

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**ACADEMIC BOARD**

**AB18/43  
CONFIRMED**

**Minutes of the meeting held on 8 May 2019**

**Present:** R Trimble (Chair), T Barry, E Bates, J Brown, C Coghill, J Colclough, K Fox, A Hampson, R Harrison-Palmer, S Henderson, A Hunt, R Hunter, L Johnson, A Lane, M Leek, E Lees, L Nelson, C Rouncefield, N Rourke, I Sinker, C Sloane, K Small, I Todd, C Watson, K Watson, B Webster-Henderson, S Wilson

**In attendance:** T Best (Academic Programmes Manager) (for item 18:50), J Hodge (Research Development Manager - for item 18:52), J Whitfield (Administration & Governance Manager - Committee Secretary)

**18:45**      **Apologies for absence:** D Cox, A Marshall, S McCarthy-Grunwald, J Mennell, J Robinson, K Stuart. Verbal

**18:46**      **Minutes of the meeting held on 7 March 2019** AB18/33  
The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as an accurate record.

The action log was reviewed and noted, and updates provided as available. Additional actions agreed were recorded against existing action log entries.

**18:47**      **Departmental Representatives** Verbal  
Following a recent meeting between the PVC Academic and elected Academic Board Departmental Representatives, proposals were presented to encourage further staff engagement and feedback from departmental colleagues in respect of Academic Board business.

It was reported that new standing agenda items had been established to enable feedback from teams to be reported to Academic Board, and for items for communication to departments to be agreed. Minutes extracts and relevant documentation would be provided to departmental representatives for circulation to colleagues following each meeting.

**Action:** Administration & Governance Manager.

It had also been agreed that Academic Board Departmental Representatives would attend the meetings of other senior deliberative committees as observers, to develop a wider understanding of the University's academic business and processes. Academic Board members welcomed the initiative and commented on its value in ensuring communication and connectivity. It was agreed to review attendance and effectiveness of the initiative in due course.

**Action:** The Administration & Governance Manager to make all necessary arrangements for observer attendance.

**18:48**      **Academic Departments' Report** AB18/34

**Received:** A report on departmental updates

Key highlights from departmental reports were presented by Heads of Department, as noted within the paper.

Particular reference was made to the following elements:

- Recruitment progress across departments.
- Recent appointments and confirmations of Fellows, Professors and Associate Professors.

- The scope of ongoing activity in support of students, including initiatives to help students develop their academic writing skills.
- The University's successful bid for the award of significant Heritage Lottery funding to re-wild the Morecambe Bay area. The project would provide numerous opportunities for students within the Department of Science, Natural Resources and Outdoor Studies.
- Additional measures implemented by departments to support student mental health, in response to increasing levels of reported student mental health issues.
- The positive outcomes of the University's recent Ofsted inspection of Apprenticeships provision. The PVC Academic offered formal thanks to all colleagues involved in the preparation for inspection.
- The new Ofsted framework for Teacher Education, which would be published in 2020, following completion of a formal consultation process. It was reported that the University could expect an inspection of its Teacher Education provision in Summer 2020.

Departmental colleagues stressed the importance of ensuring that departmental successes and good news stories were communicated to students and stakeholders. It was confirmed that the Academic Departments Reports were forwarded to marketing colleagues after each meeting. It was agreed that the PVC Academic would discuss this further with the Director of Marketing & Recruitment.

**Action:** PVC Academic.

**Outcome:** To note the report

**18:49 Students' Union Report**

AB18/35

**Received:** A report from the Students' Union Academic Officer, including an update on UCSU operational priorities for 2018-19

The Academic Officer presented the highlights of the paper, with particular reference to UCSU activity to improve campus vibrancy, improve UCSU NSS results, enhance the student experience and provide support and opportunities for students in terms of volunteering and employability.

Discussion followed regarding the levels of support in place for students whose courses of studies began outside the main cycle, as there was a need to ensure appropriate levels of support and campus vibrancy for these cohorts. It was agreed that early and second main cycle registration points should be confirmed to the Students' Union to inform planning.

**Action:** Director of SAAS.

Academic Board expressed satisfaction at the improvements seen in respect of the number of Student Representatives in place across departmental areas, and sought a progress update on the delivery and quality of their training and induction. The Academic Officer agreed to provide an update out with the meeting.

**Action:** UCSU Academic Officer.

It was also requested that the UCSU provide additional reporting to departments to offer a breakdown of the types and sources of academic issues reported by students, and clear differentiation between the number of departmental and campus representatives.

The Academic Officer requested that Ms A Bradley of the UCSU Support Team be contacted to provide this information.

**Action:** Heads of Department.

The PVC/Director of Student & Staff Services recommended that an Equality Impact Assessment should be completed in relation to Students' Union activity and representation. Academic Board were supportive of the initiative and requested that this be progressed.

**Action:** UCSU Officers and PVC/Director of Student & Staff Services.

**Outcome:** To note the report

**18:50 Portfolio Development Programme**

AB18/36

**Received:** An overview of progress and activity under the Portfolio Development Programme

An overview of the main activity under the three key strands of the Portfolio Development Programme was provided by the Academic Programmes Manager, as outlined within the paper.

All programmes to recruit in 2020-2021 were confirmed, and it was reported that consideration was currently being given to business cases for 2021-2022 validation and delivery.

A new academic planning cycle had been developed, and was now being embedded within planning practice to ensure that programmes would complete validation prior to the first receipt of applications taking place. This would ensure mitigation of risk in terms of CMA compliance.

A refresh and streamlining of all L3 provision was also underway, with validation across 3 subject groups to be in place from September 2019.

It was confirmed that 5 new subject areas had been identified for new delivery, with associated growth targets. 3-year plans were also aligned to new subject areas.

CPD activities were now subject to enhanced process and planning activity to ensure that appropriate principles of operation and administration were in place. In line with this work, revalidation of the Health Practice Development Framework was being finalised for delivery in September 2019.

Academic Board discussed the practical difficulties associated with balancing the development and validation of new delivery alongside the teaching and administration of existing provision.

It was confirmed that AQD colleagues were working on revised processes in respect of validation panels, and that these would be presented to the Student Success & Quality Assurance Committee in due course.

It was requested that this activity should be embedded within the forward PDP planning timeline, and agreed that the PVC Academic and Academic Programmes Manager would discuss the proposals for revisions with the Director of AQD.

**Action:** PVC Academic, Academic Programmes Manager.

**Outcome:** To note the update

**Received:**

- a) An update on progress against NSS Action Plans
- b) A departmental presentation on NSS from the Head of Department Business, Law, Policing and Social Sciences
- c) A departmental presentation on NSS from the Head of Department Medical & Sports Sciences
- d) A departmental presentation on NSS from the Head of Department Health, Psychology & Social Studies

The Dean for Student Success reported that the 2019 NSS had now closed, with an institutional student response rate of 77.9% having been achieved. This was a similar result to the previous year, and represented a high response rate in comparison with the sector average.

It was confirmed that survey results would be published at 9.30am on 3 July 2019.

Updates were also provided against the institutional and academic themes action plans, as outlined within the paper.

Academic Board expressed thanks to colleagues working to achieve the improvements being seen in overall satisfaction rates across all areas of the institution.

It was reported that activity to ensure a more streamlined approach and closer alignment of departmental and institutional plans was to be overseen by the PVC Academic for 2019-20.

It was confirmed that the next meeting of Academic Board, and therefore the next update on NSS, was to take place in advance of the publication of NSS results. As such, it was agreed that all outstanding actions in respect of NSS action plans should be marked within the June reporting as closed or noted for carry forward to 2019-20. In addition, all best practice elements identified during 2018-19 should be captured alongside the forward action plans to inform 2019-20 activity.

**Action:** Heads of Department and Directors of Service to work with the Dean for Student Success and PVC/Director of Student & Staff Services to produce June reporting in line with the guidelines above.

The PVC Academic sought clarification as to whether staff development sessions had been run during 2018-19 in relation to the identified need to promote innovation in learning and teaching. It was confirmed that a number of sessions had been run, but that a fuller programme was now planned for 2019-20 following the appointment of the new Head of Learning & Teaching Development. AQD interventions had also taken place, targeted at programme level, and working in tandem with individualised staff performance management, development and peer review processes.

Presentations then followed on departmental NSS monitoring, actions, progress and activity, and staff development, presented by the Heads of Department for BLPSS, MSS and HPSS.

Academic Board stressed the need to ensure appropriate evaluation of all NSS activity to identify those initiatives that offered the most positive impact for students. It was also noted that careful consideration should be given to how to develop successful department-centric pilot programmes into cross-institutional activity, policies and procedures.

**Action:** Dean for Student Success to incorporate into future reporting.

Discussion also took place around the essential requirement to build evaluation into initiatives from the outset, and to ensure that NSS action plans appropriately tied in to ongoing Annual Monitoring activity. The PVC Academic outlined the focus of the Office for Students on ensuring and evidencing effective institutional evaluation of activity in support of student experience, feedback and attainment.

It was noted that student mental health issues were a recurring theme across reporting areas, and represented a risk to student retention. It was confirmed that academic departments were working closely with central services to support students with mental health problems.

- Outcome:**
- To note the departmental activity at module and programme level to ensure improvements in NSS outcomes and the positive outcomes already being seen in terms of staff empowerment and student engagement as a result.
  - To request that a further update be presented to Academic Board in June 2019, in line with the comments and format outlined above.

**18:52 Research Matters**

AB18/38

- Received:**
- a) An update on Research Degree Awarding Powers (RDAP) and progress against the associated Communications Plan
  - b) The draft REF2021 Code of Practice for review and approval
  - c) An update on the appointment of Professors and Associate Professors

**RDAP**

The Research Development Manager reported that, following the confirmation of Research Degree Awarding Powers to the University, communications had been issued to all existing research students, inviting their entry onto the Cumbria pathway. 28 students had transferred to the pathway to date, and 15 new registrants were anticipated to join the University in October 2019. The first research degree graduands would be awarded in November 2019.

A series of communications had also been issued to external stakeholders and regional news outlets in respect of RDAP, and celebration events were planned for May and June.

Heads of Department requested details of the students now registered on the University of Cumbria pathway.

**Action:** Research Development Manager.

**Appointment of Professors and Associate Professors**

Recent appointments of Professors and Associate Professors by the Professorial Titles Conferment Committee were confirmed, as outlined with the paper.

Academic Board welcomed the enhanced parity in respect of male and female professorial appointees achieved by the latest round of awards.

## **REF2021 Code of Practice**

The Research Development Manager presented the draft REF2021 Code of Practice (CoP), and it was noted that the CoP had been produced in line with REF requirements to identify eligible staff for REF2021, to assess research outputs, and to govern and administer fairly the REF2021 process.

It was reported that the CoP was also being progressed for noting to the Employment Policy and Academic Governance Committees.

It was confirmed that staff had been engaged in the development of the CoP via focus groups held across campuses. As a result of these sessions, a need had been identified to provide development activity for emerging research active staff not currently eligible for participation. As a result, a mirrored suite of measures for emerging responsibility for research had been developed to enable staff to develop relevant expertise for REF2028.

Academic Board sought confirmation as to whether individuals had been notified of their eligibility for REF2021. It was confirmed that individuals were being notified of their potential eligibility by 31 May 2019, and then at bi-monthly intervals to reflect any changes. However, final identification of staff for REF2021 would not be formally determined until the census date in July 2020. All staff would be informed regarding this process as well as the mechanisms for appeals and declaring of individual circumstances.

In approving the CoP, Academic Board were asked to review and confirm their satisfaction with each of the following sections and associated criteria:

- a) Criteria for determining being an 'independent researcher', required for staff on research only contracts (section 2.7 and 3.1 of Code of Practice).
- b) Criteria for 'significant responsibility for research', required for staff on teaching and research contracts, and determining staff eligibility for REF2021 (section 2.9 and 2.10).
- c) The 'Academic Career Framework', use of pathways, proposed approach to utilising these with academic staff, and associated criteria for 'emerging responsibility for research' (section 2.11 and 2.12).
- d) Process for identifying staff with 'significant responsibility for research' (section 2.3 and 2.13).
- e) Process for appeals (section 2.14).
- f) Process of selection of outputs (section 4.10).
- g) Process for consideration of individual staff circumstances (section 4.12).

In particular, Academic Board provided challenge and comment as follows:

- Clarification was sought as to the process and timescales by which research supervisors were identified.

It was confirmed that the University had established a research mentor programme, for which individuals with a formal individual research plan could apply. The framework and principles for research plans were highlighted within the CoP document, for use by Heads of Department and academic line managers with their direct reports.

It was also confirmed that a support and communications framework would be established and operationalised following approval of the CoP.

- Academic Board expressed satisfaction at the clarity of the framework for identifying and developing REF2021 eligible colleagues and those with emerging responsibility for research.
- Academic Board noted that Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) were planned, but sought assurance regarding their implementation and any mitigating activity as a result of their findings.

It was confirmed that a schedule for producing EIAs was in place, and rich data had been gathered to date. Responsibility for dissemination of EIA outcomes rested with the REF Steering Group to inform and shape operational thinking.

- The PVC/Director of Student & Staff Services requested that Academic Board approve the CoP subject to further consideration of the Academic Career Framework by the Vice Chancellor's Executive.

**Action:** University Secretary.

- In response to questions, it was confirmed that there was no appeals process in respect of research outputs selected for inclusion in REF2021.

- Outcome:**
- To note Academic Board's satisfaction with each of the Code of Practice elements outlined above
  - To approve the Code of Practice, subject to minor amendments and to additional input by the Employment Policy and Academic Governance Committees, and the Vice Chancellor's Executive

## **18:53 Competition & Markets Authority**

AB18/39

- Received:** An update on current consumer protection requirements for communication to departments and services

It was reported that condition C1 of the ongoing conditions of registration with the OfS was directly related to CMA compliance.

An update on progress and activity to date was presented by the Director of SAAS, as outlined within the paper.

It was confirmed that a CMA Compliance Group had been established, and the Terms of Reference were presented for endorsement by Academic Board.

The PVC Academic confirmed that the Group had been tasked with considering how to effectively monitor institutional CMA compliance, to include a combination of staff training and spot checks.

- Outcome:**
- To note the report
  - To endorse the Terms of Reference for the CMA Compliance Group as presented

**Received:** An update on the outcomes of Ofsted inspection, the institutional action plan and proposed reporting routes for Apprenticeships outcomes

The Head of Department for Nursing, Health & Professional Practice confirmed that the University had undergone inspection by Ofsted under the FE and Skills Common Inspection Framework between 26 and 29 March 2019.

The scope of the inspection had been Level 4/5 Apprenticeships provision, at present extending only to the Assistant Practitioner in Health and Social Care programme. In preparation for inspection, the University had developed a Self-Assessment Review for 2017/18 (SAR) and a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP), which identified a number of areas for improvement.

The outcome of inspection had been positive, with the University achieving 'Good' ratings across all of the following areas:

- Effectiveness of leadership and management
- Quality of teaching learning and assessment
- Personal development behaviour and welfare
- Outcomes for learners
- Apprenticeships
- Overall Effectiveness

The areas for improvement highlighted within the Ofsted report, and actions in place to address these via the Apprenticeships Steering Group were outlined, as presented within the paper. The reporting structure to ensure implementation of Ofsted recommendations was confirmed.

Academic Board members sought confirmation of any additional progress and attainment recording requirements in respect of apprentices and any potential impact on academic workloads as a result. It was reported that the recommendations provided by Ofsted were felt to be equally as valid for implementation across undergraduate student cohorts, and therefore would be embedded within validation and planning processes for all future programmes.

The PVC Academic confirmed that it was also within the scope of the Apprenticeships Steering Group to ensure that this and other new activity could be embedded and progressed in the most effective way. Subsequent processes would be subject to continued review and consideration as additional Apprenticeships programmes came on stream.

[The Director of SAAS and Head of Business Law Policing & Social Sciences left the meeting.]

**Outcome:** To note the update

**18:55 Collaborative Provision Annual Partnership Review**

**Received:** A summary of the outcomes of the review, including the re-approval of partners

As the Director of AQD and Collaborative Provision Manager had been unable to attend the meeting, Academic Board noted the report by exception.



It was confirmed that re-assessment of partnership arrangements with providers with low student numbers was currently being conducted by the PVC Academic and Collaborative Provision Manager.

**Outcome:** To note the report

**18:56 Start Dates**

Verbal

**Received:** An update on the agreed programme start dates for 2019-20

As the Director of SAAS had had to leave the meeting, it was agreed that an update on confirmed start dates for 2019-20 should be circulated to Academic Board members out with the meeting.

**Action:** Director of SAAS.

**Outcome:** To take this item out with the meeting

**18:57 Minutes from Academic Board Committees**

AB18/43

**Received:**

a) The minutes of the meeting of the Academic Strategy & Planning Committee held on 20 March 2019	a)
b) The minutes of the meeting of the Research & Enterprise Committee held on 27 March 2019	b)
c) The minutes of the meeting of the Student Success & Quality Assurance Committee held on 27 March 2019	c)

The minutes and associated key points of the meeting of the Academic Strategy & Planning Committee on 20 March 2019 were received. In particular, Academic Board noted the Committee's consideration of:

- Academic Planning Cycle compliance.
- The Student Protection Plan review.
- Programme suspensions and withdrawals.

The minutes and associated key points of the meeting of the Research & Enterprise Committee 21 March 2019 were received. In particular, Academic Board noted the Committee's consideration of:

- KEF proposals and consultation.
- An update on Growth, Partnerships and Enterprise
- A REF update.
- Proposal planning for the Institute of Health.

The minutes and associated key points of the meeting of the Student Success & Quality Assurance Committee on 27 March 2019 were received. In particular, Academic Board noted the Committee's approval of:

- Trialling an alternative approach to module evaluation for Semester 2.
- The Apprenticeship Data Summary Self-Assessment Review and Quality Improvement Plan 2017-18.
- Revised definition and guidance on tripartite reviews for Apprenticeships.
- Updates on plans to develop a Student Retention Dashboard Pilot.

**Outcome:** To note the Committee minutes and summaries presented

- 18:58**      **Vice Chancellor's Report**      Verbal
- Received:**    A verbal update from the Vice Chancellor
- No report was provided, as the Vice Chancellor had had to offer  
                  apologies for the meeting.
- 18:59**      **Matters for Onward Communication**      Verbal
- It was agreed that agenda items to be fed back to departmental and  
                  service colleagues would be agreed by the PVC Academic out with the  
                  meeting.  
                  **Action:** PVC Academic.
- 18:60**      **Next meeting:** Wednesday 19 June 2019      Verbal