

## ACADEMIC BOARD

**Minutes of the Meeting held on 8 October 2013**

**Present:** Professor Philip Jones (Chair), Martin Beer, Diane Burkinshaw, Stephanie Coates, Emily Connor, Howard Duffy, Professor Roger Eccleston, Sonja Ellis, Professor Adrian Hopgood, Professor John Leach, Professor Ann Macaskill, Dr Christine O'Leary, Joe Rennie, Professor Norman Wienand, Liz Winders (Secretary)

**In Attendance:** Dr Neil McKay, Head of Student Feedback and Information; Nuala Devlin, Assistant Director, Learning and Information Services; Ann Betterton, Head of Information Resources, Learning and Information Resources; Maura Sorensen (Minute Secretary)

**Apologies for absence:** Professor Karen Bryan, Jean Flanagan, Dr Graham Holden, Professor Philip Martin, Tanya Miles-Berry, Rona O'Brien, Professor Terrence Perera

Paper ref	Minute
	AB/13/36 <b>Apologies</b>
	36.1 Apologies were noted.
AB/2/13/M	AB/13/37 <b>Minutes of the meeting held on 11 June 2013</b>
	37.1 The minutes were <b>approved</b> as a correct record.
	AB/13/38 <b>Matters arising</b>
	38.1 There were no matters arising.
	AB/13/39 <b>Urgent Business</b>
	39.1 There was no urgent business.
AB/3/13/6	AB/13/40 <b>National Student Survey 2013: Outcomes</b>
	40.1 The Head of Student Feedback and Information introduced the report noting that the majority of members had already seen earlier versions or variations of the report. Members noted that the University had continued to make some progress in key areas though progress was not as marked as for NSS 2012. Overall satisfaction had increased by 1% on NSS 2012; however it was noted this was unlikely to lead to a significant change in sector ranking as there had been a uniform improvement of 1-3% across the sector.
	40.2 Members considered outcomes under each NSS question noting where outcomes had remained static and where there had been an improvement or a drop in satisfaction rates, noting also how the University's outcomes compared to the sector. The integration of NSS reporting with Course Monitoring and Action Planning or MAAP (formerly Routine Monitoring and Review) was also noted.
	40.3 Members considered Appendix 7: What Might Have Been noting that, using the best results over two years from

departments, that is if improvements made had been maintained, those results would have met the University's corporate performance target of 85% and the University would rank 74th out of 123 higher education institutions (HEIs). Three faculties would have reached 87% but if all four had achieved this the University rank would have been in the top 50 at 47 out of 123. It was noted that this was a clear indication that efforts needed to be directed at ensuring any gains and improvements in satisfaction rates were maintained.

40.4 In response to a query from a member it was confirmed that, as well as the MAAP process to be undertaken in faculties, consideration would be given in directorates to improving student support services, particularly where lower satisfaction rates were indicated.

40.5 The President of the Students' Union acknowledged the drop in satisfaction rates with the Union and confirmed that the Union would undertake a separate review of the outcomes. A review of the Students' Union brand was also being undertaken. It was suggested that the changes at Collegiate Crescent over the last year may have had an impact on student responses. Reference was made to the high satisfaction with their students' union at the University of Sheffield however it was acknowledged there were significant differences, with the University of Sheffield's students' union having a more established presence as well as significantly greater funding, better facilities, and a better location with less competition from city centre cafes and restaurants. It was suggested that the Union HUBS building was becoming more central to the city campus, as the campus is expanding. In response to a query about HUBS signage, and presence, reference was made to proposals in the Estates Strategy to reorientate the entrance to the HUBS building to face towards the campus.

40.6 In relation to Collegiate Crescent it was suggested that some staff there felt, in more than a geographical sense, Collegiate Campus to be separate. It was suggested consideration be given to the identity, and possibly a specific strategy, for Collegiate Campus.

40.7 The Board **noted** the report and the revised process for Course Monitoring and Action Planning (MAAP).

AB/3/13/7

AB/13/41 **University Strategy**

41.1 The Secretary and Registrar introduced the report noting that feedback from the staff conference held in July had been incorporated. Following the University Executive Group's away day on 23 October a further iteration of the strategy would be developed and further staff engagement would be undertaken. Members commended the display in the foyer at City Campus summarising responses from the July staff conference. It was suggested it would be helpful if a copy of the display could be placed at Collegiate Campus, too. The Board **received** the report.

- 42.1 The Assistant Director, Learning and Information Services and the Head of Information Resources, Learning and Information Services introduced the report. Members noted that there would be significant changes to the way in which research outputs were published as a result of the recent Finch report and a new policy produced by Research Councils UK (RCUK). It was further noted that a forthcoming HEFCE review of its policy on publications was also likely to have an impact on the sector response to Open Access Publishing (OA). Reference was made to resource implications and to the provision of transitional funding from RCUK. Steps to consult and engage with the University's research community were outlined. In response to a query about consultation the Head of Information Services confirmed that staff outside the University's research centres were welcome to contribute and that individuals should liaise with her.
- 42.2 Members noted that HEFCE had commended the University's research archive, SHURA, and suggested the University continue to maintain SHURA.
- 42.3 It was confirmed that Gold OA is unlikely to be in place for REF 2020 and institutions would follow the Green OA option. Members noted that a number of internal University OA journals were attracting more international submissions and their reputation was growing as a result.
- 42.4 The Board **noted** and **endorsed** the approach being taken.

- 43.1 The Secretary and Registrar introduced the report noting that it had been identified that further consideration and revision to the policy was needed and therefore requesting that the Board agree to defer detailed discussion at this meeting, and agree that Chair's Action could be taken to approve the policy. The Secretary highlighted some of the areas to be addressed including:
- clarification of the boundaries between stages 1 and 2;
  - addressing the fact that in reducing and clarifying sanctions the most severe sanctions had been inadvertently lost;
  - separating the arrangements for examination misconduct including consideration by a dedicated panel.
- 43.2 Members highlighted a number of points also to be considered and addressed including:
- clarification of dishonest practice and consideration of current practice in relation to international students, ensuring careful consideration is given to any changes to the wording;
  - consideration of the balance of sanctions 1a and 1b at both stages; it was suggested that under the current proposals these sanctions were much more severe at

stage 2;

- ethics approval; it was highlighted that the proposals in the report did not reflect the current procedures. The Head of Research Ethics noted that the University's Research Ethics Committee had recently considered draft research ethics guidelines. She agreed to liaise further with the Deputy Registrar, outside the meeting.

43.3 The Board **agreed** that, once the issues identified had been addressed, the Academic Misconduct Policy 2013-14 could be approved by Chair's Action.

AB/3/13/9

AB/13/44 **Verification of Moderation Policy and Procedures 2013-14**

44.1 The Deputy Registrar introduced the report outlining the consultation process undertaken with staff, the substantive changes proposed and the resource implications.

44.2 Members highlighted a number of issues including:

- i. **Resource implications:** it was highlighted that there were potentially greater resource implications than those highlighted in the report, for example the role of Internal Coordinator was not currently resourced and was potentially an onerous role.
- ii. **Small cohorts and double marking:** it was suggested that double marking of small cohorts (under 15 students) needed to be included in work planning for academic staff. Members noted that slightly larger cohorts of 16 or 17 students were still small. It was highlighted that double marking of small cohorts of Masters students could require the second staff member to have a similar level of expertise. It was further suggested that there may be resource implications for external examiners in relation to small cohorts and double marking.
- iii. **Methods of internal verification:** clarification was sought on whether the processes for the three methods of internal verification differed.
- iv. **Moderation and scaling:** it was suggested that, in order to avoid being unfair to students, the proposal relating to changing all marks in a cohort by scaling, if it were deemed appropriate following moderation of a sample, needed to be made more explicit.
- v. **Mark criteria:** it was agreed that reference to appropriate sharing of the marking criteria should be made explicit in the guidance.

44.3 Members also discussed anonymous marking; however it was agreed that this issue should be considered separately from the 2013-14 Verification of Moderation Policy and Procedures.

44.4 The Board **agreed** that once the issues identified had been addressed the Verification of Moderation Policy and Procedures 2013-14 could be approved by Chair's Action.

- AB/3/13/10                      AB/13/45    **Extenuation Policy 2013-14**
- 45.1    The Deputy Registrar introduced the report highlighting the proposed amendment in relation to submission of a completed EC1 form no later than 5 days after an examination or the deadline for coursework assessment. The Board **approved** the amendment to the Extenuation Policy.
- AB/3/13/12                      AB/13/46    **Course and Institutional Approval Matters**
- 46.1    The Board **ratified** Chair's Action taken to approve a number of recommendations from the Faculty and University Approval Committees ahead of the start of the 2013-14 academic year.
- AB/3/13/13                      AB/13/47    **Faculty of Development and Society: departmental name change**
- 47.1    The Pro Vice-Chancellor, Faculty of Development and Society, introduced the report outlining the rationale for changing the name of the Department of Law, Criminology and Community Justice (LCCJ) to the Department of Law and Criminology (DLC). The Board **endorsed** the name change.
- AB/13/48    **Students' Union**
- 48.1    The President of the Students' Union, and the Education Officer, provided an oral update on recent activities including the welcome week for new students. The issue of keeping Wednesday afternoons free of timetabled classes to allow students to engage in personal development activities, including the opportunity to participate in team sports, was raised. It was highlighted that some students still had classes timetabled on Wednesday afternoons, precluding them from participation in sports or other activities. It was agreed that further discussion between representatives of the Students' Union, and the University's timetabling team, would take place outside the meeting.
- AB/13/49    **Academic Board Sub-Committees: Annual Reports for 2012-13 and Proposed Business for 2013-14**
- AB/2/13/15.1                      49.1    **Student Experience, Learning and Teaching Committee**
- AB/3/13/15.2                      49.2    **Academic Quality, Standards and Enhancement Committee: proposed business for 2013-14**
- AB/3/13/15.3                      49.3    **Research Innovation Committee**
- AB/3/13/15.4                      49.4    **Honorary Awards Committee**
- AB/3/13/15.5                      49.5    **Professoriate Committee**
- AB/3/13/15.6                      49.6    **Faculty of Arts, Computing, Engineering and Sciences Faculty Academic Board**
- AB/3/13/15.7                      49.7    **Faculty of Development and Society Faculty Academic Board**

49.8 The Board **received** the reports.

AB/3/13/16

AB/13/50 **Student Experience, Learning and Teaching Committee**

50.1 The Board **received** the minutes of the meeting of 16 May 2013.

AB/3/13/17

AB/13/51 **Research and Innovation Committee**

51.1 The Board **received** the minutes of the meeting of 23 May 2013.

AB/13/52 **Next meeting**

52.1 It was noted that the next meeting will take place on Tuesday 10 December 2013, 2.00pm to 4.30pm, Boardroom, City Campus.