

CONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21 APRIL 2021

PRESENT (via Zoom):

Prof Sir Chris Husbands (Chair)	Dr John Freeman	Dr Rebecca Mallet
Andrew Adegbola	Dr Sam Giove	Dr Neil McKay
George Alvey	Dr Geff Green	Dr Lisa Mooney
Dr Helen Best	Dr Rebecca Hodgson	Dr Christine O'Leary
Dr Julie Brunton	Catriona Hynes	Dr Vishal Parikh
Dr Claire Cornock	Praise Ishola	Dr Lucian Tipi
Prof Roger Eccleston	Laith Jafaar	Susan Wakefield
Prof John Francis	Prof Kevin Kerrigan	Prof Chris Wigginton

APOLOGIES:

Prof Eileen McAuliffe, Dr Elizabeth Freeman, Dr Toni Schwarz, Dr Rob Wilson

IN ATTENDANCE:

Michaela Boryslawskij, University Secretary (Secretary)
 Dr Keith Fildes, Research Development Manager (Policy & Performance) (for agenda item 7.2)
 Leopold Green, Head of Academic Quality & Standards
 Ben Machin, Governance Senior Adviser (Minute Secretary)
 Prof John Pymm, Director of Academic Development and Diversity
 Carolyn Taylor, Head of Student Policy and Compliance
 Ruth Thei, Head of Governance and Sector Regulation (Minute Secretary)
 Alison Wells, Director of Academic Services

Opening comments

Minute Ref AB/2/21/1

- The Chair welcomed the meeting and introduced Ben Machin who has commenced in the role of Governance Senior Advisor and will be supporting the Academic Board.

Agenda item 2
 Paper Ref AB/1/21/M

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Minute Ref AB/2/21/2

- The Board approved the minutes of the meeting on 20 January 2021 as a correct record following a minor amendment to reflect Eileen McAuliffe's title as Professor.

Agenda item 3

Matters Arising

Minute Ref AB/2/21/3

- There were no matters arising.

Agenda item 4.1
 Paper Ref AB/2/21/4.1

Review of Compliance with Office for Students Registration Condition C1

Minute Ref AB/2/21/4

Confidential

- 4.1 The report provided the Academic Board with sight of the internal review conducted in response to a request from the Office for Students, received on 14th January 2021, that Higher Education providers conduct a review of compliance with registration condition C1, on the extent to which due regard has been given to guidance in relation to consumer protection law for the current Academic Year 2020/21.

4.2 The Director of Academic Services and senior managers reported the following in response to comments and questions from members. A minute confidential to the Board was recorded.

4.3 The Academic Board **noted** the two-stage approach taken to the review.

Agenda item	4.2	Standard Assessment Regulations for Foundation Years and Level 4	Minute Ref	AB/2/21/5
Paper Ref	AB/2/21/4.2			

5.1 The proposals outlined in the report represent an immediate change to the 2020/21 Standard Assessment Regulations. Section 2.1 confirms the intended change is to enable Foundation Year and Level 4 students to progress to the next level of study where they have passed 60 credits and achieved a mark of 30% or higher in all other modules. This would be a progression only regulation and would be in addition to rules for students who are in continuous reassessment or have failed one module.

The Dean of College for Social Sciences and Arts outlined the rationale for the change as outlined in section 2.2. of the report, highlighting the following additional points for the Academic Board's attention:

- The recommendations follow a review outlined in an Assessment Changes 20-21 paper (AB/4/20/5; Section 2.2) which proposed a review of some elements of assessment.
- There is a clear remit to rationalise and simplify assessment in a way that recognises the formative and developmental nature of foundation year and level 4 study, whilst maintaining quality and standards.
- It is recognised the proposals and the tangible benefit to our students will take time to embed.
- The exceptional reasons for amending the regulations to encompass these changes during the current academic year is due to fairness, recognising the points raised in section 2.3 of the report. If approved, the amendments would be established for the summer Department Assessment Boards.
- It was highlighted that if the changes were made for the next academic year, the current cohorts would sit in the middle of a cohort to whom exceptional regulations had been applied and this regulation change. There was considered to be no clear rationale for a delay in implementing these proposals.
- It is noted that some PSRB requirements would not allow for this change. PSRBs and partners will be notified, and colleges will be asked to confirm exceptional exemptions.
- Student representatives, including Students Union officers were consulted on the proposals and supported the changes proposed.

5.2 The Academic Board welcomed the proposed amendments and in particular, the likely contribution to equity and stronger progression and the delivery of the Access and Participation Plan. In discussion the following comments were made:

- There needs to be further consideration of student support provision for those who are passed and progressed based on these changes, focusing on how they are enabled to succeed at levels 5 and 6.
- These amendments were considered to create an opportunity to support minoritized groups and focuses on the transformative nature of University level study, enabling students from different educational backgrounds to make the transition and succeed at levels 5 and 6.
- The content of the communication for these changes needs to be clear, recognising it does not change the credit boundaries required for attainment. There are opportunities to ensure multiple forums are used, including social media for the communication of this change.

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- Scenario planning (appendix 2) was considered confusing to read for some members. It was noted that level detail was included for robustness and is intended to be used to inform student support colleagues.
 - The timescales for the proposed implementation are short therefore there would need to be adequate provision for implementation and integration.
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5.3 The Academic Board **approved** the proposal.

Agenda item	4.3	Student Experience Update	Minute Ref	AB/2/21/6
Paper Ref	AB/2/21/4.3			

6.1 The report provides insight to the Academic Board about how the University is ensuring the continued delivery of a high-quality academic experience to students, throughout the Covid 19 pandemic, and for the remainder of the academic year. The Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) introduced the report and highlighted the following points for the Academic Board's attention:

- The changes in the local tiers, national guidance, and the Department of Education advice to students about travelling home for the Christmas vacation was disruptive to the semester one delivery. Feedback was collected from students on their experience through a range of channels and this is summarised in a SETL report on Autumn 2020 delivery outlined in section 2.2.
- It was highlighted that college and course student representatives have played an essential role in supporting student engagement in planning and providing feedback on delivery.
- Semester two was delivered through the development of contextualised plans intended to transition from online to on campus delivery. Planning was focused on a departmental level, but the national lockdown meant a large portion of courses continued to be delivered online except those that required practical delivery as specified by DfE guidance.
- A risk log is maintained to monitor the status of delayed learning and teaching and compliance with Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) requirements. Colleagues have worked hard to minimize the amount of delayed learning, and the risk log demonstrates the progress made.
- A wide range of measures have been put in place to support remote learning as outlined in section 2.5 of the paper).
- Essential on campus activity was resumed for prioritised final year and other specific groups of students in March with approximately 600 students per day attending campus, which is below expectations.
- Government guidance issued on 05 April did not allow the return of students on campus for non-essential activities, as such this would be from 17 May in line with the government roadmap on the easing of restrictions. Planning in departments will continue to focus on recovering a delayed on-campus experience.
- Planning is underway for the 2021/22 academic year and is focused on the quality of the student experience, reflecting on lessons learned. Planning will concentrate on a fully open campus with social distancing not in place, but departments are being asked to build in resilience in case of reintroduction of restrictions.

6.2 The Academic Board welcomed the report and update on the student experience, recognising that significant progress has been made on remote delivery and remote access to learning resources. Whilst considerable efforts been made on the academic experience, the subsequent discussion highlighted that further progress was needed to be made on the wider experience, recognising and taking forwards progress made, particularly in areas such as equality, diversity and inclusion.

The Academic Board raised the following key points in discussion:

- Students Union representatives highlighted that additional support for the Request to Repeat an Assessment Attempt (RRAA) process and access to learning equipment had received a good response from students and will positively impact on their achievements.
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- There was optimism for further engagement on the wider student experience for the next academic year with access to sports and wellbeing facilities highlighted as a particular area of focus.
- It is essential to retain benefits where these have positively impacted a broad range of students and specific student groups, building on lessons learned over the last year and increasing accessibility to learning opportunities. It was noted that a 'sprint' group is being convened to take an extensive review of impact across student groups of protected characteristics. It is anticipated that the Autumn Delivery Framework will develop guidance and seek to further normalise this kind of activity.

6.3 The Academic Board **noted** the update on the student experience.

Agenda item 5	Quality and Standards Report	Minute Ref AB/2/21/7
Paper Ref AB/2/21/5		

7.1 This report is a standing item and provides the Academic Board with an update on significant issues relating to Quality and Standards since the previous meeting in January 2021.

As items relating to Ofsted (section 2.1, 2.2 - agenda item 6) and Standard Assessment Regulations for Foundation Years and Level 4 (section 2.3, 2.4 - agenda item 4.2) were for discussion as substantive agenda items, the Head of Quality and Standards highlighted the following key points for the Academic Board's attention:

- Work continues to enhance course improvement plans which is due to be reviewed by the Teaching and Learning Leadership Team in week commencing 26 April 2021. An audit-based approach to drive improvements at course level is being explored.
- As outlined in the report (section 2.5), The team are considering options for the recommencement of Departmental Periodic Reviews to provide a formal point to KPI's and metrics, drawing alignment from the Office for Students recommendations.
- Support has been provided for College based initiatives (section 2.6).
- The development of a new MSc International Justice was commended, recognising the model successfully embedded within post-registration advanced clinical practice, allowing for a 'step on/step off' credit/award escalator'.

7.2 The Academic Board **received** the report, **noting** the range of activity and **supported** the metric-based approaches to the proposed reviews

Agenda item 6	Apprenticeship – Ofsted Update	Minute Ref AB/2/21/8
Paper Ref AB/2/21/6		

8.1 The paper provided an update to the Academic Board on the outcome of the Progress Monitoring Visit (PMV) from Ofsted on the 17 and 18 February 2021 (as previously reported in AB/1/21/5; section 5.2) and outlined the consequential next steps.

The Pro-Vice Chancellor for Business and Enterprise reminded the Academic Board of the reasons for the PMV and that colleagues had been working over the last two years remedying and making improvements. The following points were highlighted the Academic Board's attention:

- This was the first formal external assessment of progress since the last full inspection in 2019.
- The outcome from the PMV was that the University was judged to have made 'significant progress', the best outcome that could have been received.
- As a result, the Apprenticeship and Work Based Learning Steering Group have written to Ofsted to request a move to full inspection.
- There is still significant work to be undertaken, and the report identifies strengths and areas for development in the provision with several themes for focus along with a number of smaller issues.
- A Quality Improvement Plan has been developed and key improvement actions were outlined as referenced in the paper in section 2.4 and 2.5.

8.2 The Academic Board welcomed the report and recognised the hard work of colleagues involved.

The Academic Board recognised the identified challenge of the increasing scope of the Ofsted remit and increasing numbers of apprenticeship students and ensuring departments new to this regulatory regime would be supported in responding to these requirements. Academic department members of the Board welcomed further opportunities to work with the central team on this. .

The Academic Board noted the impressive turnaround of the assessment and congratulated colleagues that had been involved, acknowledging the significant task of ensuring the relevant systems and support structures were in place.

- 8.3 The Academic Board **noted**:
- The outcome of the Progress Monitoring Visit
 - The decision by Apprenticeship and Work Based Learning Steering Group regarding the next inspection activity.
 - The focus for improvements over the summer of 2021.
 - The challenge presented by the expansion of the number of departments and students anticipated to be included in the next inspection.

Agenda item	7.1	Research and Innovation Reporting and Compliance	Minute Ref	AB/2/21/9
Paper Ref	AB/2/21/7.1	Research Institutes and Centres		

- 9.1 The report presents the context in which the University's research has been established and organised within distinct knowledge clusters, constituted across 4 institutes and 14 centres. In presenting the report, the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research and Innovation reported that the accompanying publication will also serve to raise the profile and visibility of the centres of research excellence, offering a current overview on their nature, focus and future direction. It is the intention that this item will be as a precursor to a wider report to the Academic Board on the full range of institutes, centres and departmental groups going forward. This will be presented to the relevant committee's and Board's in the Autumn.

- 9.2 In response to a question on support for doctoral students, the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research and Innovation confirmed that a communication had been sent to research leads to focus on support students through the pandemic period.

- 9.3 The Academic Board **received** and **noted** the report.

Agenda item	7.2	Research and Innovation Reporting and Compliance	Minute Ref	AB/2/21/10
Paper Ref	AB/2/21/7.2	REF 2021 Submission		
		Confidential		

- 10.1 The report provides an update to the Academic Board on the submission of the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021 on 29 March. This was a postponed submission from November 2020 to allow Universities sufficient time to respond in view of the pandemic and resultant disruptions.

- 10.2 A minute confidential to the Board was recorded.

- 10.3 The Academic Board **received** and **noted** the report.

Agenda item	8	Report on the Outcomes of the Student Union Elections	Minute Ref	AB/2/21/11
Paper Ref	AB/2/21/8			

- 11.1 The report provided an update to the Academic Board on the outcomes of the Student Union Elections for the full time Student Officers, part time Representatives and Union Council Chair, which were held in March 2021. The elections had the best individual turnout and votes achieved with all 14 posts being successfully filled.

- 11.2 In presenting the report the Academic Board, the University Secretary and President of the Students Union confirmed the elections had been conducted in a fair and proper manner. The new elected Officers and President elect are expected to commence their roles by July to provide continuity with the current officer team.

The Academic Board offered congratulations to all elected candidates and everyone involved in the election process, acknowledging the significant organisational effort in achieving an improvement in turnout. Changes to the student representatives on the Academic Board and Board of Governors will be made in due course as the new officers take up their roles.

11.3 The Academic Board **noted** the outcomes of the Students Union elections

Agenda item 9	Annual Report on the Student Disciplinary Regulations 2019/20	Minute Ref AB/2/21/12
Paper Ref AB/2/21/9		

12.1 The report, introduced by the Head of Student Policy and Compliance, provided an update to the Academic Board on the operation of the Student Disciplinary regulations for the 2019/20 academic year. The report and presentation focused on the key points:

- The report relates to student conduct rather than academic misconduct or Fitness to Practise.
- Cases continue to be managed effectively in a difficult landscape.
- The number of student disciplinary cases remain modest in comparison with the sector.
- There have been a moderate number of cases in total, recognising a dip last year due to students going home following the lockdown restrictions.
- A review of the Student Disciplinary regulations for the 2020/21 academic year will show a significant increase of cases due to the inclusion of COVID 19 breaches.
- Preventative measures including continues to raise awareness of the need to comply with Government rules on My Hallam.
- The Student Disciplinary regulations have been revised to simplify the terminology and format of the document.

12.2 On 19 April 2021, Office for Students released a statement of expectation for Universities to review sexual misconduct and harassment policies by summer 2021. The Group Director for Student & Academic Services is leading a working group in response to this with meetings scheduled during May and June 2021. Further updates will be provided as necessary as part of the standard business cycle.

12.3 The Academic Board **noted** the report.

Agenda item 10	Annual Business Cycle	Minute Ref AB/2/21/13
Paper Ref AB/2/21/10		

13.1 The Chair confirmed that following the meeting, comments on items to be considered for inclusion at the June or September Academic Board meetings can be sent directly to Ben Machin.

13.2 The Academic Board **noted** the forward programme.

Agenda item 11	Co-option of a member of the Academic Board to the Board of Governors	Minute Ref AB/2/21/14
Verbal Update		

14.1 The Clerk to the Board confirmed that following the retirement of Elaine Buckley, expressions of interest were invited to fulfil a vacancy on the Board of Governors. The vacancy was for the co-opted position of one member of the Academic Board drawn from the academic staff constituency.

Following a competitive selection process where all candidates were identified as credible appointments, the Selection Panel recommended that Dr Claire Cornock to be appointed to the Board of Governors. This appointment will include representation of the Academic Board on the Academic Assurance Committee and membership of the Nominations Committee.

14.2 The Chair conveyed thanks to everyone who expressed an interest in the vacancy and congratulated Dr Claire Cornock on her appointment.

14.3 The Academic Board **received** and **noted** the outcome of the selection process.

Agenda item 12	Review of meeting	Minute Ref AB/2/21/15
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15. The Chair thanked all staff and students present in the meeting for their excellent contribution that included 50 interventions (40 from members of staff (19 male, 21 female) and 10 from students).

Agenda item 13	Other urgent business	Minute Ref	AB/2/21/16
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- 16.1 The Chair noted the statement of expectation published by the Office for Students asking Universities to review sexual misconduct and harassment policies by summer 2021 and the University response reported in minute 12.2.

- 16.2 No further urgent business was raised.

Agenda item 14	Date of next meeting	Minute Ref	AB/2/21/17
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17. 09 June 2021
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