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| **CONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 1 FEBRUARY 2023** | | | | | | | | | |
| **Present (via Zoom):** | | |  | | | | | | |
| Prof David Shepherd (Chair)  Roger Bateman  Dr Helen Best  Prof Neil Bricklebank  Prof Claire Craig  Dr Marjory Da Costa Abreu | | Prof Rory Duncan  Mobolaji Edun  Dr Samantha Giove  Dr Neil McKay  Dayo Oladiti  Sabahat Pathan | | | Dr Rebecca Peake  Dr Alan Ruddock  Prof Helen Scott  Prof Toni Schwarz (from item 7)  Prof David Smith (from item 8)  Misbah Ticklay | | | | |
| **Apologies:** | | | |  | | | | | |
| Dr Sadiq Bhanbhro, Dr James Fenwick, Dr Iain Garner, Dr Tina Harness, Prof Sir Chris Husbands, Prof Kevin Kerrigan, Dr Claire Ketnor, Prof Conor Moss, Dr Christine O’Leary, Dr Alison Purvis, Prof Chris Wigginton | | | | | | | | | |
| **In attendance:**  Michaela Boryslawskyj, University Secretary  Professor Doug Cleaver, Director of the Doctoral School  Nikki Davies, Head of Student Policy Casework and Compliance  Dr Luke Desforges, Academic Director - London Campus  Leopold Green, Head of Academic Quality & Standards  Dan Lally, Interim Director of Business Engagement, Skills, and Employability  Ben Machin, Governance Senior Adviser (Secretary)  Ann Norton, Associate Dean (Business and Enterprise) - College of Business, Technology & Engineering  Ruth Thei, Head of Governance and Sector Regulation  Alison Wells, Director of Academic Services | | | | | | | | | **Agenda items**  All  Item 8  All  From item 7  All  Item 10.1  All  Item 9.1  All  All |
| **Minute Ref** | **Item of Business** | | | | |  | | **Paper ref** | |
| AB/2023-02-01/1 | **OPENING OF THE MEETING** | | | | |  | |  | |
| 1.1 | In opening the meeting, the Chair:   * noted the apologies received; * welcomed new staff members; * thanked, on behalf of Academic Board, members who have left the university since the previous meeting for their contributions; * sought member interest in representing the University at an external event on academic governance hosted by AdvanceHE. | | | | | | | | |
| AB/2023-02-01/2 | **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING** | | | | |  | | AB/2022-10-05/M | |
| 2.1 | The minutes of the meeting held on 5 October 2022 were **approved** as a correct record, subject to an amendment which clarifies the scope of the review of Course Improvement Plans by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning, Teaching & Student Success). | | | | | | | | |
| AB/2023-02-01/3 | **ACADEMIC ASSURANCE COMMITTEE (AAC) FEEDBACK** | | | | | |  | | |
| 3.1 | In providing feedback from the AAC meeting held on 10 November 2022 (AAC-2022-11-10-M), the Chair informed members that the Committee had:   * received a presentation on Office for Students’ regulatory developments and explored the impact of National Student Survey changes on sector benchmarking; * sought detail on pre-pandemic trends in the annual review of student casework trajectory, and the contributing factors; * sought the following assurances:   + that there was continuity with recommendations, from student experience reports, that overlap the sabbatical officer terms of office;   + that the University has a working definition of educational gains to support the Teaching Excellence Framework submission. | | | | | | | | |
| AB/2023-02-01/4 | **MATTERS ARISING / ACTION TRACKER** | | | | | |  | | |
| 4.1 | There were no identified matters arising or outstanding actions to report. | | | | | | | | |
| AB/2023-02-01/5 | **CHAIR’S ACTION REPORT** | | | | | |  | | |
| 5.1 | Academic Board **received** the verbal report detailing changes to the membership of College academic leaders. | | | | | | | | |
| AB/2023-02-01/6 | **INDUSTRIAL ACTION: UPDATE** | | | | | |  | | |
| 6.1 | Academic Board **received** a verbal update from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor(Academic) in connection with the ongoing national dispute. Members were informed:   * University and College Union (UCU) have announced a series of actions related to the ongoing dispute. * The marking and assessment boycott that was scheduled to start on 23 January 2023 has been postponed for the time-being. * The University’s overwhelming priority will be to minimise the impact of the dispute on students. * Regulation 13 of the [Standards Assessment Regulations](https://students.shu.ac.uk/regulations/assessment_awards/Standard%20Assessment%20Regulations%20202223.pdf), approved by Academic Board in June 2022 (min ref: AB/3/22/10), which mitigates disruption to the application of the Assessment Regulations, remains in force and will be reviewed in alignment with other regulations. | | | | | | | | |
| AB/2023-02-01/7 | **ACADEMIC BOARD: REGULATIONS AND PROCEDURES** | | | | | | AB/2023-02-01/7 | | |
| 7.1 | The paper was presented in response to the findings and recommendations from the Academic Governance Review (min ref: AB/2022-10-05/11) and outlines next steps, including updates to constitutional documents for Academic Board’s consideration. The Head of Governance and Sector Regulation highlighted the following points to members:   * Enhancements are proposed to Academic Board’s terms of reference which incorporate recommendations from the review, consider good governance principles, and account for recent University developments. * An additional provision within Academic Board’s appointment procedures is proposed to support efficiencies and business continuity by enabling the Selection Panel to revisit outcomes from a previous recruitment round within a set period. * An action plan related to the Academic Governance Review has been developed to support delivery and monitor progress against the agreed recommendations. | | | | | | | | |
| 7.2 | In the subsequent discussion, members:   * Received detail on the process of initiating the appointment procedures and on equality, diversity, and inclusion considerations. * Suggested at least one attendee from each College Leadership team is incorporated into quorum requirements. | | | | | | | | |
| 7.3 | Academic Board:   * **recommended** the revised Terms of Reference and membership to the Board of Governors, with the suggested quorum amendment. * **approved** the revised procedures for appointment. | | | | | | | | |
| AB/2023-02-01/8 | **ANNUAL QUALITY REVIEW** | | | | | | AB/2023-02-01/8 | | |
| 8.1 | The Annual Quality Review Report sets out how the University continues to exercise its responsibilities for the regulation, quality assurance, and enhancement of educational provision. It details that 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 Head of Academic Quality and Standards thanked colleagues involved in the report’s production and highlighted the following points from the report for Academic Board’s attention:   * The following were identified as key areas of external focus for the 2022/23 academic year:   + The anticipated forthcoming full inspection Ofsted inspection of the Initial Teacher Training (ITT) provision.   + The monitoring of developments within the international political landscape.   + Understanding how the Office for Students will undertake its role as the Designated Quality Body (DQB) and future DQB arrangements. * An Academic Partnerships Committee has been established to enhance the governance of the University’s collaborative provision by managing the risk of academic partnerships. * The portfolio redevelopment is expected to have a positive impact on the academic quality and standards of the University’s portfolio through greater curriculum stability. * The University continues to incorporate a range of new awards into the University’s academic framework. * A table has been embedded which details the steps taken to ensure continuing compliance with the Office for Students B conditions of registration. * There are commitments to adapt the Annual Quality Review from 2023.   The Annual Quality Review is supported by several appendices, including the Annual Review of Research Degrees Activity (annex 1). The Director of the Doctoral School was invited to provide a supplementary overview of the report. The following points were drawn to the Academic Board’s attention:   * The report presents key findings from Postgraduate Research (PGR) Student Surveys including the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (“PRES”) and an internal Annual Feedback and Monitoring Exercise (“AFME’’), which also included a Directors of Study survey. * PRES outcomes indicated that student satisfaction exceeds sector averages. * The report details progress against the action plan from the 2021/22 academic year and includes recommendations and actions for 2022/23. * Quality Related (QR) funding resulting from the outcomes of the Research Excellence Framework 2021 is supporting the University’s ambition and strategy for PGR recruitment. * The procedure for students to submit their thesis online has continued, by student request. * Three different modes of viva have been offered to enable the resumption of in-person provision, but also in consideration of those students and examiners who preferred an online option. | | | | | | | | |
| 8.2 | Academic Board welcomed the report and commented on its importance, particularly in consideration of increased regulatory scrutiny. Key points from the subsequent discussion were as follows:   * The use of Artificial Intelligence software has become more prominent since the production of the report. The Academic Board received assurances that this issue is under continuous review and further information has recently been circulated to all academic staff. Work is under way to review the Standard Assessment Regulations and provide support for assessment redesign. * Higher-risk collaborative provision is being closely monitored, with a Silver Group convened to oversee delivery and the medium- to longer-term strategy. * Members suggested that future iterations of the Annual Quality Review should present mitigations within the corresponding table of risks. * There is a desire to be a high-quality location for European postgraduate research students, and support for these students is being proactively explored. * The Research Degrees Committee’s intentions to demonstrate how the University has responded to student and staff views by disseminating the actions linked to student survey feedback was welcomed. * Quality Related Enhancing Research Culture funding has been distributed to research institutes to support local events and project-level interventions. * Postgraduate research withdrawal trends were considered and a particular impact of Covid was noted. * Opportunities for process improvements in relation to late curriculum modifications continue to be explored.   **Action: Head of Academic Quality and Standards** | | | | | | | | |
| 8.3 | Academic Board **recommended** the report to AAC. | | | | | | | | |
| AB/2023-02-01/9.1 | **CURRICULUM STRUCTURES (SCHEME D)** | | | | | | AB/2023-02-01/9.1 | | |
| 9.1 | The report detailed a recommendation to revise the curriculum structure of the University’s taught portfolio specific to the apprenticeship provision (scheme D). The Associate Dean (Business and Enterprise) for the College of Business, Technology and Engineering outlined the principles, process, and major proposition. Key points were as follows:   * Scheme D aligns with the principles of the Portfolio Sustainability and Course Performance (PSCP) workstream of the Portfolio Plan previously presented (min ref: AB/3/22/7) and sequentially follows consideration of Schemes A to C (min ref: AB/3/22/8). * The proposal has been scrutinised and recommended by the Teaching and Learning Committee, Future Strategy Programme Board, and University Executive Board. * A process of consultation was conducted to support the development phase and the final proposal published for University-wide consultation. Summary feedback was made available to members. * The proposal offers the elements of Scheme A and Scheme B with specific enablers for apprenticeship provision. * Implementation of the proposal will improve portfolio efficiency and support Ofsted readiness through greater consistency. | | | | | | | | |
| 9.2 | Key points from the subsequent discussion were as follows:   * In the next stage of implementation, the Scheme D proposal will be integrated into the revised Academic Awards Framework. * Information on hybrid approaches to delivery will be detailed at course level. * Rationale was provided for the parameters to module credit value combinations, noting the consistency with the previously approved Scheme B (AB/3/22/8). * Clarity was received on the schemes that apply to Higher Technical Qualifications and collaborative provision. * Comment was raised on the importance of a fully costed delivery model. * The number of models being developed within the Schemes should be monitored to ensure the University continues to adopt a streamlined approach to curriculum design. * A summary was provided of the levers for efficiencies, and members were informed that the Dean of Academic Strategy will be ensuring that the curriculum structure proposal delivers on the outlined efficiencies. * Staggered start dates are employer-driven and have benefits by separating commencement from peaks in undergraduate recruitment and induction activity. | | | | | | | | |
| 9.3 | Academic Board **approved** the curriculum structure scheme D proposal for implementation. | | | | | | | | |
| AB/2023-02-01/9.2  **CONFIDENTIAL** | **ACADEMIC STANDING PANEL: ASSESSMENT SCALING AND EXCEPTIONS FOR THE 2021/22 ACADEMIC YEAR** | | | | | | AB/2023-02-01/9.2 | | |
| 10.1 | The Director of Academic Services introduced the paper, which reported to the Academic Board cases that had been reviewed by the Academic Standing Panel/University Central Panel in the 2021/22 academic year. It highlighted where considerations had been made for cohort scaling in taught modules and incidences where the Standard Assessment Regulation had been waived. Members were informed that the process presented no significant risks to the quality and standards of the University’s academic provision or to the student experience. | | | | | | | | |
|  | In the subsequent discussion, members:   * Received an overview of the referral process. * Commented on the importance of robustness in systems adaptations being made as a result of the approved curriculum structures (min ref: AB/3/22/8), and of feedback mechanisms to mitigate future requirements for exceptions. | | | | | | | | |
| 10.2 | Academic Board **noted** the exceptions made. | | | | | | | | |
| AB/2023-02-01/10.1 | **APPRENTICESHIPS: SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT** | | | | | | AB/2023-02-01/10.1 | | |
| 11.1 | The Director of Business Engagement, Skills, and Employability (interim) presented Academic Board with the annual Apprenticeship Self-Assessment Report (SAR). The report reflects on the 2021/22 academic year and sets out key areas of Strength and Areas for Improvement (AFI) related to the University’s apprenticeship provision. Members were informed:   * The strategic direction of the SAR is to drive consistency across to portfolio ahead of the next Ofsted inspection. * The SAR will be submitted to Ofsted in line with good practice, although this is not a formal Ofsted requirement. | | | | | | | | |
| 11.2 | Academic Board thanked colleagues involved in the production of a thorough report. In the subsequent discussion, members suggested the SAR could be strengthened through an increased evidence base on actions taken, and by broadening the scope to incorporate core questions from external benchmarking exercises. | | | | | | | | |
| 11.3r | Academic Board **approved** the SAR for submission to Ofsted. | | | | | | | | |
| AB/2023-02-01/10.2 | **TEACHING EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK SUBMISSION** | | | | | | | AB/2023-02-01/10.2 | |
| 12.1 | The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning, Teaching and Student Success) delivered an overview presentation which reflected on the production, and submission of the institutional response to the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) in accordance with published guidance. | | | | | | | | |
| 12.2 | In **noting** the report, Academic Board thanked the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning, Teaching and Student Success), the Students’ Union and other colleagues involved for their contributions. | | | | | | | | |
| AB/2023-02-01/11.1 | **RESEARCH AND INNOVATION & TEACHING AND LEARNING COMMITTEE SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT** | | | | | | | AB/2023-02-01/11.1 | |
| 13.1 | The report, in conjunction with the unconfirmed records of the meetings on 1 December 2022 (paper ref: AB/2023-02-01/11.2) and 8 December 2022 (paper ref: AB/2023-02-01/11.3), updated the Academic Board on business progressed by the Teaching and Learning and Research and Innovation Committees. | | | | | | | | |
| 13.2 | Academic Board **noted** the scrutiny and decisions in the report. | | | | | | | | |
| AB/2023-02-01/11.2 | **UNCONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE TEACHING AND LEARNING COMMITTEE HELD ON 1 DECEMBER 2022** | | | | | | | AB/2023-02-01/11.2 | |
| 14.1 | Academic Board **received** and **noted** the unconfirmed minutes. | | | | | | | | |
| AB/2023-02-01/11.3 | **UNCONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE RESEARCH AND INNOVATION COMMITTEE HELD ON 8 DECEMBER 2022** | | | | | | | AB/2023-02-01/11.3 | |
| 15.1 | Academic Board **received** and **noted** the unconfirmed minutes. | | | | | | | | |
| AB/2023-02-01/12 | **STUDENTS’ UNION AUTUMN ELECTIONS** | | | | | | | AB/2023-02-01/12 | |
| 16.1 | Academic Board **noted** the Students’ Union part-time election outcomes. | | | | | | | | |
| AB/2023-02-01/13 | **ANNUAL BUSINESS CYCLE** | | | | | | | AB/2023-02-01/13 | |
| 17.1 | The forward schedule of business was **noted.** | | | | | | | | |
| AB/2023-02-01/13 | **OTHER URGENT BUSINESS** | | | | | | |  | |
| 18.1 | The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning, Teaching and Student Success) informed Academic Board that additional wording was being developed for proposed inclusion in Curriculum Structures Scheme C (min ref: AB/3/22/8) in order to accommodate specific requirements of initial teacher education programmes.  Academic Board **agreed** that Chairs action would be taken to approve the additional wording. | | | | | | | | |
| AB/2023-02-01/14 | **DATE OF NEXT MEETING** | | | | | | |  | |
| 19.1 | Wednesday 26 April 2023, 13:00 – 15:00 | | | | | | | | |