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| **CONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 14 JUNE 2023** |
| **Academic Board Members Present**  |
| Prof David Shepherd (Chair)Helen Best Dr Sadiq Bhanbhro (until item 10)Prof Neil BricklebankProf Claire CraigDr Marjory Da Costa Abreu Prof Rory Duncan  | Dr James Fenwick Dr Iain Garner Dr Tina Harness Dr Neil McKay Dr Christine O’Leary (from item 5)Dr Rebecca Peake  | Dr Alison PurvisDavid Rogerson Dr Alan Ruddock Prof Toni Schwarz Prof Helen Scott Prof David Smith Misbah Ticklay |
| **Academic Assurance Committee Members Present** |
| Prof Jeff Bale |  |  |
| **Apologies:** |  |
| Prof Sir Chris Husbands, Roger Bateman, Mobolaji Edun, Angela Foulkes (AAC), Dr Samantha Giove, Prof Kevin Kerrigan, Dr Claire Ketnor, Prof Conor Moss, Dayo Oladiti, Sabahat Pathan, Prof Julietta Patnick (AAC), Prof Keith Ridgeway (AAC), Prof Chris Wigginton |
| **In attendance:**Michaela Boryslawskyj, University Secretary Nikki Davies, Head of Student Policy, Casework and ComplianceDr Luke Desforges, Academic Director - London Campus Leopold Green, Head of Academic Quality and Standards Ben Machin, Governance Senior Advisor (Committee Secretary)Tam Milner, Head of Academic AdministrationElizabeth Morgan, Strategy and Policy ManagerNicola Nibbs, Change Initiatives OfficerProf John Pymm, Director of Academic Development and DiversityJoe Rennie, Group Director of Student and Academic ServicesRuth Thei, Head of Governance and Sector RegulationAlison Wells, Director of Academic ServicesAdam Wilkinson, Principal Business Analyst | **Agenda items**AllAllAllAllAllItem 5Item 6Item 9AllAllAllAllItem 9 |
| **Minute Ref** | **Item of Business** |  | **Paper ref** |
| AB/2023-06-14/1 | **OPENING OF THE MEETING** |  |  |
| 1.1 | In opening the meeting, the Chair:* Noted the apologies received.
* Thanked, on behalf of Academic Board, the outgoing Students’ Union representatives for their contributions to Academic Board.
* Confirmed the Chair of Academic Assurance Committee (AAC) would represent the Committee at the meeting and comments would be sought form the wider membership.
* An urgent item of business had been raised for consideration under the corresponding agenda item (min ref: AB/2023-06-14/14).
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| AB/2023-06-14/2 | **DECLARATION OF INTEREST** |  |
| 2.1 | Academic Assurance Committee (AAC) members confirmed there were no declarations of interest. |
| AB/2023-06-14/3 | **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING** |  | AB/2023-04-26/M |
| 3.1 | Academic Board **approved** the minutes of the meeting on 26 April 2023 as a correct record. |
| AB/2023-06-14/4 | **MATTERS ARISING / ACTION TRACKER** |  |
| 4.1 | There were no identified matters arising or outstanding actions. |
| 4.2 | Academic Board received a report from the Chair that following consideration by Academic Board in April (min ref: AB/2023-04-26/11), a procedural amendment to the Academic Conduct Regulations were progressed through Chairs Action due to time-sensitivities associated with publication.  |
| AB/2023-06-14/5**STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL** | **EXCEPTIONAL REGULATION FOR AWARD AND PROGRESSION** | AB/2023-06-14/5**CONFIDENTIAL** |
| 5.1 | The Director of Academic Services and Head of Academic Administration presented the paper which detailed the conditions for Academic Board to consider invoking Regulation 13 of the Standard Assessment Regulations.  |
| 5.2 – 5.4 | Confidential minutes were recorded. |
| 5.5 | Academic Board **approved** the invoking of Regulation 13, which includes a requirement to report on the exceptions agreed. **Action: Academic Administration** |
| AB/2023-06-14/6 | **ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION PLAN** | AB/2023-06-14/6 |
| 6.1 | The paper provided Academic Board with an overview of changes to access and participation regulation and gave an update on progress against targets in the university’s Access and Participation Plan (APP). The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning, Teaching and Student Success) and Strategy and Policy Manager highlighted the following key points:* An APP forms part of the regulator’s ongoing conditions of registration. The Office for Students has undertaken a consultation into access and participation and announced its response and further guidance in March 2023.
* The University’s current plan was approved in 2020, with no adjustments required, and a new plan is due to be submitted in 2023/24.
* New data, including an update on progress against targets, was being uploaded to the Access and Participation dashboard on the University’s management information portal, ‘the Source’.
* On reviewing existing targets:
	+ A target to increase the proportion of Black entrants had been achieved, and improvements across degree awarding and progression targets for students from under-represented postcodes have been secured. The University’s performance benchmarks well against the rest of the sector in these objectives.
	+ Progress against outstanding targets is being monitored by the Access and Participation Strategy and Oversight Group and University Executive Board.
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| 6.2 | Academic Board **received** the update and in discussion, the following was noted:* Clarity was given that the plan applies to UK fee paying students and the focus of the awarding gap is on attainment.
* Members welcomed the accessibility of data through ‘the Source’ and suggested that further consideration be given to how the data is organised on the platform.
* Members welcomed the evaluative work being undertaken and proposals to enhance awareness and engagement with this.
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| 6.3 | The Chair of AAC thanked the presenters for the clarity and detail in the paper. In noting Academic Board’s discussion: * The Board of Governors has oversight of the APP, including its targets and impact.
* Was assured that there is a clear understanding of regulatory developments and the institutional impact.
* Commented on the importance of embedding strong collaborative partnerships with schools in recognition of the socio-economic challenges that start early in education. The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning, Teaching and Student Success) furthered this by emphasising the University’s responsibility for creating the best conditions to support student success.
* Advised that the University continues to monitor developments among sector comparator institutions and best practice.
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| 6.4 addendum | AAC members unable to attend the meeting **noted** the progress on the APP and commented positively on the comprehensive nature of the risk assessment and on the activities to date, recognising that further work was required for the University to achieve the remaining and ongoing targets. |
| 6.5 | Academic Board **noted** the report.  |
| AB/2023-06-14/7 | **STUDENT VOICE: UNIVERSITY ACTIONS PROGRESS REPORT** | AB/2023-06-14/7 |
| 7.1 | The paper provided Academic Board with a summary of progress on the University’s response to the 17 recommendations identified in the Student Voice Report 2021/22. In introducing the item, the Dean of Students reminded members of the production and purpose of the report, as presented in October 2022 (min ref: AB/2022-10-05/9). Additional points were as follows:* Responses are coordinated and monitored by the Directorate of Student Experience, Teaching and Learning (SETL) throughout the academic year.
* Good progress has been made against all recommendations, with the majority of actions either complete or on target for completion.
* Scrutiny from the Teaching and Learning Committee was highlighted (paper ref: AB/2023-06-14/12.2), including the important role University staff can have an in promoting representative roles to students.
* The final progress ratings for the 2022/23 academic year will be agreed with the Students’ Union for inclusion in the 2023/24 Student Voice Report
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| 7.2 | Academic Board thanked the Dean of Students for the update, commenting on the positive progress against the outlined recommendations. In discussion:* Members reflected on the importance of maintaining a positive and robust working relationship between the University and the Students’ Union.
* Students’ Union representatives thanked University staff for their continued support for students and highlighted the importance of continuity of activities and progress between outgoing and incoming sabbatical officer teams.
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| 7.3 | In noting Academic Board’s discussion, the Chair of AAC commended the contributions of the Students’ Union Sabbatical Officers and commented on the benefits of the College representation system in raising student issues. |
| 7.4 addendum | AAC members unable to attend the meeting **noted** the paper. |
| 7.5 | Academic Board **noted** the progress report.  |
| AB/2023-06-14/8 | **ANNUAL QUALITY REVIEW: MID YEAR UPDATE**  | AB/2023-06-14/8 |
| 8.1 | The inaugural report presented Academic Board with an in-year position on areas of risk as identified in the Annual Quality Review and Apprenticeships Self-Assessment Report which were considered in February 2023 (min ref: AB/2023-02-01/8 and AB/2023-02-01/10.1) and the mitigating actions. The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning, Teaching and Student Success) and Head of Academic Quality and Standards introduced the report and highlighted the following:* Work continues to be being undertaken across the University to mitigate risks identified.
* The University continues to comply with regulatory expectations.
* A session was recently held at the University’s annual apprenticeship conference which focused on the linkage between the Office for Students B conditions of registration and Ofsted’s Education Inspection Framework.
* The annual course quality review process was being updated, with an enhanced focus on student feedback and on student outcomes, in alignment with the Office for Students ‘B’ conditions of registration.
* Support arrangements for College and Department Quality Leads are being to be reviewed and enhanced.
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| 8.2 | Academic Board welcomed the report, particularly noting the updates in relation to the external regulatory environment. In discussion, members: * Welcomed the introduction of a revised annual quality process, highlighting the importance of staff engagement and training.
* Commented that the Office for Students business plan, due to be issued imminently, would be an important further impetus to refine quality assurance processes.
* Received confirmation of ongoing work to meet forthcoming regulatory proposals on data collection and reporting.
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| 8.3 | AAC welcomed the inception of a mid-year report, commenting on its importance in providing ongoing assurances on institutional academic quality and standards. |
| 8.4addendum | AAC members unable to attend the meeting **noted** the report and commented on the importance of continuing to uphold and maintain quality and standards.  |
| 8.5 | Academic Board **noted** the update.  |
| AB/2023-06-14/9**CONFIDENTIAL** | **DELIVERY MODELS** | AB/2023-06-14/9 |
| 9.1 | The report, supplemented with a presentation, detailed a recommendation to change the way the University plans, schedules, and communicates the learning experience at module level. The Associate Dean Teaching and Learning for the College of Health, Wellbeing and Life Sciences outlined the principles, process, and major proposition. Key points were as follows:* A consultation involving staff and student groups was conducted to support the development, with the proposal further refined in response to feedback.
* The proposal is based on expectations and principles which align to the Teaching Expectations 2022/23 and the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Framework 2022-2030.
* Implementation of the proposal will simplify and clarify the student learning experience, provide consistency and efficiency of module delivery, and support sustainable growth.
* The proposal’s pedagogical principles have been scrutinised by the Teaching and Learning Committee and are recommended for approval (paper ref: AB/2023-06-14/12.2).
* The project’s success has dependencies relating to resource and the estate, which will be considered by the University Executive Board.
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| 9.2 | Academic Board thanked the project team for the proposal and supporting presentation. In discussion, the following points were noted:* The methods of delivery will focus on in-person teaching and online synchronous learning.
* Staff training and development will be provided to support staff in feeling positive and confident about online synchronous learning and to ensure consistent definitions are used across the University.
* Members acknowledged a significant volume of consultation had taken place and in response to a specific question, were informed that a range of students were represented on the student focus group.
* A review of sector practice had been undertaken and some common practice had been established, but the volume of information publicly available was limited.
* Further scrutiny and development was being conducted on assessment design to ensure consistency, equity and appropriate student and staff work loading.
* A key enabler of the proposal is the production of the implementation plan for Digital Learning Transformation, which will capture issues identified by members in relation to digital accessibility.
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| 9.3 | In noting Academic Board’s discussion, the Chair of AAC received assurances that achieving consistencies in work loading fed into the design principles and would be addressed through course revalidations. |
| 9.4addendum | AAC members unable to attend the meeting **noted** the report. |
| 9.5 | Academic Board **approved** the academic principles and **recommended** the proposal for consideration by the University Executive Board.  |
| AB/2023-06-14/10**CONFIDENTIAL** | **POLICIES FOR APPROVAL** | AB/2023-06-14/10 |
| 10.1 | The Head of Student Policy, Casework and Compliance presented to Academic Board the paper, which proposed revisions to the Extensions and Extenuating Circumstances Policy and Student Engagement Policy. Key points were as follows:* The policies had been scrutinised by the Teaching and Learning Committee and were recommended for approval (paper ref: AB/2023-06-14-12.2).
* Key changes to the Extensions and Extenuating Circumstances policy include terminology updates and the introduction of automatic extensions.
* The Student Engagement Policy has been refined to capture the full spectrum of engagement and to ensure that students at risk are identified at the earliest opportunity to enable re-engagement.
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| 10.2 | In discussion, the following points were noted:* Representatives of the Students' Union welcomed the consultation process and confirmed that student feedback had been incorporated into the proposals.
* In reference to the proposed introduction of automatic extensions:
	+ Members noted the approach is consistent with that widely used across the sector and the institutional extension approval rate and uptake had been considered.
	+ The suggested maximum number of automatic extensions permissible per student, per academic year was based on a review of the average number of requests.
	+ The implementation and impact would be thoroughly reviewed and evaluated the next year, considering the staff and student experience.

**Action: Student Policy, Casework and Compliance**  |
| 10.3 | In noting Academic Board’s discussion, the Chair of AAC was supportive of the proposed amendments to policies which streamlined processes and improved the student experience.  |
| 10.4addendum | AAC members unable to attend the meeting **noted** the paper. |
| 10.5 | Academic Board **approved** the policies.  |
| AB/2023-06-14/11 | **RESEARCH AND INNOVATION & TEACHING AND LEARNING SUB-COMMITTEE CHAIR’S UPDATE** | AB/2023-06-14/11 |
| 11.1 | The paper presented Academic Board with an overview of the business transacted by the Research and Innovation and Teaching and Learning (TLC) sub-committees at recent meetings. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) as Chair highlighted the following points: * The Exemptions to the Standard Assessments Regulations for 2023/24 had been approved by TLC and were available for members to view.
* Assurances were received from the Sheffield Institute of Education on preparations for a likely periodic inspection by Ofsted of the Initial Teacher Education provision. TLC would continue to monitor developments and escalate any regulatory risks, as appropriate.
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| 11.2 | Academic Board **noted** the update. |
| AB/2023-06-14/12 | **UNCONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE RESEARCH AND INNOVATION COMMITTEE HELD ON 11 MAY 2023** | AB/2023-06-14/12.1 |
| 12.1 | Academic Board **noted** the unconfirmed minutes. |
| AB/2023-06-14/13 | **UNCONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE TEACHING AND LEARNING COMMITTEE HELD ON 18 MAY 2023** | AB/2023-06-14/12.2 |
| 13.1 | Academic Board **noted** the unconfirmed minutes. |
| AB/2023-06-14/14 | **ANNUAL BUSINESS CYCLE** | AB/2023-06-14/13 |
| 14.1 | The forward schedule of business was **noted**. |
| AB/2023-06-14/15 | **OTHER URGENT BUSINESS** | AB/2023-06-14/14 |
| 15.1 | Academic Board received a proposed amendment to a principle of Curriculum Structure Scheme B (taught postgraduate provision), approved in June 2022 (min ref: AB/3/22/8), to clarify co-delivery expectations. The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning, Teaching and Student Success) and Head of Academic Quality and Standards informed members:* the change would enable co-delivery between cohorts where necessary to maintain educational or financial viability.
* College Portfolio Groups will be responsible for approving courses for co-delivery, monitoring the impact on the student experience and outcomes, and ensuring compliance with regulatory expectations.
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| 15.2 | AAC commented positively on the changes, citing them as institutionally beneficial. |
| 15.3addendum | AAC members unable to attend the meeting **noted** the proposed amendment.  |
| 15.4 | Academic Board **approved** the revisions to Curriculum Structures Scheme B. |
| AB/2023-06-14/16 | **DATE OF NEXT MEETING** |  |
| 16.1 | Academic Board, Wednesday 11 October 2023 |
| AB/2023-06-14/17 | **REVIEW OF MEETING** |  |
| 17.1 | The Chair thanked all staff and students present in the meeting for their contributions.  |