

CONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 02 FEBRUARY 2022

PRESENT (via Zoom):

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| Professor Jeffrey Bale (Chair) | Dr Claire Ketnor |
| Angela Foulkes (from item 4) | Professor Julietta Patnick |
| Praise Ishola | Professor Keith Ridgway |

APOLOGIES:

Dr Ishan Cader

| IN ATTENDANCE: | AGENDA ITEM |
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| Michaela Boryslawskij, 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 |
| Ben Machin, Governance Senior Adviser (Committee Secretary) | All |
| Dr Neil McKay, Dean of Students | All |
| Professor David Shepherd, Pro-Vice Chancellor for Teaching and Learning | All |
| Carolyn Taylor, Head of Student Policy and Compliance | Items 7.1 – 7.3 |
| Ruth Thei, Head of Governance and Sector Regulation | All |
| Alison Wells, Director of Academic Services | All |

Opening Remarks

Minute Ref AAC/1/22/1

1.1 In opening the meeting, the Chair:

- Noted the apologies received.
- Congratulated Professor David Shepherd on his appointment to Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic)

Agenda item 2
Paper Ref

Declarations of Interest

Minute Ref AAC/1/22/2

2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

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

Minutes of Meeting held on 06 October 2021

Minute Ref AAC/1/22/3

3.1 The Committee **approved** the minutes from the meeting held on 06 October 2021 as an accurate record.

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

Matters Arising and Action Tracker

Minute Ref AAC/1/22/4

4.1 There were no identified matters arising.

4.2 The Chair reported that several areas of action were either covered on the agenda, pending action by an external body or had been closed.

4.3 The Committee **elected** Professor Keith Ridgway as Deputy Chair (AAC/4/21/11.2).

Agenda item 5
Paper Ref AAC/1/22/5

Apprenticeships and Ofsted Update

Minute Ref AAC/1/22/5

5.1 The paper presented the annual Self-Assessment Report for 2020/21 which covered the University's entire apprenticeship provision, setting out key strengths and areas for improvement. The Director of Skills and Partnerships outlined the Self-Assessment Report's progress through the University's academic governance framework and informed members:

- the Self-Assessment Report was submitted to Ofsted at the end of January 2022 and will be used by inspection teams to inform a future inspection, which is

expected to take place this year. Due to the imposed timeframes, feedback was provided by the Chair of the Committee, as Link Governor, in advance of the submission.

- the version presented to the Committee incorporated amendments following scrutiny and challenge from the Academic Board and the Link Governor.
- areas for improvement (and associated actions) will feed into the Quality Improvement Plan.
- the Quality Improvement Plan will be presented to the Committee at its next meeting.

5.2 In **noting** the apprenticeship Self-Assessment Report, the Committee commented that this is an honest and transparent document that provides testimony to the significant progress made since the last inspection. Members were satisfied there is a clear awareness of areas to improve that have been appropriately acknowledged within the report.

In discussion, the Committee recommended the following considerations:

- outputs from 'deep dives' by an external contractor have supported the preparation of the Self-Assessment Report. It was suggested that external input could be enhanced further by incorporating a review of the final document.
- the requirement to submit the Self-Assessment Report to Ofsted prior to the notification of an inspection is reviewed and clarified.
- a mid-year update document is created which sits alongside the Self-Assessment Report and demonstrates in-year progress.

Action: Director of Skills and Partnerships

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

Annual Quality Review Report

Minute Ref AAC/1/22/6

6.1 The Annual Quality Review Report set out how the University continued to exercise its responsibilities for the regulation, quality assurance, and enhancement of educational provision through its academic governance structure. The Head of Academic Quality and Standards highlighted the following points for the Committee's attention:

- Overall, the University's quality procedures for taught and research students are operating effectively to maintain standards and to assure and enhance the quality of its provision and meet all required regulatory mandates.
 - The University is dedicated, focused and optimistic about improving ratings at an imminent Ofsted inspection.
 - Particular attention needs to be given to the increasing range of regulatory requirements within sector regulation.
 - Assurance was given to the Academic Board that a single new collaborative programme in a higher risk geographical area does not extend the University's risk and continues to be closely monitored.
 - The Office for Students' consultation on quality and standards conditions has the potential to change how Quality and Standards processes operate.
 - Some arrangements are being further reviewed to support revised internal governance structures
 - There was acknowledgement of current volumes of modifications. Work is ongoing to reduce the volume of late curriculum modifications and ensure greater portfolio stability.
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6.2 The Committee's consideration of the Annual Quality Review was informed by the content of the report, details of the scrutiny and challenge that had taken place at the Academic Board, and discussions with senior leaders and managers. Key areas of discussion were as follows:

- Improving stability in the curriculum can be correlated with an increase in student satisfaction, particularly in relation to organisation and management.
- Reflections on the regulatory framework were commended.
- Achieving a good quality Ofsted rating from future inspections of apprenticeship and Initial Teaching Training is a strategic priority.
- Members advised on the importance of capturing and embedding lessons learned in a systematic way as the apprenticeship provision continues to grow.
- As the University's portfolio becomes more diverse, elements of consumer protection with regards to student engagement should be considered to form part of the continuing narrative on the University's academic provision.

6.3 The Committee was assured as to the overall quality of the University's academic provision and that processes were in place to maintain, review and enhance this quality. The Committee **approved** the Annual Quality Review report.

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| Agenda item | 7.1 | Academic Regulations: | Minute Ref | AAC/1/22/7.1 |
| Paper Ref | AAC/1/22/7 | Undergraduate Degree Algorithm Review | | Confidential |
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7.1 The Committee received a confidential report.

7.2 Action: Committee Secretary

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| Agenda item | 7.2 | Academic Regulations: | Minute Ref | AAC/1/22/8 |
| Paper Ref | AAC/1/22/7 | Student Disciplinary Regulations - Annual Statistical Review 2020/21 | | |
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8.1 The Head of Student Policy and Compliance introduced the annual statistical review on the operation of the Disciplinary Regulations and Procedures for students for the 2020/21 academic year. The Committee were informed:

- an increase in conduct cases was attributed to the pandemic and is expected to reduce in the current academic year.
- relationships with the local community and external organisations have been strengthened which will improve opportunities for early and preventative action.

8.2 The Committee **received** and **noted** the report.

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| Agenda item | 7.3 | Academic Regulations: | Minute Ref | AAC/1/22/9 |
| Paper Ref | AAC/1/22/7 | Academic Standing Panel: Assessment Scaling and Exceptions 2020/21 | | |
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9.1 The Committee received the report on cases that had been reviewed by the Academic Standing Panel/University Central Panel in the 2020/21 academic year. The Director of Academic Services briefed the Committee on the role and operation of the Panel in taking action to remedy arising concerns and specific issues, reflect the legitimate attainment of students and ensure the maintenance of robust and consistent processes and expectations within the context of a diverse student population.

9.2 Members were provided with assurance that action was only taken in exceptional circumstances and that academic quality and standards were upheld, whilst achieving optimum outcomes for students. The Committee commended the University's transparency in reporting and on a proportionate approach to ensuring student achievement and success.

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| Agenda item | 8.1 | Student Experience: | Minute Ref | AAC/1/22/10 |
| Paper Ref | AAC/1/22/8 | Student Experience Update | | |
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- 10.1 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 student learning experience as the University emerges from management of the pandemic to longer term considerations.

The Committee was informed that since the meeting of the Academic Board on 19 January 2022, there were new developments to consider. Reference was made to the announced industrial action planned for February and March 2022, and the publication of three Office for Students consultations pertaining to student outcomes (Condition of Registration B3) and the Teaching Excellence Framework.

- 10.2 The Committee **noted** the report and in discussion:
- received assurances that mechanisms and procedures were in place to identify risk areas and minimise the impact of the planned industrial action on learning.
 - highlighted the importance of ensuring and periodically reviewing contingency procedures for the awarding of degrees in circumstances where there may be incomplete marks available.

Agenda item 8.2
Paper Ref AAC/1/22/8

**Student Experience:
University Response: Student Voice Report
2020/21**

Minute Ref AAC/1/22/11

- 11.1 The Committee received an overview of the Student Voice report from the President of the Students Union who outlined key statistics and recommendations from the report.

In introducing the University's response, the Dean of Students recognised colleagues who had contributed to a comprehensive interim response. Members were informed the work represents a continuous cycle of improvement and is correlated with other areas of student feedback and engagement.

- 11.2 The Committee **noted** the report and interim response. Members welcomed the collaborative and collective approach between the University and the Students Union as enabling effective responses to support the students' experience. In response to a question on the recency of the issues, the Dean of Students confirmed that some issues predate and are not related to the pandemic, but that this has accentuated them.

The Chair thanked the Students Union President and Dean of Students for their work on the report and interim response which demonstrates constructive engagement between students and the University.

Agenda item 9
Paper Ref AAC/1/22/9

**Academic Board: Constitution and
Membership**

Minute Ref AAC/1/22/12

- 12.1 The Committee noted the paper which codifies and refreshes the Academic Board procedures for appointment, in line with ongoing work related to the Instrument and Articles and in recognition of changes within the institution. The Head of Governance and Sector Regulation informed members the procedures:
- will be utilised in recruiting where terms of office on the Academic Board end in July 2022.
 - introduce a two- or three-year variable term of office to all selected members with an aim of promoting business continuity and to extend opportunities.
 - give College Deans a wider scope of consideration during the selection process to ensure there is sufficient coverage of key business streams.

- incorporate the use of diversity data to enhance equality monitoring.
- do not propose any changes to the ex-officio or selected membership.

12.2 The Committee were content with the procedures for appointment, approved by the Academic Board.

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| Agenda item 10.1 Paper Ref AAC/1/22/10 | Items received from Academic Board: Unconfirmed minutes of the Academic Board held on the 19 January 2022 | Minute Ref AAC/1/22/13 |
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13.1 The Committee **received** the minutes of the January Academic Board meeting.

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| Agenda item 10.2 Paper Ref AAC/1/22/10 | Items received from Academic Board: Honorary Awards Committee: Terms of Reference and Constitution | Minute Ref AAC/1/22/14 |
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14.1 The Committee **noted** the updated Terms of Reference for the Honorary Awards Committee.

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| Agenda Item 11 Paper Ref AAC/1/22/11 | Annual Business Cycle | Minute Ref AAC/1/22/15 |
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15.1 The forward schedule of business for the next meeting was **noted**.

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| Agenda Item 12 | Date of Next Meeting | Minute Ref AAC/1/22/16 |
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16.1 The Committee will next meet on 18 May 2022.

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| Agenda Item 13 | Other Urgent Business | Minute Ref AAC/1/22/17 |
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17.1 The Chair confirmed that Board of Governors' sub-committee meetings will continue to be held remotely.

17.2 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) informed the Committee that recruitment processes had commenced to appoint a substantive Pro-Vice Chancellor (Teaching and Learning). In addition, the role will be reframed Pro-Vice Chancellor (Teaching, Learning and Student Success).