ACADEMIC BOARD   **AB18/12**
                                                                               CONFIRMED

Minutes of the meeting held on 24 October 2018

Present: J Mennell (Chair), L Bates, C Coghill, D Cox, A Hampson, S Henderson, A Hunt, R Hunter, L Johnson, A Lane, L Nelson, J Robinson, C Rouncefield, N Rourke, I Sinker, C Sloane, K Small, K Stuart, I Todd, C Watson, K Watson

In attendance: J Whitfield (Committee Secretary)

18:01	**Apologies for absence:** T Barry, J Brown, J Colclough, K Fox, R Harrison-Palmer (K Watson attending), M Leek, E Lees (A Hunt attending), A Marshall, L Rowe (alternate for T Barry – C Sloane attending)	Verbal
18:02	**Minutes of the meeting held on 27 June 2018:** The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as an accurate record.	AB17/65

18:03   **Matters Arising**

RDAP:
The Director of Research & Graduate School confirmed that the scrutiny period for the University's application for Research Degree Awarding Powers (RDAP) had been formally concluded. The resulting report had been received and was positive, also noting the areas in which the institution was seeking to further grow and develop its research activity.

The outcome of QAA's consideration of the report and its recommendations was anticipated late 2018/early 2019 and would be communicated once available.

18:04   **Terms of Reference and Membership**   AB18/01

Received: a) The outcomes of the nominations and elections process to appoint new Departmental Staff Representatives to Academic Board
                  b) The Terms of Reference and Membership for Academic Board 2018-19

The Vice Chancellor welcomed new departmental staff representatives to Academic Board and outlined the importance of the consideration and oversight of key issues by Academic Board as the senior deliberative committee of the University.

Action: New Departmental Representatives to meet with the Vice Chancellor in a group session to discuss the role and responsibilities of their membership. The Administration & Governance Manager/Senior EA to the Vice Chancellor to arrange.

It was confirmed that there were no substantive changes to the Terms of Reference for Academic Board, but that the membership had been updated to reflect the new appointments following elections.

Agreed: • To note the new appointments to Academic Board
                • To formally offer thanks to outgoing departmental representatives for their contribution to Academic Board
                • To approve the Terms of Reference and Membership for 2018-19

| **18:05** | **Vice Chancellor's Report** | Verbal |

Received: A verbal update from the Vice Chancellor

NSS:
The Vice Chancellor outlined the importance of a focus on further improvements in NSS outcomes. Despite improvements in the majority of areas during 2017-18, there remained elements for significant further development at institutional, departmental and programme levels. A comprehensive set of plans had been devised to ensure the necessary areas of focus moving forward, including a comprehensive programme of performance improvement, which would be covered in detail under item 18:09.

The importance of continuing engagement with the Students' Union and Student Voice representatives was stressed, and it was confirmed that further activity to support UCSU and student voice initiatives was included in the NSS plans.

The role of the newly appointed campus leads in supporting vibrancy and student-led activity was welcomed by Academic Board members, and it was confirmed that the first UCSU/UoC liaison meeting of the academic year was taking place shortly.

PVC Academic:
As planned, the recruitment process for a permanent senior academic lead to replace the outgoing interim DVC Academic was scheduled to commence shortly, and on the basis of market testing and analysis, an advertisement had been placed for a PVC Academic.

Academic Board members, senior institutional leads and student representatives would be given the opportunity to engage with and input into recruitment activity.

OfS Registration:
It was confirmed that the institutional OfS registration was ongoing and in the process of finalisation.

Outcome: To note the update provided

| **18:06** | **Academic Departments' Report** | AB18/02 |

Received: A report on departmental updates

The successes and activity presented within the report were noted, and the research outputs included were commended to Academic Board for communication to all staff and students.

It was confirmed that reports of this kind were an area of focus of a newly established student-led feedback campaign, and the newly appointed individual campus leads.

Action: Suggestions for successes and activity for communication to students and staff to be provided to the Director of Marketing & Recruitment for inclusion in the student-leads programme.

Academic Board offered congratulations to colleagues awarded Doctor Designate status, including Academic Board member and Director of the Institute of the Arts, Mr R Hunter.

Advances with regard to the recruitment of Degree Apprenticeship cohorts following successful tender processes were reported by the Deputy Director of the Institute for Industrial Practice and Head of BLPSS.

Outcome: To note the report

18:07   **Students' Union Report**   AB18/03

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

The key points of the report were presented by the Students' Union Academic Officer, including an update on Welcome Week activity, UCSU campaigns for the 2018-19 year and the positive feedback received from students regarding the new gym at the Ambleside Campus.

UCSU activity to address areas of poor NSS outcomes was discussed. It was confirmed that continued improvements were also required in other areas which, although higher scoring, remained below the sector averages.

The current status of uptake of Student Representatives training was reported, and the programme of activities initiated by UCSU for 2018-19 to support Equality, Diversity and Inclusion was highlighted. The work of internal colleagues on Black & Minority Ethnic (BME) issues was outlined, and contact points provided to the UCSU Academic Officer for liaison.

Academic Board members queried whether UCSU campaigns had sufficient coverage to ensure that all campuses received consistent levels of activity and engagement. It was suggested that working directly with campus leads could support the spread of and engagement with planned initiatives.

The importance of ensuring consistent Welcome Week activity for cohorts with late September start dates was stressed. The Vice Chancellor confirmed that new arrangements were now in place for organisation of Welcome Week events for future years, under the leadership of the PVC/Director of Student & Staff Services. A working group was in place to ensure a consistent and joined up approach to all welcome activity, including vibrancy, admissions, academic administration, clubs and societies, and student support across all campuses, cohorts and start points at both Undergraduate and Postgraduate levels.

Outcome: To note the report

18:08   **Annual Operating Plan 2018-19**   AB18/04

Received: The final AOP 2018-19

The background to the development of the Annual Operating Plan 2018-19 was outlined by the Vice Chancellor, and the 17 key objectives and associated KPIs were noted by Academic Board. It was confirmed that individual plans and targets for departments and services underpinned the institutional plan.

There had been a need to refocus the strategy of the University under the new Strategic Plan to ensure the future sustainability and success of the institution.

The AOP provided the operational model to ensure the necessary growth for future investment through the development of existing and new portfolio areas at home and internationally, addressing the skills needs of the region and its employers, improving student outcomes and value for money, driving recruitment, equipping and supporting staff and addressing any areas of poor performance.

It was the responsibility of all staff to escalate issues as appropriate, in order to ensure that the root causes of any problems could be addressed, including process review and systems development.

Actions agreed:
- It was suggested that a final review of the document could be conducted to ensure consistency of the language around customers and stakeholders. **Action:** Vice Chancellor/Chief Operating Officer
- It was confirmed that the final documentation would be uploaded to StaffHub now that it had been fully approved by University Board. **Action:** Administration & Governance Manager

One Academic Board member expressed concern around the impact on staff of the decant of the SE corner of the Lancaster campus site. The Vice Chancellor and departmental colleagues reported on the process of consultation undertaken with affected staff, the actions taken to address any issues and the successful completion of moves to date.

Action: The Vice Chancellor to discuss further with the Director of Finance & Resources.

Academic Board sought clarification of the process and timescales for the recruitment of additional members of staff to support and deliver Degree Apprenticeships following successful tender outcomes. The Vice Chancellor reported that this had been reviewed in detail by the Academic Strategy and Planning Committee at its October meeting, to ensure that due consideration had been given to any potential impacts and requirements.

Development and enablement of existing staff was also planned to ensure that the specific requirements of Degree Apprenticeship programmes could be met. It was confirmed that as an area for future growth, the Institute for Industrial Practice already had an established NSS action plan.

Further information was sought on work to develop the pay framework under the institutional Reward and Recognition Plan. It was confirmed that the PVC/Director of Student & Staff Services was leading on this work, and that Terms of Reference were currently in development. Further updates would follow in due course.

An update was provided on proposals to substantially increase employer's contributions under the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS) from 16% to 23%, representing a considerable financial impact on schools, colleges and HEIs throughout the sector. The University was currently modelling options to meet increasing costs.

The levels of departmental income generation as a percentage of overall income were explored, and it was noted that the intention was for greater consistency across areas, as appropriate to the different operating parameters of each department.

Outcome: To note the AOP, its themes and associated KPIs

18:09   NSS   AB18/05

Received: a) A summary of NSS outcomes, priorities and actions going forward, including institutional and local plans
b) A summary of recommendations from the Student Success & Quality Assurance Committee of necessary actions to be included in the institutional action plan for NSS to ensure all relevant policies and processes relating to the student experience are understood and consistently implemented, monitored and evaluated

The Vice Chancellor reported on the areas of NSS performance where issues had been identified across the institution. As a result, a university-wide approach had been devised to address key academic matters, led by the Dean for Student Success, with responsibility for overall satisfaction residing with the PVC/Director of Student & Staff Services.

Alongside, the Dean for Student Success was working with the UCSU on targeted action to support improvements under the question relating directly to Students' Union activity.

A set of academic department plans was also in place to underpin the institutional plan, according to a qualitative and quantitative data-led approach. Further guidance and details of institutional and local expectations would be circulated to all colleagues in due course.

There was an essential requirement, in line with qualitative feedback received, to bring about change at a cultural level to address any problem behaviours impacting on the student experience. An example of the departmental approaches adopted in this regard was presented by the Head of Department for Nursing, Health & Professional Practice.

Discussion took place regarding examples of negative qualitative feedback received. It was confirmed that every member of academic staff had been given access to the qualitative comments relative to their areas, in order to ensure clarity of understanding of problem areas and appropriate remedial action.

In many areas, poor qualitative feedback had been reinforced by associated poor scores in quantitative data. Discussions to ensure accountability, performance management and quality learning and teaching were taking place with all departmental colleagues.

Action: It was agreed that the Vice Chancellor would consider the sharing of qualitative feedback from all areas of the University with Academic Board members.

The importance of shared values amongst departmental teams was stressed, alongside the need for communal meeting spaces and contact time for colleagues to discuss issues and share best practice. There was also felt to be a requirement for effective systems and administrative support to underpin the dissemination of key information and expectations, and the coordination of activity.

It was confirmed that all plans had a focus on immediate actions and medium- to longer-term activity. However, there was a need for clear communication to all academic colleagues and to students of the expectations established.

Action: All Academic Board colleagues to discuss the immediate actions required to address NSS performance, to ensure clarity of focus at individual, team and departmental levels, and to feedback any issues identified to their immediate line managers for escalation to senior and executive leads.

The framework, process and reporting lines for all NSS activity were outlined by the Vice Chancellor. NSS outcomes would also be the focus on forthcoming senior and all-staff conferences taking place during November 2018.

Outcome: Academic Board noted the report provided and the institutional and departmental level action plans

18:10	**Academic Regulations**	AB18/06

Received: a) A summary of the outcomes of communications activity following the changes to Academic Regulations approved June 2018
b) The outcomes of the Equality Impact Assessment conducted with regard to changes to the Academic Regulations

The background to recent changes to the Academic Regulations was provided by the Director of AQD. In June 2018, following extensive consultation with staff and students, Academic Board approved a number of changes to the Academic Regulations for implementation from September 2018.

Academic Board agreed that the revised regulations should automatically apply to all new students commencing their studies (or commencing a new programme with the University) but that continuing students should be given the choice of which regulations would apply to the remainder of their period of studies.

Following Academic Board, a detailed communications plan was developed and submitted to the Vice Chancellor's Executive Group for consideration and approval, setting out arrangements and outline timescales for communications with all key stakeholders.

Impact monitoring systems and processes were now in place, and longer-term reporting on the impact of the activity would be provided to Academic Board during 2019.

The uptake levels of the new regulations was confirmed, along with all activity undertaken to support students in making or changing their decision.

The UCSU Academic Officer confirmed UCSU's satisfaction with the communications and support mechanisms in place for students.

An Equality Impact Assessment had been conducted, which had determined that the proposals removed barriers for all students facing reassessment after failing one or more modules, while maintaining academic standards.

In the case of both changes (to undergraduate and postgraduate regulations) it was considered that all students from across the range of diverse groups and with diverse circumstances would benefit from the changes. It was noted that the changes did not affect the right of students with a temporary or permanent disability to seek reasonable adjustments to their assessment to accommodate their circumstances, and that the right of appeal remained.

Outcome:	Academic Board noted and endorsed the report and associated outcomes	

18:11	**Postgraduate Research**	AB18/07

Received: Draft postgraduate research degree regulations, academic appeals and examination guidance for approval for implementation

The Director of Research & Graduate School outlined the work undertaken to develop the University's own postgraduate research degree regulations, academic appeals and examination guidance in anticipation of a positive outcome in terms of the institutional award of Research Degree Awarding Powers (RDAP).

All documents had been extensively reviewed and edited during the 2017-18 year following guidance from the Academic Quality & Development and Student Academic Administration Services, and the Academic Infrastructure Lead. Postgraduate representatives had also provided detailed feedback and input into the development of the new documentation.

Revalidation activity was also underway for appropriate postgraduate programmes under the existing operating and regulatory framework to ensure continuity until such time as RDAP was awarded.

It was confirmed that an MPhil programme was also available for students, who could then transfer to a PhD programme following the successful award of RDAP to the University.

Academic Board welcomed the review procedures established and noted that the University's quinquennial review process had been praised by QAA during their review of the University's application for RDAP.

Further regulations relating to MRES and professional doctorates would proceed to Academic Board for approval in due course.

Outcome: Academic Board approved the postgraduate research degree regulations, academic appeals and examination guidance as presented

18:12	**Academic Infrastructure**	AB18/08

Received:
a) Proposals to extend the Academic Year and the development of the Academic Calendar 2019-20
b) An update on the programme/module health check approach
c) An update on the Portfolio Development Programme

Academic Year/Academic Calendar 2019-20
The Vice Chancellor confirmed that each year, Academic Board was asked to approve the forward academic calendar on a rolling two-year basis. As a result of the current year's forward planning and reporting process, it had been identified that the University's calendar was short in comparison to other institutions and contained a number of significant pinch points.

A benchmarking exercise had subsequently been undertaken, and it was concluded that extending the academic calendar would be beneficial in the longer term to both staff and students, and that the University was out of alignment with the sector, resulting in

operational challenges and the need to offer increased value for money for students.

The potential implications of extending the calendar by up to four weeks were currently being analysed in detail, however in the interim it was proposed to implement an extension of two weeks in order to provide additional student enrichment and wellbeing packages during 2019-20.

Academic Board were supportive of the proposals to extend the academic year in the longer term, but raised concerns that implementation of an extended year from 2019-20 could be too short a timescale to ensure the appropriate consideration of issues and the creation of meaningful plans for additional content and enrichment for students.

Programme/Module Health Check Approach
The process outline for the extension of the programme and module health check approach during 2018-19 was presented, as per the paper provided.

It was confirmed that activity was underway to align the programme health check process with the annual monitoring process co-ordinated by the Academic Quality & Development service.

Action: It was suggested that there was a need to ensure programme withdrawals were captured in healthcheck lists in a more timely manner. The Vice Chancellor to discuss with the Portfolio & Programme Development Manager.

Portfolio Development Programme
A summary progress update was provided against each of the 5 streams of the Portfolio Development Programme.

The Director of AQD provided assurance to Academic Board that a detailed piece of work had been undertaken to ensure the infrastructure in support of the successful outcomes of the programme was in place, prior to commencement of implementation of the programme objectives.

Outcome:
- To reject the proposal to extend the academic year for 2019-20, whilst remaining supportive of the need to implement an extended academic calendar from 2020-21 onwards.
- To note the updates provided on the programme/module health check approach and Portfolio Development Programme.

18:13	**Academic Governance Annual Report**	AB18/09

Received: The draft annual report for recommendation to the Academic Governance Committee

The requirement of the University Board to provide assurance statements on academic governance to the Office for Students was outlined by the Vice Chancellor.

The draft report for progression to the University Board's Academic Governance Committee was presented to Academic Board for noting at its current stage of development.

Action: It was agreed that the final draft report would be circulated to Academic Board members for comment prior to circulation to the Academic Governance Committee. (Director of AQD)

Outcome:	To note the draft report and intention for the final draft to be circulated via correspondence for Academic Board comment prior to progression to the Academic Governance Committee	
18:14	**Deliberative Committees**	AB18/10

Received:
a) The Terms of Reference and Membership of Deliberative Committees 2018-19 following additional review under the first cycle of meetings
b) An update on the establishment of a central committee calendar in Outlook to publish and manage the schedule of committee meetings 2018-19

The Terms of Reference and Membership of deliberative committees for 2018-19 were presented to Academic Board for approval.

Particular attention was drawn to the Terms of Reference of the Student Success and Quality Assurance Committee, which had been subject to substantial review in line with the requirements of the Office for Students and revised frameworks for compliance and monitoring.

It was confirmed that, as the Dean for Student Success was acting as interim Chair for Student Success and Quality Assurance Committee pending the appointment of the new PVC Academic, the Director of AQD was to remain as Chair for the Collaborative Provision Sub-Committee.

Action: It was agreed that the Director of Information Services should join the membership of Student Success and Quality Assurance Committee. (Administration & Governance Manager)

Outcome:
- To approve the Terms of Reference and Membership for Deliberative Committees for 2018-19
- To note the establishment of a central committee calendar

18:15	**Minutes from Academic Board Committees**	AB18/11

Received: The minutes and associated key points of the following Committees for receipt and noting:

a) Academic Strategy & Planning Committee 3 October 2018
b) Student Success & Quality Assurance Committee 4 October 2018

The minutes and associated updates were noted by exception.

Outcome: To note the Committee minutes and summaries presented
To note the Programme Initiation Annual Review conducted by the Academic Strategy & Planning Committee (ASPC)
To note and endorse the programme suspensions and withdrawals approved by ASPC
To note the Student Success & Quality Assurance Committee's (SSQAC) review of the Peer Review of Learning & Teaching Policy
To note the Institutional Learning, Teaching & Assessment Strategy Year 2 Action Plan, as overseen by SSQAC
To note SSQAC's planned work on the Student Charter 2018-19

18:16	**Next meeting:** 12 December 2018, Lancaster	Verbal