University of Cumbria   **AB15/68**

ACADEMIC BOARD   CONFIRMED

Minutes of the meeting held on 20 April 2016

Present: C Hardcastle – Interim Pro Vice Chancellor Academic, Chair (C)
                      S Booth – Pro Vice Chancellor Enterprise, Business Development and
                      Engagement (C)
                      D Cox – Director of Research & Head of Graduate School (La)
                      A Dickson – Associate Dean – Quality and Student Experience (La)
                      A Fry – UCSU Community and Partnerships Sabbatical (C)
                      G Haigh – Director of Marketing and Recruitment (La)
                      A Hampson – HoD representative (C)
                      N Harris – Registrar and Secretary (La)
                      R Harrison-Palmer - HoD representative (C)
                      L Kenward – Academic representative – NHPP (C)
                      A Lane – Interim Director of Student Academic Administration Service
                      (SAAS) (La)
                      E Lees – HoD representative – H&S (A)
                      L Mansfield – Academic representative – SNROS (A)
                      S Patefield – Academic representative – M&SS (La)
                      J Robinson – Head of Academic Quality and development (AQD) (La)
                      C Rouncefield – HoD representative (La)
                      N Rourke – Academic representative – BLPSS (La)
                      F Sapsford – Academic representative – HPSS (C)
                      I Sinker – Associate Dean – Academic Development and Innovation (La)
                      R Talbot – Executive Dean (La)
                      K Watson – Academic representative – Ed (La)

                      (C) – Carlisle campus, (La) – Lancaster campus, (A) – Ambleside campus

In attendance: E Mackay - Committee Secretary (C)

15:68   Apologies for absence
          Apologies were received from P Strike, S Henderson, S Longstaffe, J Moses, S
          Pankhurst, M Weaver.

15:69   Minutes of the meeting held on 23 February 2016   AB15/57
          The minutes of the meeting on 23 February 2016 were approved as a correct record.

15:70   Matters Arising

          (a)   Matters Arising Report   AB15/58
          AGREED   1.   Received updates from the colleagues on progress with
                            the following ongoing actions:

          (i)   *15:49(a)I – Deanery report – R Talbot and N Harris*
                  It was noted that there had not been any negative feedback from University
                  Board re the format of the report.
          (ii)   *15:49avii - Safeguarding: Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults* – it
                  was noted that M Weaver had arranged to meet L Kenward to progress this.
          (iii)   *15:52 – Extenuating Circumstances Procedure – Communications Plan - M
                  Weaver and A Lane* - It was noted that SAAS colleagues had arranged to meet
                  with LiSS colleagues to clarify requirements and progress accordingly with the

Students' Union.

(iv) *15:52 – Appeals with embedded complaints – A Lane, A Dickson and M Weaver* - It was reported that a meeting had been arranged for SAAS colleagues to progress this with the Associate Dean Quality and Student Experience and the Students' Union.

(v) *15:52 – Academic Appeals benchmarking and Department breakdown – A Lane* - It was noted that Heads of Department had been sent a breakdown of the number of appeals in their Departments. Benchmarking with other Universities may be problematic as they may not publish details of the number of appeals.

(vi) *15:53 – Programme Initiation and Withdrawals Policies – J Robinson* - It was noted that templates had been updated. Further work was being undertaken on health checks and there may need to be some further minor amendments to policies and templates, which would be reported to the June meeting of Academic Board. **Action – J Robinson**

(vii) *15:54 - UoC Approach to the Use of Academic Awards – Update – I Sinker*
It was noted that the Associate Dean, Academic Development and Innovation was progressing work with the Head of AQD to consider the implications. This was a significant piece of work as there would need to be a significant infrastructure put in place.

In response to a question, clarification was provided that the University would be the validation University for partner providers of HNDs and HNCs rather than directly delivering HND/HNC, but delivery direct with employers had not bee ruled out.

(viii) *Student Social Media Policy – M Weaver* – it was noted that this Policy had been signed off by the Vice Chancellor under Chair's actions and placed on the website. Communications were being designed to reach all students, in partnership with the UCSU.

AGREED 2. Noted the actions which had been completed since the last meeting of Academic Board.

SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS

ACADEMIC STRATEGY AND PLANNING
15:71 Appointment of Professors
Received   Confidential Paper from the Director of Human Resources   AB15/66
               and Organisational Development (presented by the
               Director of Research and Head of the Graduate School)
The paper provided details of the appointment of Professors and Associate Professors following the Professorial Titles Conferment Committee. Since the paper had been written, the PTCC had also agreed the appointment of Professor Peter Strike as Emeritus Professor following his retirement. The appointments were as set out below:

- Ian Convery – Professor of Environment and Society.
- Mark Wilson – Professor of Fine Art.
- Sheila Pankhurst - Professor.
- Volker Deeke - Associate Professor in Wildlife Conservation
- Peter Strike – Emeritus Professor

There was discussion on the gender profile of Professors and Associate Professors within the University and it was suggested that this should be considered further.

AGREED 1. Noted the appointments of Professors, Associate Professors and Emeritus Professors and congratulated the individuals involved.
2. Agreed that the Director of Research and Head of the Graduate

School progress work with the Director of HR and Organisational Development re the gender profile of Professors and Associate Professors within the University. **Action – D Cox to progress with M Leek**

15:72 Draft Update to Academic Strategy – C Hardcastle
Received   Paper from the Interim Pro Vice Chancellor Academic   AB15/59

Recorded as a separate confidential minute.

15:73 RDAP Update
Received   Verbal update from the Director of Research and Head of   Verbal
             the Graduate School

An update was provided on progress towards submission of an RDAP application in March 2017. Following the initial process, there would be scrutineers at the University for almost a year. Good progress had been made, but there would be significant ongoing focussed efforts, particularly in relation to research activeness and externality of academic colleagues.

AGREED   Welcomed the impressive progress the University had made towards the achievement of RDAP.

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE, QUALITY, STANDARDS AND LEARNING, TEACHING, STUDENT EXPERIENCE

15:74 Vice Chancellor's Report
Received   Paper from the Vice Chancellor   AB15/60

The paper provided an update on activities in a number of areas within the University at a national and international level. The following matters were highlighted and discussed:

- Death of a student – Academic Board expressed condolences and sympathy to the family and thanked colleagues involved in providing support.
- Staff departures.

AGREED   Received and noted the report.

15:75 Executive Dean's Report
Received   Paper from the Executive Dean   AB15/61

The paper provided an update on: strategic matters; student recruitment; Professional Body accreditation / accreditation agency visit / outcomes; news and successes of the Deanery as a whole; and then provided a breakdown of strategic issues, current performance and news/successes within each of the different areas of the Deanery.

The following matters were highlighted and discussed:

- Congratulations to Professor and Associate Professor appointments and to colleagues who had been nominated and received awards at the Success Awards.
- Noted the HCPC approval for Paramedic programmes.
- IFLAS
- There would be a paper to the next meeting of Academic Board on the potential relocation of BA Physical Education to Lancaster campus, which would align with the academic strategy.
- A proposed merger between Carlisle College and Newcastle College Group which was currently under consultation. The University's position and potential impact

was being considered and a consultation response was being submitted by the University.

AGREED   1.   Received and noted the report including reports from each of the Departments / Centres.

2.   Noted and welcomed the successful outcomes of recent initiatives including the HCPC approvals for the DipHE Paramedic Practice Programme.

15:76   **Proposed Changes to Academic Regulations, Procedures and Processes (with effect from 2016/17)**

Received   Paper from the Head of AQD   AB15/62

The Head of AQD presented the report which set out proposed changes to Academic Regulations, Procedures and Processes. The proposals had been developed by the Academic Regulations Review Groups and had been the subject of full discussion and consideration by the Academic Quality and Standards Committee.

The key changes being proposed were summarised, with particular discussion on the following proposed changes:

Regulation G4.1 (10 in summary table) - At present students who had failed to achieve sufficient credits to progress were not permitted to access the full entitlement of reassessment opportunities. In view of consumer law and CMA guidance, it was suggested that students should be allowed to continue with reassessment opportunities to gain as much academic credit as possible.

There was significant discussion on the proposed change including, the CMA perspective, managing the expectations of students, Professional Body requirements, status of students withdrawn and the need for absolute clarity in student records.

It was suggested that, as there was a lack of understanding re what this would look like in practice, this proposed change should be the subject of further consideration at the next meeting of Academic Board, with examples provided of what this would look like in practice.

Appendix 3d – 7.2.1b Malpractice – Minor Plagiarism (17 in summary table) – a request for this section of the Plagiarism regulations to be extended to L7 work had originally been rejected by AQSC and AB 2 years ago. Following detailed discussion, and noting that the OIA had supported HEIs in the past where complaints had been based on Institutions being too harsh in this respect, it was now suggested that the regulation should be extended as set out in the report. Academic Board supported this proposed change.

Regulation B2.1(7) – Ordinary Degree as an Exit Award from a Top-Up (3 in summary table) - The proposed change meant that a student who has taken a Top-Up award MUST complete 60 credits at L6 to be awarded an Ordinary Degree.

There was discussion on whether this would prevent the current practice of allowing those who had been awarded ordinary degrees being able to graduate at the same time as those receiving Honours awards.   It was also recognised that students on professional health programmes were not allowed this current practice. It was suggested that the Acting Director of SAAS and the Head of AQD consider this further outwith the meeting and progress a final decision under Chair's actions.

AGREED   1.   Approved the proposed changes to Academic Regulations,

Procedures and Processes (as set out in the report), with effect from 2016-17, with the exception of Regulations B2.1(7) and G4.1 as stated in 3 and 4 below. Noted that one change had already been approved by Academic Board in December 2015 to permit a variation to Academic Regulations in respect of a Graduate Diploma in Law (details of this can be found in the (new) Appendix 1 to the Regulations which sets out all approved variations for specific programmes). **Action – J Robinson to make the changes**

2. Approved progression of additional changes to Appendices 3b and 3c, in an effort to future proof these procedures in the context of the University's move towards electronic management of assessment. **Action – J Robinson to make the changes**

3. Agreed that the proposed change to Regulation G4.1 (section 10 of the report) should be the subject of further consideration at the next meeting of Academic Board, when examples should be provided re what this would look like in practice. **Action – J Robinson to report to next meeting**

4. Agreed that the proposed change to Regulation B2.1(7) – Ordinary Degree as an Exit Award from a Top-Up (3 in summary table) should be discussed further by the Acting Director of SAAS and the Head of AQD outwith the meeting and progress a final decision under Chair's actions. **Action – J Robinson to progress with A Lane and get final sign off by the Vice Chancellor.**

5. Noted that a pilot would be undertaken in Semester 1 of 2016-17 to require External Examiners to approve coursework titles. External Examiners already review exam papers, but this responsibility is to be further extended in future to align with good practice within the sector. Following the outcomes of the pilot, this would necessitate additional changes to the Academic Regulations, Procedures and Processes.

6. Noted that new Regulations for Integrated Masters would be presented to a later meeting of Academic Board.

15:77   Annual Reports 2014/15

(a) Student Recruitment Annual Report 2014/14 to 2015/16
Received   Paper from the Director of Marketing and Recruitment –   AB15/63(a)
               to be Confidential

The paper provided a three year picture of student recruitment, which offered a summary of performance and patterns in relation to applications, offers, conversion and enrolment. The headlines were highlighted and a number of key recommendations for action were considered. The annual report and the actions had been discussed by the Academic Quality and Standards Committee.

It was recognised that there was a need for improvement in relation to the number of applications generated. Details were provided of the different activities which were now being undertaken to achieve an improvement in the number of applications generated.

Reassurances were provided that the data in the report was used regularly to inform all marketing and recruitment activity.

AGREED   1.   Received the Student Recruitment section of the 2016 Student Recruitment reports, covering academic years 2013/14, 2014/15 and 2015/16.

2.   Endorsed the actions to improve recruitment performance for 16/17 onwards. **Action – G Haigh to progress the actions set out in**

the report.

      3.   Agreed that the report should be marked as confidential. **Action – E MacKay to mark report as confidential.**

(b) Student Retention and Achievement Annual Report 2014/15

Received   Paper from the Associate Dean – Quality and   AB15/63(b)
               Student Experience

The Associate Dean presented the report which provided details of student retention and achievement across the University analysed within the following contexts: Global ie at University level; By level of award - Under-graduate & Post-graduate; By mode of attendance - Full time & Part time; and on the basis of students' Polar quintile, Age, Disability, Ethnicity and Campus of study.

The report utilised data for the last 3 academic years for purposes of comparison and trend analysis.

The Academic Quality and Standards Committee had considered the report and approved recommendations for further investigation and to address areas for concern. Details were provided of the main areas to be actioned to achieve an improvement in student retention and achievement, including further investigations and identify of interventions to secure an improvement in relation to the following areas:
- student retention in POLAR quintiles 1 and 2
- attrition rates for students with disabilities
- proportion of students achieving higher classifications / grades
- students over 50 who do not achieve intended award or exit with lesser award
- the high number of "unknowns" for ethnic origin
- students with learning difficulties who were leaving the University as a result of academic failure

Assurances were given that more detailed actions for improving retention and achievement at programme levels were being progressed through the AER action plans at all programme levels. It was confirmed that there was ownership at Programme and Departmental level, with data being scrutinised and actions being put in place to achieve an improvement in retention rates. In addition, the Student Engagement and Retention Group closely monitors in year retention

It was noted that in future, 5 year rather than 3 year data would be considered. In addition, work was progressing on interrogation of the data to consider retention performance for years 1, 2 and 3, with appropriate actions being taken in year.

AGREED   1.   Noted the report and the actions (outlined above and detailed in the report) which are being taken to further investigate and address the areas for action. Action – A Dickson to monitor
              2.   Noted that future reports would be based on 5 year rather than 3 data. **Action – A Dickson to progress**
              3.   Agreed that the Head of AQD provide a covering paper for the three reports; Student Recruitment, Student Retention and Achievement and Collaborative Provision Student Retention and Achievement annual reports, setting out the context, including alignment with the AER process, for submission to University Board. **Action – J Robinson to provide cover paper for University Board.**

(c) Student Retention and Achievement (Collaborative Provision)

Received   Paper from the Head of Academic Quality and   AB5/63(c)
            Development

The Head of AQD presented the report which provided details of student retention and achievement data for collaborative provision. It was noted that the SITS work would allow easier and improved interrogation of collaborative provision data.

The report had been the subject of detailed consideration at AQSC. Details were provided of the actions to achieve further improvement.

It was noted that data management and reporting processes would be the focus of some more sustained activity moving forward e.g. monitoring value added, entry grades, exit outcomes and use of external benchmarking data.

There was discussion on financial reporting on the contribution of collaborative provision. It was noted that this report related to 14/15 and had been before a revised strategy for academic partnerships and collaborations, had been developed and implemented. The revised strategy had a more focussed approach to partnerships, which would be reflected in the 15/16 Annual Report.

AGREED   Received the Collaborative Provision Student Retention and Achievement Report for 2014/15, and endorse the following recommendations:
1. Monitor trends in students' degree classification over future years, given greater cohort sizes moving forward. Responsibility: Associate Dean, Quality & Student Experience. **Action – A Dickson**
2. Investigate the reasons for retention rates in Blackburn and Furness College. Responsibility: Associate Dean, Quality & Student Experience. **Action – A Dickson**
3. Investigate the increase in those students who leave with a 'lesser' award than they intended to when they commenced study (alongside trend in University provision), identify the possible reasons and any appropriate interventions. Responsibility: Academic Services and Retention Manager. **Action – N Sunderland**
4. Consider ways in which in data on collaborative provision should be considered through Student Engagement and Retention Group and Recruitment Management Group, given the scale of this provision. **Action: Director of AQD – J Robinson**

(d) International Annual Report
Received   Paper from the Associate Dean – Academic Development   AB15/63(d)
            and Innovation

AGREED   Noted that the report had been withdrawn as it was a mid-year review for 15-16, rather than a full report for last year. The report would be submitted to the next Academic Board. **ACTION – I Sinker**

15:78 Institutional Approval of London School of Commerce

Received   Paper from the Head of Educational partnerships and   AB15/64
            Lifelong Learning (presented by the Executive Dean)

The Executive Dean presented the report which reported that the London School of Commerce had notified the University of a wish to withdraw from the institutional approval process to enable the development of an embedded college model. However, since the report had been written, discussions were ongoing re some potential activity which would not be the embedded college model. A further update would be provided to the next meeting of Academic Board.

AGREED   1.   Noted that the London School of Commerce (LSC) had notified the University formally of the wish to withdraw from the Institutional Approval process to enable the development of an embedded college model. Therefore this aspect of the partnership was not progressing.

2.   Noted that the Institutional Panel meeting did approve the partnership.

3.   Noted that discussions were continuing with LSC re some other potential activity. **Action – R Talbot to report to the next meeting.**

15:79   University of Cumbria Admissions Policy on Disclosure of Criminal Background for Students in Relation to Work with Children and Vulnerable Groups

Received   Paper from Admission Manager (presented by the   AB15/65
Registrar and Secretary)

The Registrar and Secretary outlined the report which set out some proposed changes to the Admissions Policy on Disclosure of Criminal Background for Students in Relation to Work with Children and Vulnerable Groups, following the biennial review. The proposed changes were necessary to comply with changes the Disclosure and Barring Service had made.

AGREED   Approved the Admissions Policy on Disclosure of Criminal Background for Students in Relation to Work with Children and Vulnerable Groups. **Action – N Harris / A Bolton to implement and place on website.**

REPORTS AND COMMITTEE MINUTES

15:80   Academic Board Committees

(a)   Academic Quality and Standards Committee - A Dickson

Received: (i)   Minutes of the meeting held on 16 March 2016   AB15/67
(ii)   Student references Policy   Verbal
(iii) QAA Institutional Audit Action Plan progress   Appendix 1
(iv) Extensions to validation periods   Verbal
(v)   External Examiner appointments   Appendix 2

AGREED   1.   Received the minutes of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee of 16 March 2016

2.   Noted that the Student References Policy had been planned for implementation in Academic year 2016/17.

3.   Noted progress against the QAA Institutional Audit Action Plan progress.

4.   Noted extensions to validation periods for one year to the Practice Development/CPD framework programmes and the Nursing and Midwifery Council Approved Programmes, as set out in the cover paper and minutes.

5.   Noted the External Examiner nominations/changes to remit.

15:81   Strategic Risks and Communications

(a)   Risks
No specific changes or additions to the Risk Register were identified.

(b)   Communications
No specific items were identified for strategic communications.

15:82   Date of next meeting
Wednesday 22 June 2016 at 2pm (until 4.30pm) – in EG19, Calva, Carlisle.
Deadline for papers: Friday 10 June

The Chair then explained that it would be the last Academic Board meeting for Elspeth MacKay – Committees Officer, who was leaving the University. Elspeth was thanked for the tremendous contribution she had made to the University and was wished every success for the future