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| **CONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26 APRIL 2023** |
| **Present**  |  |
| Prof David Shepherd (Chair)Dr Sadiq BhanbhroRoger BatemanDr Helen Best Prof Neil BricklebankProf Claire CraigDr Marjory Da Costa Abreu | Prof Rory Duncan Dr James Fenwick (up to item 5.2)Dr Iain Garner Dr Samantha GioveProf Kevin Kerrigan Dr Neil McKay | Prof Conor Moss Dayo Oladiti Dr Rebecca Peake David Rogerson Dr Alison PurvisProf Helen Scott (from item 5.2)Prof David Smith |
| **Apologies:** |  |
| Prof Sir Chris Husbands, Mobolaji Edun, Dr Tina Harness, Dr Claire Ketnor, Dr Christine O’Leary, Sabahat Pathan, Dr Alan Ruddock, Prof Toni Schwarz, Misbah Ticklay, Prof Chris Wigginton |
| **In attendance:**Anna Benjamin, Student Policy, Casework and Compliance OfficerMichaela Boryslawskyj, University Secretary Hannah Boyce, Governance Advisor (Secretary)Phil Bloor, Head of AdmissionsNikki Davies, Head of Student Policy Casework and ComplianceDr Luke Desforges, Academic Director - London Campus Leopold Green, Head of Academic Quality and Standards Dr Jill Lebihan, Head of Student EngagementSam Moorwood, Head of Skills and PartnershipsProf John Pymm, Director of Development and DiversityRuth Thei, Head of Governance and Sector RegulationKaren Quine, Senior Lecturer in Strategic ManagementAlison Wells, Director of Academic Services | **Agenda items**AllAllAllItem 7.3AllAllAllItem 7.1Item 4.2AllAllItem 6.1All |
| **Minute Ref** | **Item of Business** |  | **Paper ref** |
| AB/2023-04-26/1 | **OPENING OF THE MEETING** |  |  |
| 1.1 | The Chair:* Noted the apologies received.
* Welcomed Anna Benjamin, Student Policy and Compliance Officer, as an observer to the meeting.
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| AB/2023-04-26/2 | **MATTERS ARISING / ACTION TRACKER / CHAIR’S ACTION** | AB/2023-04-26/3 |
| 2.1 | The following item was taken out of agenda order. Academic Board **received** the Academic Board Selection Panel Report and **noted** the appointment of David Rogerson (Health, Wellbeing and Life Sciences) for a three-year term of office. The Chair welcomed David Rogerson to the meeting. |
| 2.2 | There were no identified matters arising. Two items on the action tracker were confirmed as resolved:* Revisions to the Annual Quality Review for AAC presentation; and
* an amendment to Curriculum Structures Scheme C (confirmed **approved** by Chair’s action).
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| 2.3 | The Chair provided an update on arrangements in relation to the marking and assessment action by UCU, confirming that Deans of College and Heads of Departments were working to identify the extent of likely impact on students and mitigations required to protect a high-quality student experience and outcomes. Academic Board was assured of the presence of regulations to enable the provision of awards in exceptional circumstances should this be necessary. |
| AB/2023-04-26/3 | **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING** |  | AB/2023-02-01/M |
| 3.1 | The minutes of the meeting held on 01 February 2023 were **approved**. |
| AB/2023-04-26/4 | **ACADEMIC ASSURANCE COMMITTEE (AAC) FEEDBACK** |  |
| 4.1 | In providing feedback from the AAC meeting held on 16 March 2023, the Chair informed members that AAC:* Received **assurance** of the University’s actions to mitigate impacts of industrial action on student experience and outcomes.
* **Approved** the Annual Quality Review.
* **Received** a report on scaling and exceptions and **recommended** the University explored the impact of moderation procedures.
* **Received** amendments to Academic Board’s Terms of Reference, which were subsequently **approved** by the Board of Governors.
* **Recommended** proposedchanges to AAC Terms of Reference in alignment with those for Academic Board to the Board of Governors.
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| AB/2023-04-26/5 | **DEGREE AWARDING GAP ANNUAL REVIEW** | AB/2023-04-26/4.1 |
| 5.1 | The Degree Awarding Gap Annual Review Report was presented to Academic Board, which outlined the 2022 set of statistics and gave an update on the activity and evaluation taking place to narrow the gap. The Director of Academic Development and Diversity confirmed:* The report had been considered by the Access and Participation Strategy Group and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee, and recommended to Academic Board by Teaching and Learning Committee.
* Overall, there were significant efforts being made to address this important but hard to tackle issue in academic departments. Figures indicate that the University metrics are broadly comparable with sector performance, and intelligence indicated that practice is being developed in line with that at competitor and comparator institutions.
* The report presented the Academic Board with updates on University activity, trend analysis and the review of plans, activities and evaluations being conducted across the institution.
* The establishment of the University network of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Leads in academic departments was crucial in driving forward change.
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| 5.2 | Academic Board **considered** the report, noting:* Collection of EDI data for decision making was challenging, and work was ongoing to develop robust datasets and enable better understanding of progression and outcomes at all levels.
* Work to understand outcome and experience differences between groups of students and in types of provision and subject areas. These developments were welcomed and anticipated to inform wider areas of portfolio and pedagogy development.
* The ongoing development of the network of equity leads in academic areas was commended, noting the breadth of work being undertaken, future support needs and the importance of visibility of these responsibilities.
* The importance of continued consistency and integration with Access and Participation Plan development and activities.
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| AB/2023-04-26/6 | **APPRENTICESHIPS: QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN** | AB/2023-04-26/4.21 |
| 6.1 | The Head of Skills and Partnerships presented the paper sharing Areas for Improvement (AFIs) within the University’s Apprenticeship Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) for 2023, as identified in the Self-Assessment Report (SAR):* The QIP had been recommended to Academic Board for approval by the Apprenticeship and Work Based Learning Steering Group and Teaching and Learning Committee.
* The SAR was formally approved by Academic Board in February 2023 (min ref: AB/2023-02-01/10.1) and was subsequently submitted to Ofsted in line with guidance from the regulatory body. Although not mandated, this was seen as good practice and provided assurance that the University was carrying out detailed self-assessment and appropriate action planning.
* A key driver of change and greater consistency was anticipated to be delivered through the implementation of the associated revised curriculum structures programme.
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| 6.2 | Academic Board **considered** the report, commenting:* It was important to ensure clear and consistent ownership of actions, taking into consideration where staff would need to work in collaboration to achieve the desired outcomes.
* A report on the development of delivery models would be received by Academic Board which may have implications for the QIP.
* Areas of relative resource intensity and efficiencies in the delivery of employer-led provision were recognised in comparison with other provision types.
* Some challenges were outlined in the delivery and oversight of mandatory training.
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| 6.3 | Academic Board **approved** the Quality Improvement Plan and **recommended** the report to AAC. |
| AB/2023-02-01/7 | **RESEARCHER DEVELOPMENT CONCORDAT ANNUAL REPORT**  | AB/2023-04-26/5.1 |
| 7.1 | The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) presented the report, which noted:* The report had been recommended to Academic Board by the Research and Innovation Committee.
* The annual report is a requirement of the University as a signatory to the Concordat.
* This year, the report comprised the 10-year review summary report as successfully submitted for the HR Excellence in Research (HREiR) Award.
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| 7.2 | Academic Board **considered** the report, commenting:* Wellness and wellbeing were important factors in the Concordat’s three principles, particularly in respect of research environment and culture.
* The report provided a helpful reference to the Development Academy, and extending the pool of ethics reviewers and increased activity was welcomed.
* More information would be provided at an upcoming research town hall event, and any appropriate feedback taken to the Research and Innovation Committee for further consideration.
* The usage of the term Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) within the report was recognised as having some inconsistencies with University recommended use; however the report retained the term as it was still recognised and in continued use by some stakeholders.
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| 7.3 | Academic Board **noted** and **recommended** the report to AAC. |
| AB/2023-04-26/8CONFIDENTIAL | **UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ETHICS ANNUAL REPORT 2021-22**  | AB/2023-04-26/5.2 |
| 8.1 | The Head of University Research Ethics provided an annual review and summary of the University’s Research Ethics Committee’s activity for the 2021/22 academic year; key points included:* The report had been recommended to Academic Board by the University Research Ethics Committee, and the Research and Innovation Committee.
* The report was confidential until it had been considered and published externally.
* The metrics in relation to research ethics applications and work to further understand themes relating to allegations of misconduct, trends and training was presented. Some changes in metrics were considered to be a result of a resumption of in-person activities and changes to review processes.
* A University Research ethics review and audit had been conducted. The review confirmed compliance with expected good practice and policy sector standards and an overview was provided of the recommendations for improving processes, policy and procedures.
* The process for auditing and checking of quality assurance of ethics applications had been enhanced and improved to ensure high quality standards and expectations.
* Particular development was being delivered in respect of Data Protection in research.
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| 8.2 |  Academic Board **considered** the report, noting:* The Research Ethics Committee was thanked for its work and comprehensive report.
* The work to ensure a fair distribution and balance of ethics review workloads was welcomed.
* Consideration was being given to the risks and opportunities relating to Artificial Intelligence (AI) developments. The Research Ethics Committee would keep this issue under review.
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| 8.3 | Academic Board **noted** and **recommended** the report to AAC. |
| AB/2023-04-26/9 | **UNIVERSITY-WIDE ELECTIVES** | AB/2023-04-26/6.1 |
| 9.1 | The Senior Lecturer in Strategic Management updated Academic Board on the progress of the electives project and the move towards a focus on University-wide electives as part of wider sustainable portfolio priorities:* The project had been previously scrutinised at Future Strategy Programme Board and University Executive Board.
* A proposal was released for University-wide consultation outlining some key recommendations, and staff were thanked for their feedback and views.
* Two workstreams on Suitability and Feasibility were identified and were being taken forward. Next steps were for the Academic Strategy Team to develop options for design and implementation, including confirmation of delivery timescales currently targeted in 2025.
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| 9.2 | Academic Board **noted** the report and next steps commenting:* University Wide Electives offered good, universal knowledge, skills and attributes and a positive student experience.
* It was important that all departments are offered an opportunity to engage with electives.
* Further consideration was considered helpful on potential capacity for students to take extracurricular electives.
* Consideration was proposed on the potential integration of electives into the developing SHU-in-London portfolio.
* Provision was being made to enable inclusion of elective developments where appropriate in the portfolio development and validation processes.
* University Wide Electives would be expected to meet minimum viability criteria to ensure module sustainability and deliver a high-quality student experience.
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| AB/2023-04-26/10**CONFIDENTIAL** | **GRADE BASED ASSESSMENT AND UNIVERSITY GRADE BASED DESCRIPTOR** | AB/2023-04-26/6.2 |
| 10.1 | The Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning presented the proposal for revision to the University Grade Descriptors, previously agreed at the Academic Board meeting in June 2021, in response to feedback from the review of initial implementation. * The options outlined in the report were previously presented and discussed at Teaching and Learning Leadership Team and the Teaching and Learning Committee. Both supported and recommended Option A to Academic Board.
* Having a clear and consistent structure was important in continuing to ensure high-quality outcomes for students and to meet regulatory expectations.
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| 10.2 | Academic Board considered the proposal, noting:* Support for the proposed changes, and the necessity for a clear and active implementation and communication strategy led by the Colleges into Departments and for students.
* Recognition of the capacity required to deliver these changes in the short term.
* Assurance received that boundaries had been thoroughly considered and scrutinised.
* It was important to ensure these were the last changes ahead of wider assessment proposals implementation.
* Continued scrutiny would be retained on degree outcome rates.
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| 10.3 | Academic Board **approved** recommended option A proposals to amend the University Grade Descriptors. |
| AB/2023-04-26/11**CONFIDENTIAL** | **ACADEMIC REGULATIONS** | AB/2023-04-26/7.1 |
| 11.1 | The Head of Student Policy and Compliance introduced the Academic Regulations paper, noting: * The proposed changes to both regulations had been scrutinised by the Teaching and Learning Committee.
* No major changes were proposed for the Standard Assessment Regulations for academic year 2023/24. Proposed amendments were intended to update and provider greater clarity for students.
* The proposal to make Regulation 13 (exceptional regulation for awards to students where there are incomplete marks) a permanent feature of the Regulations. This regulation would be triggered through explicit approval by the Academic Board.
* Changes were proposed to the Academic Conduct Regulation to improve clarity and align with sector changes including emerging issues in academic misconduct.
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| 11.2 | Academic Board noted considerations on any proactive adjustments required for students within the misconduct policy would be picked up outside of the meeting. |
| 11.3 | The Academic Board: * **Approved** both the Standard Assessment Regulations for the 2023/24 Academic Year and the Academic Conduct Regulations; and
* delegated minor changes to be approved via Chair’s action where appropriate.
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| AB/2023-04-26/12 | **ACADEMIC AWARDS FRAMEWORK**  | AB/2023-04-26/7.2 |
| 12.1 | The Head of Academic Quality and Standards introduced the revised Academic Awards Framework (AAF) which superseded the April 2017 version, noting:* The revised AAF was recommended by Teaching and Learning Committee for Academic Board approval.
* The AAF had been updated to reflect the approved changes to curriculum structures and new types of provision.
* The AAF would be continuously reviewed and updated where there was an interdependence on wider University policies and external drivers. An annual report would be provided to the Academic Board for approval.
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| 12.2 | Academic Board **approved** the revised Academic Awards Framework for immediate implementation. |
| AB/2023-04-26/13 | **ADMISSION OF UNDER 18’S POLICY** | AB/2023-04-26/7.3 |
| 13.1 | The Head of Admissions introduced the Policy report, noting:* The recommendation for development of the policy, and subsequent recommendation to Academic Board, by University Safeguarding Board.
* The Policy had been received and considered by University Recruitment Committee, Teaching and Learning Committee and Executive Leadership Team, and had received scrutiny by Legal Services.
* The new policy intended to support the safe admission of students under the age of 18 at enrolment and would be introduced for courses starting after October 2023.
* The introduction of the policy did not signal a change to the University’s recruitment priorities at this time.
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| 13.3 | Academic Board **approved** the Under 18’s Policy. |
| AB/2023-04-26/14**STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL** | **HONORARY AWARDS COMMITTEE INTERIM REPORT** | AB/2023-04-26/8 |
| 14.1 | Academic Board received the report from the Honorary Awards Committee and recommendations for Honorary Nominations to be conferred at Graduation 2023 |
| 14.2 | Academic Board:• **Approved** the proposed nominations.• **Approved** delegated authority to the Vice Chancellor to finalise awards on completion of due diligence and take decisions on exceptional awards as appropriate.• Was reminded that information on nominations was strictly confidential until formal announcements has been agreed and released by the University. |
| AB/2023-04-26/15 | **STUDENTS’ UNION ELECTIONS** | AB/2023-04-26/9 |
| 15.1 | Academic Board **noted** the Students’ Union election outcomes. |
| AB/2023-04-26/16 | **OFFICE FOR STUDENTS ‘B’ CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION: INTERNAL AUDIT** | AB/2023-04-26/10 |
| 16.1 | Academic Board **noted** the Office for Students’ ‘B’ Conditions of Registration: Internal audit. |
| AB/2023-04-26/17 | **RESEARCH AND INNOVATION COMMITTEE AND TEACHING AND LEARNING COMMITTEE SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT** | AB/2023-04-26/11.1 |
| 17.1 | Academic Board **noted** the Sub-Committees report. |
| AB/2023-04-26/18 | **UNCONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE RESEARCH AND INNOVATION COMMITTEE HELD ON 09 MARCH 2023** | AB/2023-04-26/11.2 |
| 18.1 | Academic Board **noted** the unconfirmed minutes. |
| AB/2023-04-26/19 | **UNCONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE TEACHING AND LEARNING COMMITTEE HELD ON 22 MARCH 2023** | AB/2023-04-26/11.3 |
| 19.1 | Academic Board **noted** the unconfirmed minutes. |
| AB/2023-04-26/20 | **ANNUAL BUSINESS CYCLE** | AB/2023-04-26/12 |
| 20.1 | The forward schedule of business was **noted.** |
| AB/2023-04-26/21 | **OTHER URGENT BUSINESS** |  |
| 21.1 |  No other business was recorded. |
| AB/2023-04-26/22 | **DATE OF NEXT MEETING** |  |
| 22.1 | Wednesday 14 June 2023 - The annual joint meeting of Academic Board and Academic Assurance Committee. |