

**CONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18 MAY 2022**

PRESENT (via Zoom):

Professor Jeffrey Bale (Chair)	Dr Claire Ketnor
Zainab Ata	Professor Julietta Patnick
Dr Ishan Cader	Professor Keith Ridgway
Angela Foulkes (from item 4)	

APOLOGIES:

Praise Ishola

IN ATTENDANCE:

	AGENDA ITEM
Dr Phil Bloor, Head of Admissions	Item 6.1
Michaela Boryslawskyyj, University Secretary and Clerk to the Board	All
Leopold Green, Head of Academic Quality & Standards	All
Dan Lally, Head of Business Engagement and Growth	Item 5.2
Ben Machin, Governance Senior Adviser (Committee Secretary)	All
Professor David Shepherd, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)	All
Carolyn Taylor, Head of Student Policy and Compliance	Item 6.2
Ruth Thei, Head of Governance and Sector Regulation	All
Alison Wells, Director of Academic Services	All

**Opening Remarks**

Minute Ref AAC/2/22/1

1.1 In opening the meeting, the Chair:

- Noted the apologies received.
- Welcomed Zainab Ata to the meeting, attending on behalf of the Students' Union President.

Agenda item 2  
Paper Ref

**Declarations of Interest**

Minute Ref AAC/2/22/2

2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

Agenda item 3  
Paper Ref AAC/3/21/M

**Minutes of Meeting held on 02 February 2022**

Minute Ref AAC/2/22/3

3.1 The Committee **approved** the minutes from the meeting held on 02 February 2022 as an accurate record.

Agenda item 4  
Paper Ref AAC/4/21/4

**Matters Arising and Action Tracker**

Minute Ref AAC/2/22/4

4.1 There were no identified matters arising.

4.2 The Chair reported that all outstanding areas of action had been completed.

Agenda item 5.1  
Paper Ref AAC/2/22/5

**Student Experience:  
Student Experience Update**

Minute Ref AAC/2/22/5

5.1 The Committee **noted** the student experience update which provided insight and assurance about how the University is ensuring the continued delivery of a high-quality academic experience to students throughout the pandemic and for the 2021/22 academic year.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) gave members an overview on the areas of discussion at the Academic Board which focused on the success of the Inspirational Student Awards,

assessment support and changes to the lower point threshold for entry from 2023. Members were also informed that subsequent reporting will include a specific focus on the experience of international students.

In developments since the Academic Board meeting, the following was reported:

- there are intentions to convene a special meeting of the Academic Board to consider the potential impact of the University and College Union (UCU) marking and assessment boycott.
- The Office for the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) 2021 annual report has been released which includes information on student complaints from across the higher education sector.

5.2 The Committee thanked the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) for the update and in discussion, received the following assurances:

- that mechanisms and procedures were in place to identify risks and steps were being taken to limit disruption to students from industrial action. Members were informed that most undergraduate taught marks will have been completed and submitted at the time action is due to commence.
- support for students had been considered in the University's response to industrial action.
- in addressing disruption from industrial action, the University's will continue to have regard for compliance with OfS and consumer protection expectations.
- the University's student complaint handling processes was robust and there were very few incidences where complaints were escalated by students to the Office for the Independent Adjudicator.

Agenda item 5.2  
Paper Ref AAC/2/22/5

**Student Experience:  
Apprenticeships and Ofsted Update**

Minute Ref AAC/2/22/6

6.1 The Committee received an update from the Director of Skills and Partnerships on the findings of Ofsted's Full Inspection of the University's apprenticeship provision that took place in February 2022. In alignment with the update provided to the Academic Board, members were informed of:

- the scope of the inspection.
- the published outcome, that the University was judged 'good' in all areas and safeguarding was found to be effective.
- anticipated re-inspection timeframes, subject to any risk indicator changes.
- the next 24 months being critical to address areas for improvement and to drive enhancements.
- the immediate priorities, including continuing with the Self-Assessment Report and driving the Quality Improvement Plan.
- wider improvements, including feeding into employer led provision strand of the Future Strategy Programme.
- areas of Academic Board scrutiny, including work to further develop student representation.

6.2 In **noting** the report and action taken by Academic Board, the Committee offered congratulations on the outcome to all colleagues involved in delivering the apprenticeship provision. In discussion members reflected on the significant improvements achieved, explored sector developments, and provided commentary to ensure overall effectiveness is maintained with potential aspects of 'outstanding' emerging in the future.

Agenda item 6.1  
Paper Ref AAC/1/22/6

**Academic Regulations:  
Admissions Policies**

Minute Ref AAC/2/22/7

- 7.1 The Committee received the paper which detailed considerations to three revised admissions policies approved by the Academic Board, including:
- Admissions Policy
  - Minimum Entry Requirements Policy
  - Appeals and Complaints Procedure for Applicants

In detailing the revisions, the Head of Admissions explained that changes were to ensure the University is in alignment with the new UUK GuildHE Code of Practice for Admissions and considered recent external drivers including the pandemic and Brexit.

Members noted that Academic Board's scrutiny focused on accessibility, terminology and maintaining alignment with policies in development.

- 7.2 The Committee **commented** that there are some linkages between admissions policies and the work recently presented to the Board of Governors following Data HE's report on the University's market position. However, the more significant impacts on recruitment are likely to be from other areas of policy and practice.

Agenda item Paper Ref	6.2 AAC/2/22/6	<b>Academic Regulations: Standard Assessment Regulations for 2022/23</b>	Minute Ref AAC/2/22/8
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- 8.1 The Head of Student Policy and Compliance introduced the approved standard assessment regulations that will be published for the 2022/23 academic year and detailed the changes outlined to Academic Board as part of its considerations.

- 8.2 In **noting** the paper, the Committee were assured that changes were aligned to sector recognised practice, and that Academic Board had received an overview of this.

Agenda item Paper Ref	6.3 AAC/2/22/6	<b>Academic Regulations: Teaching &amp; Learning Committee Report</b>	Minute Ref AAC/2/22/9
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- 9.1 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) introduced the paper which reported on business progressed by the Teaching and Learning Committee, specifically focusing on the items Academic Board were asked to approve, including the:
- Mandatory use of the University Grade Descriptor.
  - Updated Policy for Assessment.
  - Design principles for Level 4 and Foundation Year.

Members were given an overview of the discussion at Academic Board which focussed on the degree algorithm, the design principles, and on the period of transition and integration.

- 9.2 The Committee, in discussion:
- **noted** Academic Board's scrutiny of the report.
  - were informed that assessment changes were being brought into closer coordination.
  - commented on the clear summary of items requiring approval.

Agenda item Paper Ref	7 AAC/2/22/7	<b>Researcher Development Concordat Annual Report</b>	Minute Ref AAC/2/22/10
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- 10.1 The Director of the Doctoral School introduced the annual report which has been produced as part of the University's commitment as a signatory of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers, as set out by Vitae. Members were informed of the importance for governors to have sight of the report in raising awareness of its existence and that it will be publicly viewable.

- 10.2 The Committee **noted** the action taken by Academic Board and in discussion explored issues and risks for the University aligned to the report. This included the development of initiatives to enhance opportunities for early career researchers, the external funding environment, and the recruitment of high calibre PhD candidates.

Agenda item 8 Paper Ref AAC/2/22/8	<b>Regulation and External Policy Update</b>	Minute Ref AAC/2/22/11
11.1	The paper updated the Committee on changes and proposed amendments to the Office for Students' 'B' conditions of registration (quality and standards) and builds on information members received at a recent Board of Governors briefing on teaching quality. The Head of Governance and Sector Regulation highlighted the following for discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The revised conditions that came into force on 01 May 2022.</li> <li>The University's robust response to the separate consultations on Conditions B3 (student outcomes) and B6 (Teaching Excellence Framework).</li> <li>There are few confirmed numerical examples of what regulatory baselines entail therefore engagement with expectations and examples of compliant and non-compliant behaviours will be important to understand the University's performance, baseline, and thresholds.</li> <li>There are strong indicators the regulatory framework will continue to evolve following publication of the Office for Students strategy (2022 to 2025).</li> </ul>	
11.2	In <b>noting</b> the paper and action taken by Academic Board, the Committee thanked colleagues for providing a robust response to the consultations. In discussion, members received assurances from managers and leaders that the University: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>regularly uses internal audit to provide challenge and assurance</li> <li>continues to review compliance with the conditions of registration.</li> <li>there is centralised oversight of underpinning processes and reporting systems to respond effectively to compliance checks without undue administrative additionality.</li> </ul>	
Agenda item 9.1 Paper Ref AAC/2/22/9	<b>Items received from Academic Board: Unconfirmed minutes of the Academic Board held on the 27 April 2022</b>	Minute Ref AAC/2/22/12
12.1	The Committee <b>received</b> the minutes of the April Academic Board meeting.	
Agenda item 9.2 Paper Ref AAC/2/22/9	<b>Items received from Academic Board: Academic Board Appointments</b>	Minute Ref AAC/2/22/13
13.1	The Committee <b>noted</b> the appointments made to the Academic Board.	
Agenda item 9.3 Paper Ref AAC/2/22/9 STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL	<b>Items received from Academic Board: Honorary Awards Committee Interim Report</b>	Minute Ref AAC/2/22/14
14.1	The Committee <b>noted</b> the Honorary Awards Committee report.	
Agenda item 9.4 Paper Ref AAC/2/22/9	<b>Items received from Academic Board: Open Research Statement</b>	Minute Ref AAC/2/22/15
15.1	The Committee <b>noted</b> the statement.	
Agenda item 9.5 Paper Ref AAC/2/22/9	<b>Items received from Academic Board: Student Casework: Fitness to Practise Annual Report</b>	Minute Ref AAC/2/22/16
16.1	The Committee <b>noted</b> the annual statistical review.	
Agenda item 9.6 Paper Ref AAC/2/22/9	<b>Items received from Academic Board: Students' Union Election Outcomes</b>	Minute Ref AAC/2/22/17
17.1	The Committee <b>noted</b> the Students' Union full-time election outcomes.	
Agenda Item 10 Paper Ref AAC/2/22/10	<b>Annual Business Cycle</b>	Minute Ref AAC/2/22/18
18.1	The forward schedule of business was <b>noted</b> .	
Agenda Item 12	<b>Other Urgent Business</b>	Minute Ref AAC/2/22/19

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19.1 The Committee **received** a presentation from the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research and Innovation) detailing the outcome of the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021 results for the University. This included an overview of the REF, key aspects of the submission and the REF assessment process. Headline points were as follows:

- Impact that is world leading (4 star) has doubled since the previous submission in 2014.
- Impact that is world leading or internationally excellent (4 star and 3 star) has increased. These ratings are directly linked to funding.
- The research base grew significantly in size and diversity since the previous submission, as the staff return doubled with increases in the number of submitted female staff and staff from an ethnic minority background.
- Research power has improved since the previous submission and new research areas are being occupied.
- The REF outcome demonstrates strong alignment to the University's mission of transforming lives.
- Increases in world leading or internationally excellent research has impacted the volume of recognised internationally (2\*) research, which has reduced.
- A 'deep-dive' will be undertaken to explore the increase in research power and the number of Postgraduate Research students.
- Further information and analysis on the outcome would be available for scrutiny and challenge at a future meeting.

The Committee offered congratulations on a successful outcome for the University. In the subsequent discussion, members:

- received confirmation that data is submitted on all research active staff.
- received assurances that sector comparisons would be undertaken to understand competitor differentials.
- commented on the achievement of improving outputs for gender and ethnic minority groups.
- noted that institutes had been asked to take a measured and considered approach to outcome communications.
- noted that as well as wider communications, it would be helpful to specifically target communications around impact and expertise where this may help to enhance the University's research strategy objectives.
- explored the impact of the current quality weighted methodology and potential future changes to the funding algorithm.

In outlining next steps, the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research and Innovation) confirmed that an update to the Research and Innovation elements of the University's strategic plan will be presented to the University Leadership Team.

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19.2 As it was the final sole meeting of committee for the 2022/23 academic year (see paragraph 20.1) the Chair, on behalf of the committee, thanked the departing Student's Union President for his contributions.

The Head of Governance and Sector Regulation informed members that discussions will take place with the President-elect to confirm the Students' Union representation on the committee for the 2022/23 academic year.

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19.3 The Head of Governance and Sector Regulation appraised the committee of an ongoing internal academic governance review, welcoming feedback and input through a survey to be circulated to members.

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Agenda Item 13

**Date of Next Meeting**

Minute Ref AAC/2/22/20

20.1 The Committee will next meet on 29 June 2022, this will be a joint meeting with Academic Board.

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