**SHEFFIELD HALLAM UNIVERSITY** AB/3/14/M

**ACADEMIC BOARD**

**Confirmed minutes of the Meeting held on 10 June 2014**

**Present:** Professor Philip Jones (Chair), Professor Liz Barnes, Martin Beer, Professor Mike Bramhall, Diane Burkinshaw, Howard Duffy, Professor Roger Eccleston, Jean Flanagan, Stephanie Glen, Professor Paul Harrison, Dr Graham Holden, Professor Adrian Hopgood, Stella Jones-Devitt, Professor John Leach, Professor Ann Macaskill, Tanya Miles-Berry, Dr Kevin Nield, Dr Christine O'Leary, Oliver Redfern, Joe Rennie, Liz Winders (Secretary)

**In attendance**: Professor Doug Cleaver, Chair, Research Degrees Sub-Committee (for Item 9 - Changes to the Research Degrees Regulations 2014-15)

**Apologies for absence:** Emily Connor, Sonja Ellis, Professor Norman Wienand

| Paper ref | Minute | |
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| | AB/14/32 | **Apologies** |
| | 32.1 | Apologies were noted. It was further noted that this was the last meeting for Howard Duffy, outgoing President of the Students' Union and Oliver Redfern, outgoing Student Course Representative. The Vice-Chancellor thanked both of them, on behalf of the Board, for their contributions during their terms of office. |
| | AB/14/33 | **Chair's Business** |
| | 33.1 | There was no Chair's business. |
| AB/2/14/M | AB/14/34 | **Minutes of the meeting held on 15 April 2014** |
| | 34.1 | The minutes were **approved** as a correct record. |
| | AB/14/35 | **Matters arising** |
| | 35.1 | There were no matters arising. |
| | AB/14/36 | **Urgent Business** |
| | 36.1 | There was no urgent business. |
| AB/3/14/6 | AB/14/37 | **Changes to the University's Standard assessment Regulations relating to BTEC Higher National Awards** |
| | 37.1 | The Board **ratified** Chair's Action taken to approve amendments to the Standard Assessment Regulations in relation to BTEC Higher National awards conferred from the current academic year onwards. It was noted that the revisions were in line with the requirements of the BTEC Licence Centre Agreement (2013). |
| AB/3/14/7 *Confidential* | AB/14/38 | **University Size and Shape** |
| | 38.1 | The Vice-Chancellor introduced the report highlighting the challenges the University faces in the coming years particularly |

in relation to changes in the student market. Members noted the commitment through the University Strategy to 2020 to sustainability - academically, financially, socially and environmentally. The need to be appropriately positioned, agile and responsive was also noted.

38.2    There was a discussion on marketing postgraduate courses, particularly to graduates of the University, and a number of suggestions were made. Members noted that the first cohort of students in England who had paid up to £9k per annum in fees would soon be graduating and that close attention would be paid to the potential impact on numbers going on to postgraduate studies. Ongoing work on long-term planning in relation to student numbers was highlighted including consideration of staffing needs both of academic staff and professional services staff.

38.3    The Board **noted** the propositions agreed by the University Executive Group for the future size and shape of the University which will inform both the development of the portfolio and the implementation of the University Strategy to 2020.

AB/3/14/8          AB/14/39   **Code of Practice for Teaching and Supported Learning**

39.1    The Head of Quality Enhancement, and Dr Christine O'Leary, Teaching Fellow, Sheffield Business School introduced the report. Reference was made to the extensive consultation undertaken with both staff and students. It was highlighted that the Code was closely aligned with national professional standards - the UK Professional Standards for Teaching and Supported Learning in Higher Education, the Higher Education Academy (HEA) Code of Practice for Fellowship and the UK Quality Code for Higher Education.

39.2    Members noted that the Code supports staff in meeting HEA requirements. In relation to encouraging innovation (item 1.4) it was clarified that this referred to staff being willing to take appropriate risks in their teaching practice. It was suggested the use of the word "'supportive" in this context was unnecessary. Members sought clarification on 2.7 in relation to safeguarding; it was suggested further consideration be given to the wording.

39.3    In relation to the status and scope of the Code it was confirmed that it sits alongside other, relevant Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) criteria and the University's own criteria in relation to staff recruitment, performance and promotion. It was noted that it was intended to provide a copy of the Code to all newly recruited academic staff. Reference was made to the relationship to the Research Code of Practice; it was noted both codes were intended to help identify and address issues or concerns at an early stage.

39.4    The Board **approved** the Code of Practice for Teaching and Supported Learning. It was noted further consideration needs to be given to implementation. It was suggested that the Code be presented at the forthcoming Learning and Teaching

Conference.

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| AB/3/14/9 | AB/14/40 | **Changes to the Research Degree Regulations 2014-15** |

40.1 The Chair of the Research Degrees Sub-Committee introduced the report, outlining the proposed changes. Members noted that the changes would align University practice with the indicators of sound practice as stated in the UK Quality Code. The changes would also:

    i.    provide clarity to students on formal progression and to staff and students on the framework for students' professional and personal development;

    ii.    assist in timely student completions;

    iii.    strengthen the examination process;

    iv.    tailor the wording of the regulations appropriately for students with disabilities;

    v.    strengthen the appeal procedure for research students.

40.2 The Board **approved** the amended Research Degree Regulations 2014-15.

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| AB/3/14/10 | AB/14/41 | **Changes to the Research Degrees Appeals Procedures** |

41.1 The Deputy Registrar introduced the report. Members noted that the changes were proposed to bring the University in line with sector practice. It was confirmed that the current appeal procedure does not allow for appeals at the confirmation of PhD stage. Students who wished to appeal against decisions to fail them at this stage were being directed to the student complaint process, however this process was not considered fit-for-purpose. It had been agreed at a meeting of the Research Degrees Sub-Committee (RDSC) that the research degree appeals procedure should be enhanced to address this.

41.2 Details of the timescale for appealing under the proposed new procedures, and the composition of the appeals panel, were outlined. It was confirmed that the proposed changes would bring research students in line with taught students. There was some discussion about possible alternative arrangements for example offering the student a second examination at an extra charge.

41.3 The Board **approved** the changes to the Research Degrees Appeals Procedures. It was suggested a review be undertaken in due course, once the new procedures have been in place for some time, particularly in light of the suggestions of alternative arrangements.

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| AB/3/14/11 | AB/14/42 | **Peer Review and Enhancement Policy** |

42.1 The Head of Quality Enhancement introduced the report. Members noted that the policy had been previously known as Peer Supported Review. It was noted that the revised policy takes account of the necessary changes in relation to the changing requirements of the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) while also introducing a clearer focus on

the role of peer observation. The benefits of peer review for different aspects of academic practice including helping academics to attain, and maintain, their HEA accreditation, were highlighted.

42.2 Links between the Policy and the Code of Practice for Teaching and Supported Learning were highlighted. Reference was made to the direction that peer review be undertaken once every three years. It was suggested it would be more appropriate that peer reviews be agreed on an annual basis. It was also suggested that a reference to peer review be included in annual appraisals.

42.3 Clarification was sought on the scope of the policy including to whom it applies. It was suggested that the definition in section two ('Principles') of the document was very broad and that it was unlikely consultation had been undertaken with all of those staff potentially included. It was suggested the HEA definition may help to clarify the posts and roles to which peer review should most appropriately be applied. Members queried whether the policy would apply to associate lecturers. It was noted that it would not be appropriate for those who teach few hours. Members also queried the process for dealing with staff who 'failed to engage'.

42.4 It was acknowledged that some further clarification was also needed under section three ('Policy Statement'). Members noted that further consideration needed to be given to implementation of the Policy including integration with other relevant policies and processes.

42.5 It was noted that other institutions have firmly embedded peer review. Examples of areas in the University where it has already been implemented were shared but it was acknowledged that a strong message was needed to firmly embed the Policy across the University.

42.6 It was **agreed** that Chair's Action be taken to approve the Policy once the issues highlighted had been addressed and that the implementation proposals be presented to the Board in due course.

AB/3/14/12    AB/14/43 **Academic Awards Framework - PGCE**

43.1 The Head of Quality Enhancement introduced the report. The Board **approved** the revised credit structure and minimum requirements for PGCE and ProfGCE awards.

AB/3/14/13    AB/14/44 **Course and Institutional Approval Matters**

44.1 The Head of Quality Enhancement introduced the report. The Board:

- **Approved** the recommendations of the University and Faculty Approval Committees relating to proposals where conditions have been met.
- **Noted** the proposals recommended for approval subject

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to conditions being met or where the approval process is still pending.

- **Noted** the outcomes of Collaborative Periodic Reviews and **approved** the recommendations of the Review Panels.
- **Approved** the proposed title changes.
- **Noted** the course closures approved by Faculty Business Development Groups.

AB/14/45 **Students' Union Oral Report**

45.1 The President of the Students' Union provided a brief oral update:

i. it was confirmed that there was a general intention for the Union to have a greater academic focus in 2014-15 ;

ii. it was confirmed that the annual report from the Student Voice Committee will be published shortly.

AB/3/14/15     AB/14/46 **Research and Innovation Committee**

46.1 The Board **received** the minutes of the meeting of the Research and Innovation Committee of 30 January 2014.

AB/14/47 **Academic Quality Standards and Enhancement Committee**

AB/3/14/16.1     47.1 The Board **received** the minutes of the meeting of the Academic Quality Standards and Enhancement Committee of 13 March 2014.

AB/3/14/16.2     47.2 The Board **approved** an amendment to AQSEC membership. Members commented on the size of the membership noting that it appeared unwieldy. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Chair of AQSEC) agreed to undertake a membership review including the appointment of a Deputy Chair from amongst the faculty Pro Vice-Chancellors.

AB/14/48 **Next meeting**

48.1 It was noted that the next meeting will take place on Tuesday 14 October 2014, 2.00pm to 4.30pm, Boardroom, City Campus.