Institute of the Arts

The Institute Director reported that she had spent a significant time talking to staff, for whom this was the top priority. She commented that the NSS was a measure of partnerships and relationships at all levels. It was noted that some areas of the Institute had not met thresholds for reporting.

The areas of focus for the Institute were detailed, with communications, particularly moving away from individual e-mail to a team based approach through Blackboard for all other than sensitive matters, being high priority. The Director reported that there was a correlation between access to course specific facilities and poor results, with work planned to understand how these facilities were used outside of programmed sessions. Further work was also required to close the loop with respect to the Student Voice and to ensure not only that assessments were fair but that they also appeared to be fair, with work ongoing with CAPE on every assessment. Accountability was also a theme being discussed in the Institute.

Institute of Education

The Institute's focus was reported to be on consistency of a high-quality student experience, as seen through the student lens. The Institute Director reported that a series of actions were in place throughout the Institute with additional actions for the largest programme. She had met with all staff (or was planned to where not happened to date) to ensure that the actions and requirements were understood. Three priority areas had been identified, Assessment & Feedback, Organisation & Management and the Student Voice, with the key actions outlined for each.

Institute of Health

The Head of Teaching, Learning and the Student Experience for the Institute set out how the Institute were assuming shared responsibility for the results. Although the Institute was large and complex, the feedback had been consistently poor in four NSS theme areas. Priorities and key urgent actions were detailed, including generating opportunities for formal and informal feedback; working with students as partners in the identification of issues; providing a clear offer for students; and working to exceed student expectations through the enrichment offer to them. The Institute was committed to consistency with actions at Institute and programme level, co-created with the teams, to address both urgent and longer-term issues.

Institute of Science and Education

The Institute Director set out how the key requirement was consistency, from year to year, between and within programmes. All programme

teams had actions linked to the data, along with the Institute action plan. Institute actions included reviewing processes and monitoring analytics to make sure the student feedback processes in place worked, reviewing curriculum delivery to reduce a current issue around single points of failure, ensuring that there was consistency in the quality and timeliness of assessments and feedback, creating a mechanism to share best practice in the Institute and increasing student community. A range of monitoring activity was in place, including the setting up of a Quality and Enhancement Committee in the Institute.

The Directors were thanked for the work undertaken to date. In the discussion that followed questions and comments included:

- There was rightly a focus on consistency, however sustainability also needed to be considered.
- Long term cultural change had been mentioned, what was meant by this in practice, what was required to enable it to happen and how it would be implemented for the long term was asked.
- That it was important that while the immediate issues were being addressed the development of staff and teaching was seen in the round, including activities not included in the NSS such as research; a broader discussion with respect to how staff were developed would be beneficial.
- Where actions to be taken by the Professional Services were documented was asked.
- The management of staffing and staff absences was noted as an issue in some areas, especially where staff worked in subject silos out of necessity.
- The spend on students compared with other universities was asked.

In response the DVC(A) stated that staff teaching and learning development activities were in place with some mandatory, others optional. Where staffing was an issue this should be raised with the Institute Director.

The DfSS set out how there were action plans in place for the professional services, focused on addressing the NSS results. Other aspects that impacted on the student experience, for example with respect to catering, were also being looked into.

With respect to spend per student the Vice Chancellor responded that there were many ways to measure this; an evidence based response would be provided out with the meeting. **Action:** Vice Chancellor.

In conclusion the DVC(A) stated that the NSS was purely a particular measure of the student experience, and that change was needed not because of the NSS, but rather as the experience needed to be right for all students.

AGREED: To receive the updates.

21:10 Update on Teaching and Learning matters related to the pandemic

AB21/06

Received An update on the teaching and learning implications of the current phase of the pandemic

The DfSS reported that the timetable planning for semester two was well advanced.

The Chair thanked academic staff and those in the timetabling team who had worked hard to amend the semester one timetable following late guidance to the sector. He noted that clear guidance was in place for semester two.

AGREED: To receive the update.

21:11 Academic Calendar AB21/07

This item was deferred. The DVC(A) would review the Calendar and present to the Vice Chancellor for approval.

21:12 Student Staff Charter AB21/08

Received the Student Charter for 2021/22.

The DfSS spoke to the paper which included the proposed Student Charter, with additions following the discussion at the last meeting of Academic Board and feedback from SSQAC highlighted. The DfSS reported that there would be a more substantial review of the Charter through the year.

The DVC(A) added that the timeline for the work on the Charter review was that there would be consultation until February 2022 with a proposed document to come to the March meeting of Academic Board, for approval at the June meeting.

Following discussion it was agreed to approve the Student Charter subject to inclusion of reference to sexual harassment in the 'your responsibilities' section, correction of the Inclusivity Statement linked to in the document and of any typographical errors. **Action:** DfSS.

AGREED: To approve the Student Charter for 2021/22 subject to the changes set out.

21:13 Access and Participation Plans AB21/09

Received Updates on activity relating to APP 2019/20 and APP 2020-25

The DfSS reported that the University had received formal notification from the OfS that there were no issues to raise with respect to the 2019/20 Access and Participation Plan (APP) Monitoring Return. The documentation was being published on the University website as required.

The DfSS went on to report that monitoring of delivery of the 2020/21 APP was ongoing, noting that the targets in that Plan were much more stretching, as intended by the OfS. Alongside this work, the 2021/22 APP actions were being implemented. She noted that the APP Steering Group now had a rich source of data to support its work and that although the NSS results were not a metric within the APP, the results were analysed by the relevant demographics as far as possible.

In the discussion that followed whether there was the engagement required with the paramedic team was asked. The DfSS responded that some work had taken place with respect to the paramedic students, and that she was confident she would receive the required support.

It was noted that the new Student Engagement Coordinators should be included in future reporting related to continuation. With respect to attainment, future reporting should include that staff were working with CAPE. Both additions were to show the shared ownership of the agenda.

The Chair thanked the DfSS and team for their work, with the OfS outcome positive.

AGREED: To receive the report.

21:14 Annual Report of CMA Compliance 2020/21

AB21/10

Received The annual report on CMA compliance for 2020/21

The Director of AQD spoke to the report, which provided assurance over ongoing compliance with the OfS Condition of Registration related to Consumer Protection Law. The report provided an overview of the work of the CMA Compliance Group over the year. The DAQD reported that the majority of self-assessment activities had been completed with the remainder to be picked up the following week. Actions from the self-assessments were summarised in the report, with it noted that the Group monitors delivery of these actions. The DAQD thanked the Institute Directors for increasing the level of engagement of their staff with the CMA training.

The DVC(A) thanked the DAQD and her colleagues for the work of the Group, which was having an impact.

It was commented that the completion rates for the training were improved, which was good to see, however they were still low in some areas. Whether the Group had discussed barriers to people completing the training or what else could be done to increase uptake was asked. The DAQD responded that this was to be picked up with the Institute Directors, with some of the issue potentially the data, with some professional service staff included in the figures who did not have to take the training. **Action:** DAQD.

How the work of the Group could interface with the work done to comply with Ofsted requirements was discussed. It was agreed that the DAQD would liaise with the Institute of Education, however the work of the CMA Compliance Group would remain focused on its current agenda. **Action:** DAQD.

AGREED: To receive the report

21:15 Research and Knowledge Exchange Matters

AB21/11

Received	a) Concordat to Support Research Integrity –Annual Statement	a)
	b) Research Excellence Framework 2021 -Equality Impact Assessment	b)
	c) Knowledge Exchange Framework Update	c)
	d) Update on Research Degrees	Verbal

The Interim Head of Knowledge Exchange (IHKE) spoke to the papers:

Concordat to Support Research Integrity –Annual Statement

It was noted that the University was required to sign up to a range of concordats which then have to be displayed on the website. No cases of

non-compliance had been reported in 2020/21. The DVC(HE&I) added that it had been raised at RKEC that there had been no formal investigations however awareness of the concordat and the research integrity process could be higher, with work ongoing to raise its profile.

Research Excellence Framework 2021 -Equality Impact Assessment

The document was reported to be the final Equality Impact Assessment in relation to the 2021 REF. The main findings were outlined, as set out in the paper, alongside actions being taken to enhance the position.

It was noted that 17% of academic staff at the University were submitted to the REF, how this compared with similar universities was asked. It was not known how this compared with other institutions, with the information not in the public domain at this time.

Knowledge Exchange Framework Update

It was reported that further analysis had been undertaken on the results of the KEF, including with a consultant to identify areas of the return that could be enhanced.

How close the University was to being awarded funding under the Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF) was asked. The IHKE responded that she was optimistic, but this would not be until next financial year.

How apprenticeship income was included in the metrics around engagement with business and the community was asked. The IHKE responded that this income could not be included.

Research Degrees

The Head of the Graduate School reported that the first cohort of Doctor of Business Administration students were due to start in Ambleside the following week.

AGREED: To receive the updates provided.

21:16 Student Protection Plan 2021/22 AB21/12

Received The Student Protection Plan for 2021/22

The University Secretary introduced the proposed Student Protection Plan for 2021/22 noting the minor changes made to the previous year's Plan.

AGREED: To approve the Student Protection Plan for 2021/22.

21:17 Library Strategy AB21/13

Received An update on matters relating to the Library .

The Director of Student Services (DSS) spoke to the paper, highlighting that the NSS scores were a key metrics in the strategy and although they had dropped they had improved compared to the sector.

A miss-match between the Learning Resources scores in an Institute and the University level scores was asked about. The DSS responded that the University score was an aggregate and this was likely to be underpinned by different outcomes at institute and programme levels.

AGREED: To receive the report.

21:18	Senior Academic Board Committees	AB21/14
	Received The minutes and associated reporting from the meeting of Student Success & Quality Assurance Committee 14 September 2021	
	AGREED: To receive the minutes.	
21:19	University Board Minutes	UB20/68a
	Received The minutes of the meetings of University Board held on 20 May 2021	
	AGREED: To receive the minutes.	
21:20	Matters for Onward Communication	Verbal
	It was agreed these would be collated following the meeting.	
21:21	Forward Meetings	Verbal
	Tuesday 14 December 2021	
	Tuesday 8 March 2022	
	Tuesday 14 June 2022	