

ACADEMIC BOARD

Confirmed minutes of the meeting held on 29 April 2015

Present: Professor Philip Jones (Chair), Professor Liz Barnes, Martin Beer, Professor Mike Bramhall, Diane Burkinshaw, Emily Connor, Professor Roger Eccleston, Sonja Ellis, Jean Flanagan, Professor Paul Harrison, Dr Graham Holden, Professor John Leach, Professor Ann Macaskill, Dr Christine O'Leary, Kieran Pearson, Joe Rennie, Professor Norman Wienand, Liz Winders (Secretary)

In attendance: Rosemary Goerisch, Assistant Registrar, Assessment, Awards and Regulations (for items 6 and 7); Maura Sorensen (Minute Secretary)

Apologies for absence: Professor Karen Bryan, Edward Hatherley, Professor Adrian Hopgood, Dr Kevin Nield, Stella Jones-Devitt

Observing: Michael Clark, University Executive Group, Group Manager

Paper ref	Minute
	AB/15/17 Apologies
	17.1 Apologies were noted.
	AB/15/18 Chair's Business
	18.1 The Chair noted that the terms of office for all elected staff representatives on the Academic Board - faculty academic staff and the professional services staff representative - would come to an end in July. It was confirmed that a call for nominations was launched on 27 April. It was noted that all current elected staff representatives would be eligible to stand again.
	AB/15/19 Minutes of the meeting held on 17 February 2015
AB/15/1/M	3.1 The minutes of the meeting of 17 February 2015 were <u>approved</u> as a correct record.
	AB/15/20 Matters arising
	20.1 There were no matters arising.
	AB/15/21 Urgent Business
	21.1 No urgent business had been notified.
AB/2/15/6	AB/15/22 Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure
	22.1 The Deputy Registrar and the Assistant Registrar, Assessment, Awards and Regulations introduced the report. It was highlighted that the proposed title was consistent with the titles of other policies and procedures such as the Student Complaints Policy and Procedures. Some further proposed minor amendments (additional text in bold) were outlined: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Paragraph 14 – ‘Correspondence received after that date will not normally be considered under any

circumstance.'

- ii. Paragraph 23 – as per paragraph 15 - the same sentence is used, and the same amendment.
- iii. Paragraph 40 – 'You will not be disadvantaged by submitting ~~an a valid~~ appeal ~~provided that you do so in good faith.~~'

Members agreed the proposed amendments.

22.2 The Students' Union requested some changes to paragraph 4, to include further detail about the role of the Students' Union Advice Centre. The Assistant Registrar, Assessment, Awards and Regulations agreed to meet with the Students' Union Education Officer outside the meeting to consider the wording.

22.3 The Board **approved** the Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure.

AB/2/15/7

AB/15/23 **Policy on Recognition of Prior Learning**

23.1 The Deputy Registrar and the Assistant Registrar, Assessment, Awards and Regulations introduced the report. It was highlighted that the policy had previously been known as Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL). Members noted the new policy included recognition of both prior certified learning (RPCL, previously APCL) and prior experiential learning (RPEL, previously APEL). It was emphasised that the changes reflected current practice in the sector. The Board **approved** the Policy on Recognition of Prior Learning.

AB/2/15/8

AB/15/24 **Statement on Valuing Good Academic Standards**

24.1 The Vice-Chancellor and the Pro Vice-Chancellor, Faculty of Development and Society introduced the report. Reference was made to existing codes, charters and statements relating to academic standards within the University including:

- i. the University's Code of Practice for Teaching and Supported Learning;
- ii. the Student Charter;
- iii. the University's Statement of Academic Values;
- iv. the Strategy to 2020 in which expectations about academic standards are embedded.

24.2 Members noted the greater emphasis on students achieving higher academic standards. It was suggested the statement would support staff to align outcomes, and work planning, with the 2020 Strategy. In relation to whether the Statement may cause academic staff at the University, and those considering an academic career in the University, to assume that teaching staff at Sheffield Hallam were either expected to have a PhD or to undertake to work towards acquiring a PhD, the Pro Vice-Chancellor, Faculty of Development and Society clarified that emphasis should be on an individual's ability to demonstrate good academic standards in their teaching. For those taking up

an academic role from professional backgrounds the emphasis might be on developing and continuing to develop their teaching standards while keeping abreast of developments within their profession. Reference was made to links to the University policy and procedures on staff appraisal and on continuous professional development.

24.3 The Board **endorsed** the Statement on Valuing Good Academic Standards.

AB/2/15/9

AB/15/25 **Awarding a Personal Chair: Changes to the Guidance**

25.1 The Vice-Chancellor and the Pro Vice-Chancellor, Research and Innovation introduced the report. Pro-Vice Chancellors for the faculties commented on current practice, noting that professorial applicants did not always seek advice or liaise with their Pro Vice-Chancellor and Head of Department/Research before submitting their application. In some instances applicants would have been advised to make amendments to their application or to defer making an application. In most instances such applicants had been unsuccessful. It was noted that the guidance to applicants referred to informing Pro Vice-Chancellors of the intention to submit an application and providing a copy of the application.

25.2 It was confirmed that in exceptional circumstances where the University was looking to retain excellent staff, the awarding of a professorial title could be fast tracked.

25.3 Pro Vice-Chancellors referred to the recently launched process for awarding Readerships and recent meetings of Faculty Academic Progression Committees (FAPCs) where Reader applications had been initially considered. It was suggested that the FAPCs might also consider professorial applications at an initial stage; however it was highlighted this would necessitate a change in practice and that applicants may prefer their application to be considered by a University-wide committee rather than a faculty committee. Considering professorial applications at the University committee should also allay any concern about discrimination or deterrence at local level. It was agreed no change would be made to the procedures regarding professorial applications.

25.4 It was noted that FAPCs may be able to encourage applications for Readerships from staff who may not have considered making a submission and/or the FAPC could provide advice on developing skills or areas of practice in anticipation of submitting an application in the future. Reference was made to the University's Women Professors Group which could identify unsuccessful female professorial applicants and offer support and mentoring.

25.5 The Board **approved** the amendment to the guidance relating to Personal Chairs to advise unsuccessful applicants that they should expect to wait two years before making a further submission. Members noted that there may be exceptions and that the Committee would consider these on a case-by-case

basis.

AB/2/15/10

AB/15/26 **Course and Collaborative Partnership Matters**

26.1 The Director of Learning and Teaching introduced the report. The Board:

- i. **approved** the recommendations of the University and Faculty Approval Committees relating to proposals where conditions had been met;
- ii. **noted** recommendations for approval subject to conditions being met or where the approval process was still pending;
- iii. **approved** the recommendations arising from Departmental and Collaborative Partnership Periodic Reviews;
- iv. **noted** course closures approved by Faculty Portfolio and Partnership Groups.

AB/15/27 **Faculty Academic Boards**

AB/2/15/11.1

27.1 The Board **received** notes of a meeting of the Faculty of Development and Society Faculty Academic Board held on 18 March 2015.

AB/2/15/11.2

27.2 The Board **received** notes of a meeting of the Faculty of Health and Wellbeing Faculty Academic Board held on 16 March 2015.

AB/15/28 **Students' Union Report**

28.1 The President of the Students' Union provided an oral update on recent activities including:

- i. Volunteer Week;
- ii. the Students' Union elections in which a full team of officers had been elected and turnout had increased by 21%;
- iii. the campaign to increase voter registration for the General Election;
- iv. the hustings events in which candidates standing for Sheffield constituencies in the General Election had participated;
- v. Varsity - although the University had lost overall, they had won the final ice-hockey event;
- vi. the "Where I belong" campaign whose findings would be published in autumn 2015;
- vii. the refurbishment of the HUBS which would be completed by autumn 2015;
- viii. ongoing development of the Students' Union Strategic Plan.

AB/2/15/13

AB/15/29 **Research and Innovation Committee (RIC)**

29.1 The Board **received** the confirmed minutes of the meeting of 5 February 2015.

- 30.1 The Board **received** the confirmed minutes of the meeting of 20 January 2015. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor confirmed that a report on BME attainment had been received.

AB/15/31 **Other business**

- 31.1 The Chair referred to the forthcoming General Election and the possible implications for higher education. Possible changes included:
- i. A reduction in the full-time undergraduate student fee to £6k. It was noted this would be complicated to implement. In relation to taught postgraduate and part-time students it was difficult to anticipate whether a reduction in undergraduate student fees would have a significant impact.
 - ii. Graduate apprenticeships: it was noted the University has a commitment to and HEFCE funding for graduate apprenticeships.
 - iii. Teacher training: members noted the Labour Party statement on ensuring there should be no unqualified teachers in schools. This could, potentially, have an impact on the School Direct training programme.
 - iv. Healthcare training: reference was made to the Labour Party pledge to deliver an extra 2,000 nurses.
 - v. Students and immigration figures: members noted the various parties' positions on including overseas students in the net migration total.
 - vi. The possible threat to student opportunity funding from spending cuts.
 - vii. The possibility that the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills might be disbanded.

AB/15/32 **Next meeting**

- 32.1 Tuesday 16 June 2015, 2.00pm to 4.30pm, in the Boardroom, City Campus. It was noted that the incoming Students' Union President and Education Officer would be invited to observe.