

CONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 29 JUNE 2022

ACADEMIC BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT (via Zoom):

Zainab Ata	Catriona Hynes	Dr Alison Purvis
Dr Helen Best	Praise Ishola	Dr Toni Schwarz
Elena Bowley	Prof Kevin Kerrigan	Prof David Shepherd
Dr Ian Garner	Dr Rebecca Mallet	Dr David Smith – to item 7.1
Dr Sam Giove	Dr Neil McKay	Dr Lucian Tipi
Dr Geff Green	Prof Connor Moss	Prof Chris Wigginton
Dr Rebecca Hodgson	Adeyemi Otebolaku	Dr Rob Wilson
Prof Sir Chris Husbands (Chair)	Dr Vishal Parikh	

ACADEMIC ASSURANCE COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT (via Zoom):

Prof Jeff Bale	Prof Julietta Patnick
Angela Foulkes	Prof Keith Ridgeway

APOLOGIES:

Ishan Cader (AAC member), Prof Rory Duncan, Dr Elizabeth Freeman, Dr John Freeman, Dr Christine O’Leary, Susan Wakefield

IN ATTENDANCE:

Dr Sadiq Bhanbhro, Incoming member (shadowing)	Ben Machin, Governance Senior Adviser (Secretary)
Michaela Boryslawskyj, University Secretary (from item 5)	Dayo Oladiti, Incoming member (shadowing)
Prof Claire Craig, Incoming member (shadowing)	Sabahat Pathan, Incoming member (shadowing)
Prof Wayne Cranton, Dean of Research (item 6.1)	Prof John Pymm, Director of Academic Development and Diversity
Dr Marjory Da Costa Abreu, Incoming member (shadowing)	Joe Rennie, Group Director of Student and Academic Services
Dr Luke Desforges, Incoming member (shadowing)	Carolyn Taylor, Head of Student Policy and Compliance
Mobolaji Ajisafe Edun, Incoming member (shadowing)	Ruth Thei, Head of Governance and Sector Regulation
Dr James Fenwick, Incoming member (shadowing) – to item 8	Misbah Ticklay, Incoming member (shadowing)
Leopold Green, Head of Academic Quality & Standards	Alison Wells, Director of Academic Services
Dr Tina Harness, Incoming member (shadowing)	

Agenda item 1
Paper Ref

Opening of the meeting

Minute Ref AB/3/22/1

1.1 In opening the meeting, the Chair:

- Noted the apologies received.
- Welcomed new and incoming members.
- Thanked, on behalf of Academic Board, members whose terms of office were ending for their contributions.

Agenda item 2 Paper Ref AB/3/22/2	Declaration of interest	Minute Ref AB/3/22/2
2.1	Academic Assurance Committee (“AAC”) members confirmed there were no declarations of interest.	
Agenda item 3 AB/2/22/M	Minutes of the Previous Meeting	Minute Ref AB/3/22/3
3.1	The Board approved the minutes of the meeting on 27 April 2022 as a correct record.	
3.2	AAC members approved the minutes of the meeting on 18 May 2022 as a correct record.	
Agenda item 4 Verbal	Academic Assurance Committee feedback	Minute Ref AB/3/22/4
4.1	In providing feedback from the AAC meeting held on 18 May 2022 (AAC/2/22/M), the Chair informed members that the Committee had: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sought the following assurances: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ that mechanisms and procedures were in place to identify risk areas and minimise the impact of the planned industrial action on student experience and outcomes. ○ of the University’s student complaint handling processes. ○ that the University continues to review compliance with the Office for Students conditions of registration and the underpinning processes and reporting systems to respond effectively without undue internal administrative burden. • explored issues for the University aligned to the Researcher Development Concordat, including initiatives to enhance development opportunities for early career researchers, the external funding environment, and the recruitment of high calibre PhD candidates. • received a presentation on the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021 results and explored the reasons for institutional advances in the sector and communications. 	
Agenda item 5 Paper Ref AB/3/22/5	Matters Arising and Action Tracker	Minute Ref AB/3/22/5
5.1	Under matters arising, the Chair updated members on commentary in the national media about the closure of humanities courses across the sector, and specific coverage about the changes the university is making to the teaching of English Literature from 2023/24. Key points were as follow: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a large institution, the university regularly reviews and reshapes the portfolio offer to ensure that it is as rich, relevant, and responsive to changing patterns of demand by students and employers in the local and national landscape. • English literature will remain part of a broad-based English degree which features language, literature, and creative writing. • The decision returns the portfolio to a previous position of offering a single route in English and is an analogous approach to other HEIs. • Changes are predominantly driven by an ambition to provide the best possible offer and experience in the context of the latest application trends and the university’s future aspirations. • A review of communications in response to the national and social media coverage will be undertaken. • An article responding to the media reports has been written in the Times Higher Education which emphasises the university’s continued commitment to humanities. 	

- Internal communications will be circulated reinforcing the university's continued commitment to English.

In response to the Chairs statement,

- Members of Academic Board commented on the importance of the university's statement being communicated in a time sensitive way across different media channels to ensure thorough coverage.
- Members of the Academic Assurance Committee commented on the appropriateness of universities periodically reviewing academic portfolios in accordance with student demand and offered support in sharing the University's statement.

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

Agenda item 6.1	Policies, Regulation, and Student Experience	Minute Ref AB/3/22/6
Paper Ref AB/3/22/6.1	Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021 outcome	

- 6.1 The report to Academic Board detailed the outcome of the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021 results for the University, that were published on 12 May 2022. In presenting the report, the Dean of Research highlighted the following headline points:
- 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.
 - Impact that is world leading (4 star) has doubled since the previous submission in 2014.
 - The university is top 10 in the UK for impact in Planning, Sport, and Art and Design.
 - Quality Related (QR) funding resulting from the outcomes of the REF2021 will be confirmed in August 2022.
 - A review of results by Unit of assessment is being undertaken.
 - Outcomes have been widely communicated internally and externally.

6.2 Academic Board welcomed the results from the REF2021. In response to a members' question, the Dean of Research confirmed that Research England are accountable for changes to the funding formulae and an enhanced focused on inclusivity is expected in future iterations.

6.4 It was noted that AAC had received a presentation on the outcome from the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research and Innovation) in their previous meeting (min ref: AAC/2/22/19).

6.3 Academic Board **received** and **noted** the outcome.

Agenda item 6.2	Policies, Regulation, and Student Experience	Minute Ref AB/3/22/7
Paper Ref Presentation	Portfolio Sustainability and Course Performance (PSCP): Overview	

- 7.1 The Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) delivered an overview presentation on the Portfolio Sustainability and Course Performance (PSCP) workstream of the Portfolio Plan within Future Strategy Programme (FSP). The presentation focused on the aims and developments within the following strands of PSCP:
- Portfolio Governance and Processes
 - Course Sustainability
 - Curriculum Delivery Models
 - Managing Exceptions

7.2 In response to an Academic Board member's question, the Dean of Academic Strategy confirmed that postgraduate research degrees would be further reviewed as appropriate.

7.3 Members of AAC commented that increasing consistency of delivery and expectations across the institution is a desirable course of action, that reflects the best interests of students and the departments by promoting equity and reducing exceptions.

7.4 Academic Board **received** and **noted** the presentation.

Agenda item 6.3	Policies, Regulation, and Student Experience	Minute Ref AB/3/22/8
Paper Ref AB/3/22/6.3	Curriculum Structures	

8.1 The report, supplemented with a presentation, detailed proposed revisions to simplify the curriculum structures of the University’s taught portfolios. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) outlined the principles, process, and major propositions. Key points were as follows:

- Proposals for three of five schemes were presented for consideration, including:
 - Scheme A (32-week undergraduate provision)
 - Scheme B (taught postgraduate provision)
 - Scheme C (extended-year, practice-focused provision)
- The key driver behind the proposals is to enhance consistency across the portfolio making the curriculum and courses more sustainable, distinctive, and aligned with the principles of the Hallam Model.
- Intended benefits to learning, teaching, and assessment as well as administrative and resourcing efficiencies were outlined.
- The presentation illustrated an extensive consultation process and consideration by University groups as part of the governance pathway.
- A correction to the paper was identified under point 2.2 which should read, “**normally no more** than 4 modules per level of study”.
- Detailed scrutiny of the proposals had taken place at the Teaching and Learning Committee on 07 June 2022, which is reflected in the sub-committee report (paper ref: AB-3-22-7.2) and the unconfirmed minutes (paper ref: AB-3-22-11.2).
- Following the Teaching and Learning Committee meeting, an Equality Impact Assessment screening document has been completed and shown a full assessment in line with standards procedures is not required.
- A detailed schedule for validation events, in priority order identified by Departments and Colleges is being finalised.
- Academic Quality and Standards will commence department and course support for implementation.
- A robust communications plan will be developed.

8.2 Members of Academic Board welcomed the proposals and commented that the significant technical detail included in the report and presentation was representative of the University’s large and complex portfolio. The following points were raised in discussion:

- The consultation process has been inclusive, and members feel that colleagues have had the opportunity to input into the development of the proposals.
- It is anticipated that these proposals will remain consistent with outputs from the Quality Assurance Agency subject benchmark statement reviews.
- Assurance was given that student visa requirements for international students were a fundamental consideration for the project team throughout the design stage with any remaining challenges constrained by Home Office requirements.

- Semesterisation will have a range of benefits to support student success including a more even distribution of assessment with a clearer sight of progress earlier in the programme, allowing for more timely interventions to address performance issues.
- The project team will move quickly into the implementation stage following approval and supportive guidance will be made available in the coming weeks.
- The project team will work with the Students Union to develop communications to students when the final approach for implementation has been determined.

8.3 In noting Academic Board's discussion, AAC:

- Received confirmation that the principles of semesterisation for the University will be the delivery of teaching and assessment within a single semester.
- Advised on the importance of monitoring to ensure the intended benefits are achieved.
- Received assurances there would be a review of student performance and outcomes to evaluate the impact of the changes, following implementation, to ensure the intended benefits were being delivered.
- Received clarity that employability will be included in the core curriculum. It is not intended for inclusion in the non-credit bearing 'Hallam Module' module that will host noncurricular content.

8.4 Academic Board:

- **endorsed** the process of consultation, challenge, and approval of the proposals that have taken place to date.
- **approved** the proposed curriculum structures and associated proposals for implementation and management of exceptions.

Agenda item 6.4

Policies, Regulation, and Student Experience

Minute AB/3/22/9

Paper Ref AB/3/22/6.4

Student Experience Update

Ref

9.1 The report gave the Academic Board insight into how the University is ensuring the continued delivery of a high-quality academic experience, to students for the remainder of the 2021/22 academic year. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) presented the report which covered the following headline points:

- The institutional response rate to the 2022 National Student Survey is in line with the sector average and previous years. The results are expected to be published by the Office for Students' in July 2022.
- The institutional response rate to the Advance HE 2022 Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey is higher than in 2021 and above the sector average. The results are expected to be published in July 2022.
- Module Evaluation Questionnaire data for semester two and year-long modules show an increase in satisfaction in most areas, suggesting a sustained improvement across the year.
- A comprehensive review aligned to the Access and Participation Plan, and the associated standards of evidence and evaluative practice, will begin in September 2022.
- A University project to identify gaps in the current international student experience has been concluded. The recommendations will form part of a phased implementation led by the Future Strategy Programme Sustainable International Student Growth (SISG) Project Delivery Group from September 2022.
- The most recent Student Voice Bulletin collated from the Student Voice Repository has been published.
- A proposed approach to enhance the attendance monitoring function of the Jisc learning analytics platform has been approved. A schedule for implementation will be developed alongside a review and update of associated policies.

- An update from Student and Academic Services covered:
 - a new sport cost inclusivity fund for 2022/23.
 - winning the ‘Great Event’ award at the British Universities and Colleges Sport (BUCS) Yorkshire University Sports Awards for 2022 Sheffield Varsity,
 - participation in a national research project on black students’ experience of equality, diversity and inclusivity in libraries.
 - new catering offers at the Atrium and Hallam central.
 - Progress on the University Mental Health Charter.
- The proposed boycott of marking and assessment, as part of Action Short of Strike (ASOS), was withdrawn in May, although other features of ASOS remain in place until October 2022.
- An update on 2021/22 student appeals and complaints and academic integrity matters was presented.
- An update on the roll-out of work on minoritised Student Groups across departments was provided.

- 9.2 Members of Academic Board thanked the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) for the update. Key points from the subsequent discussion were as follows:
- The Students’ Union thanked the University for its continued support for students and welcomed the inclusion of an update on the experiences of international students.
 - Members commented that appeals and complaints data could be enhanced with the inclusion of a college-level and demographic breakdown, although it was noted a detailed comparative analysis is received annually.
 - College leaders welcomed the frequency of the feedback from the Student Voice Repository.
 - Work is being undertaken to enhance support for students in professional areas.
 - The Hallam Model remains critical to our overall curriculum design approach.
 - An update on the experience of research students in the standing report would be considered for inclusion in future iterations.

- 9.3 Members of AAC received assurances that the university routinely undertakes mid-module questionnaires to seek feedback and enable corrective interventions.

- 9.4 Academic Board **noted** the update.

Agenda item	7.1	Exceptional Regulation (Award and Progression)	Minute	AB/3/22/10
Paper Ref	AB/3/22/7.1		Ref	
	Confidential			

- 10.1 The report proposed the introduction of a variation to the regulations to mitigate disruption to the application of the Assessment Regulations. In outlining the regulation and proposed text, the Head of Academic Quality and Standards:
- Informed members the key driver behind the proposals is to ensure the University has the necessary arrangements to confer marks and meet contractual obligations in the event of significant disruption to teaching.
 - Clarified the regulation could be used in circumstances where ‘some’ marks were affected.
 - Detailed the circumstances whereby the application of the University’s normal regulations could be waived.
 - Confirmed that academic standards would be maintained and gave assurances as to the security and robustness of the University’s academic awards.

- 10.2 In examining the proposed regulation text and intended application, members of Academic Board:
- Endorsed steps in the procedures that detail the necessary interactions with professional bodies.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sought confirmation that decisions made by an Exceptional Assessment and Award Board would be final unless the student requested a review. Received assurances the proposed regulation would only be used in truly exceptional circumstances in which no other alternative is available. 	
10.3	Members of AAC were supportive of the new regulation, commenting on the importance of introducing contingency procedures that align with sector practice.	
10.4	Academic Board approved the regulation.	
Agenda item 7.2	Academic Board Sub-Committee Report	Minute Ref AB/3/22/11
Paper Ref AB/3/22/7.2		
11.1	<p>The report, in conjunction with the unconfirmed records of the meetings on 07 June 2022 (paper ref: AB-3-22-10.2) and 16 June 2022 (paper ref: AB-3-22-10.2), updated the Academic Board on business progressed by the Teaching and Learning and Research and Innovation Committees. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), as Chair of the Committees, confirmed the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic Board is asked to approve the Student Fitness to Practise Regulations, subject to an amendment recommended by Legal Services in paragraph 7. The proposals on Curriculum Structures are recommended to the Academic Board for approval (min ref: AB/3/22/8). Academic Board is asked to note and endorse the scrutiny of the Research Publication Policy. Academic Board is asked to note the Committees approval of student policies. Academic Board is asked to note the scrutiny and challenge to the exemptions to the Standard Assessment Regulations, Ofsted Regulated provision and the review of the REF2021 outcomes (min ref: AB/3/22/6). 	
11.2	In receiving the report, Academic Board members identified that future iterations of the Student Fitness to Practise Regulations would benefit from providing further clarity as to the application of these regulations to all types of provision.	
11.3	<p>Academic Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> approved the Fitness to Practise Regulations, subject to outlined amendment and the recommendation relating to Curriculum Structures (min ref: AB/3/22/8). noted the scrutiny, recommendations, and decisions in the report. 	
Agenda item 7.3	Student Protection Plan	Minute Ref AB/3/22/12
Paper Ref AB/3/22/7.3		
Confidential		
12.1	<p>The report presented to Academic Board an updated Student Protection Plan which is a requirement of Office for Students (OfS) Condition of Registration C3. The Head of Governance and Sector Regulation informed members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The update reflected internal and external changes. Following approval the plan will be published on the university's external website and a notification will be sent to the Office for Students'. The plan will be reviewed on an annual basis. 	
12.2	<p>In considering the proposed updates, the following was raised in discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusion of climate related issues will be considered for the next review. Members exchanged views on the vulnerabilities to teaching and learning posed by the unavailability of staff and the legal position was noted. To maintain the integrity of IT security processes, some mitigations omit specific details. 	
12.3	Members of AAC welcomed the updated Student Protection Plan in providing assurances that the University is demonstrating adherence with regulatory responsibilities.	
12.4	Academic Board approved the plan.	

Agenda item 8 Paper Ref AB/3/22/8 Confidential	Academic Governance Review: interim report	Minute Ref AB/3/22/13
13.1 Academic Board noted the interim report.		
Agenda item 9 Paper Ref AB/3/22/9	Students' Union: Election Outcomes (part-time)	Minute Ref AB/3/22/14
14.1 Academic Board noted the Students' Union part-time election outcomes.		
Agenda item 10.1 Paper Ref AB/3/22/10.1	Academic Board: Sub-Committee Minutes Unconfirmed minutes of the Research and Innovation Committee held on 16 June 2022	Minute Ref AB/3/22/15
15.1 Academic Board received and noted the unconfirmed minutes.		
Agenda item 10.2 AB/3/22/10.2	Academic Board: Sub-Committee Minutes Unconfirmed minutes of the Teaching and Learning Committee held on 07 June 2022	Minute Ref AB/3/22/16
16.1 Academic Board received and noted the unconfirmed minutes.		
Agenda item 11 AB/3/22/11	Annual Business Cycle	Minute Ref AB/3/22/17
17.1 The forward schedule of business was noted .		
Agenda item 12	Other urgent business	Minute Ref AB/3/22/18
18.1 No urgent business was raised.		
Agenda item 13	Date of Next Meetings	Minute Ref AB/3/22/19
19.1 Academic Board, 5 October 2022		
19.2 Academic Assurance Committee, 10 November 2022		
Agenda item 14	Review of Meeting	Minute Ref AB/3/22/20
20.1 The Chair thanked all staff and students present in the meeting for their thoughtful and concise contributions that included 36 interventions (30 from members of staff and 6 from students; 16 male and 20 female). Members were invited to submit a comment about the effectiveness of the meeting, and these would be collated.		