



## ACADEMIC BOARD

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 7 July 2021

**Present:** Paul Bennett, Martin Boddy, Evan Botwood, Tod Burton, Peter Clegg, Amanda Coffey, Olena Doran, Sonja Dragojlovic-Oliveira, Marc Griffiths, Katie Jenkins, Anil Kashyap, Helen King, Vanique Kruger, James Lee, Mandy Lee, Candy McCabe, Ray McDowell, Fidel Meraz, Jo Midgley, Christopher Moore, James Murphy, Oluwadamilola Okeyoyin, Paul Olomolaiye, Carinna Parraman, Jackie Rogers, Nicholas Ryder, Jeanette Sakel, Jamie Stevens, Deborah Sturge, Sarah Todd, Steven West (Chair), Neil Willey.

**In attendance:** Jason Briddon, Rachel Cowie, David Evans, Chris Gledhill, Molly Harris, Samuel Ikpe, Katie Jenkins, Rania Regaieg, Gerry Rice, Richard Strange, Amy Morgan (Officer), Iain Mossman, Heather Moyes (Secretary).

**Apologies:** Jodie Anstee, Sally Clark, Sonja Dragojlovic-Oliveira.

**Observers:** Andrea Young

### **AB.21.07.1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

- AB.21.07.1.1 The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and noted apologies received.
- AB.21.07.1.2 Andrea Young was welcomed as the Board of Governors' observer.
- AB.21.07.1.3 Gerry Rice, David Evans and Iain Mossman were welcomed for upcoming agenda items.
- AB.21.07.1.4 The new Students' Union presidents team were welcomed.

### **AB.21.07.2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

- AB.21.07.2.1 No conflicts of interest were recorded in respect of the business under consideration at the meeting.

### **AB.21.07.3 MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**

#### **AB.21.07.3.1 Minutes of the last meeting**

*Paper AB/21/07/01 was received.*

- AB.21.07.3.1.1 The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 12 May 2021 were approved as a true and accurate record of discussions.

**AB.21.07.3.2 Action sheet and matters arising**

*Paper AB/21/07/02 was received.*

AB.21.07.3.2.1 The committee noted that all actions arising from previous meetings had been completed or were covered elsewhere on the agenda or were not yet due for completion.

AB.21.07.3.2.2 The Chair requested that actions that were not completed, but not yet due, be identified in blue for future reference.

**Action: Officer**

AB.21.07.3.2.3 Members noted that the 'Speak Up' project is a core element of Starting Block offer and therefore this work would start in September.

**AB.21.07.3.3 Chair's actions**

*Papers AB/21/07/03, AB/21/07/04, AB/21/07/05, AB/21/07/20 were received.*

AB.21.07.3.3.1 Members noted the updated Consumer Protection Assurance statement approved by Chair's Action.

AB.21.07.3.3.2 Members noted the successful applications of Emerita and Emeritus Professor for Pamela Moule and Jonathan Charteris-Black.

AB.21.07.3.3.4 Members noted the British Institute of Engineering and Technology, Sri Lanka as an affiliated institution of UWE Bristol.

**AB.21.07.4 STANDING AGENDA ITEMS**

**AB.21.07.4.1 Update from the Vice-Chancellor**

*Paper AB/21/07/06 was received.*

AB.21.07.4.1.1 The committee received an update from the Vice-Chancellor on matters of relevance to its remit.

AB.21.07.4.1.2 Members heard:

(i) That there was no indication or plan from the Universities Minister to have a consultation on University fees, and no clear view yet from the Department of Education, the Treasury or No.10;

(ii) That following further work after the May meeting, the University was confident it was compliant across all areas within the OfS Statement of Expectations for preventing and addressing harassment and sexual misconduct;

(iii) That the University has received further advice on the requirements for Freedom of Speech and that a programme of work on Freedom of Speech would be completed within the 21/22 Academic Year, building on considerations from the workshop at the last Academic Board meeting in May;

(iv) That phase 1 of the Subject Readiness Review has launched looking at the strengths of programmes and opportunities within the academic provision. The project would allow the University to understand how

programmes can be strengthen, how to support future thinking and how the market is changing;

- (v) That a review of assurances is being undertaken to help inform assessment of academic risk and ensure governance structures are robust and that this work will be carried out over the summer and some changes may need approval via Chair's action to move this forward, which the Board agreed to support.

**AB.21.07.4.2 Update from UWE Student Representatives**

*Paper AB/21/07/07 was received and noted.*

AB.21.07.4.2.1 The committee received an update from each of the new Presidents in the Students' Union team.

AB.21.07.4.2.2 Members heard:

- (i) That Evan Botwood is the new SU President and will concentrate on importance of the student voice. He will focus on ensuring the student voice is where it needs to be and ensuring a varied student voice;
- (ii) That Samuel Ikpe is the new Vice President for Societies and Communications. He is keen to focus on improving mental health, developing the student language programme and engaging in student feedback;
- (iii) That Molly Harris is the new Vice President for Sports and Health. She will focus will be on rebuilding student sports engagement following the pandemic and will also work on improving accessibility to sports, women in sport and implementing nutritional advice for students.
- (iv) That Rania Regaieg is the new Vice President for Communications and Welfare. She plans to celebrate diversity and inclusivity across the University and will also work on developing academic excellence bursaries, mental health training, sustainability and improving sociable facilities for students.
- (v) That Oluwadamilola Okeyoyin (Dami) is the new Vice President for Education. She will be working on improving wellbeing services during examination and assessment, whilst also ensuring student feedback is representative and effectively functioning.

AB.21.07.4.2.3 The Chair congratulated the Student Union on being awarded 'Excellent' in the Green Impact submission for the 2020/21 academic year and noted to members this is the highest rating that can be achieved.

**AB.21.07.4.3 Strategy 2030: Preparations for the 2021/22 Academic Year**

**AB.21.07.4.3.1 Update on Starting Block**

*Paper AB/21/07/08 was received.*

The Dean of Students gave a presentation to members on the latest updates from the Starting Block.

AB.21.07.4.3.2 Members heard:

- (i) That the value proposition for Starting Block is; 'being well prepared and focused at the start of something leads to success';
- (ii) That there are six core elements to the Design Guide and the focus for 21/22 is to ensure Starting Block is programme focused;
- (iii) That the Professional Services content provides a strong foundation to support the transition and success of Starting Block;
- (iv) That the Personal Planner has now been rebranded to 'Starting Block Checklist' and activities are grouped around the main themes of Starting Block;
- (v) That timetabling is a logistical challenge (with a number of significant requests for large teaching spaces at similar times) and it is very likely the extended working week will be utilised during the two-week period.

AB.21.07.4.3.3

Members noted in discussion:

- (i) That mature students' requirements and needs will be considered when confirming timetabling arrangements;
- (ii) That Starting Block will commence in September 2021 at the start of the Academic Year and will also accommodate for courses that have an earlier start date;
- (iii) That the feedback and recommendations from the 'Block Zero' evaluation have directly informed a number of changes for the Starting Block programme;
- (iv) That there will be continuous training for staff and students using online platforms for activities – support will be provided across facilities;
- (v) That the digital education specialist interest group is focused on developing staff IT skills base;
- (vi) That the University is in a very different place to the start of the last Academic Year with campuses open, facilities available and flexible learning spaces free for all students to use;
- (vii) That the digital connection points are being developed to understand student engagement throughout the programme - these include 'My Engagement' systems;
- (viii) That student societies and social activities dates are being built into Starting Block and the Student Union are supporting to ensure no clashes.

### **Academic Readiness**

*Paper AB/21/07/09 was received.*

AB.21.07.4.3.4

Members heard:

AB.21.07.4.3.5

- (i) That the paper demonstrated four key proposals for increasing 2021-22 readiness, following the workshops held in May 2021;
- (ii) That the work acts an early attempt to learn from the pandemic and some of the outcomes have been very positive;

- (iii) That the paper is not 'the end' of the lessons learnt work and there are still many outcomes that can be taken forward.

**AB.21.07.5 ITEMS FOR APPROVAL OR ENDORSEMENT**

**AB.21.07.5.1 Anti-Semitism and the IHRA declaration**

*Paper AB/21/07/10 was received.*

AB.21.07.5.1.1 The Chair asked the board to consider the endorsement of adoption of the IHRA definition of Antisemitism for approval by the Board of Governors.

AB.21.07.5.1.2 Members heard:

- (i) That the recommendation was considered and endorsed by the University's EDI Committee in June;
- (ii) That the paper references a UUK report, published in June 2021, which presents the Antisemitism Policy Trust's position;
- (iii) That as part of the Festival of Learning, staff engaged with Jewish students and staff to work through a definition whilst providing support and education;
- (iv) That the Students' Union fully support the IHRA definition and welcome the University using it.

AB.21.07.5.1.3 Members endorsed the adoption of the IHRA definition of Antisemitism.

**Action: Clerk to the Board of Governors**

**AB.21.07.5.2 Policy statement on not accepting tobacco industry funding for research**

*Paper AB/21/07/11 was received.*

AB.21.07.5.2.1 The Chair of the Research Ethics Committee presented a proposed new policy of not accepting tobacco industry funding for research.

AB.21.07.5.2.2 Members heard:

- (i) That the University does not have an explicit policy regarding not accepting tobacco industry funding for research;
- (ii) That many universities have policies excluding tobacco industry funding, including The University of Bristol;
- (iii) That there are multiple reasons to adopt this policy including: ethical issues, risk of funders penalising Universities that accept Tobacco funding, reputational damage and partnership tensions.

AB.21.07.5.2.3 Members noted in discussion:

- (i) That a series of webinars on ethical issues will take place in the new year 2022, for example on Alcohol and Fossil Fuels;
- (ii) That this policy has come about because a specific issue arose and there was currently not a clear procedure or mechanism to refer issues;
- (iii) The longer-term plan will be to have an overarching statement to capture a number of ethical funding issues.
- (iv) That the proposed policy will exist as temporary measure before building a generic policy.

AB.21.07.5.2.4 The committee approved the policy.

**Action: Chair of the Research Ethics Committee**

**AB.21.07.5.3 Academic regulations 2021/22**

*Paper AB/21/07/12 was received.*

AB.21.07.5.3.1 The Director of Student and Academic Services asked the board to approve the proposed updates to the regulations presented in the paper.

AB.21.07.5.3.2 Members heard:

- (i) That the paper proposed minor changes to the current Academic Regulations;
- (ii) That a further set of proposals relating to extensions, adjustments to deadlines and the 24 hour window would be brought forward later, following a review currently in progress;
- (iii) That the aim is to simplify the academic regulations for 2021/22 and move towards one set of academic regulations from 2022/23 onwards.

AB.21.07.5.3.4 Members noted in discussion:

- (i) That field boards' role is to review students' individual module performance;
- (ii) That there is work in progress considering the attainment gap and assessments and better use of the continuous improvement tool.

AB.21.07.5.3.5 Member approved the proposed updates to the Academic Regulations 2021/22.

**Action: Director of Student and Academic Services**

**AB.21.07.5.4 Variation to Assessment Regulations: PG Diploma Solicitors Training Course**

*Paper AB/21/07/13 was received.*

AB.21.07.5.4.1 The Director of Student and Academic Services presented a proposal to vary the academic regulations as applied to the PG Diploma Solicitors Training Course.

AB.21.07.5.4.2 The committee approved the proposal.

**AB.21.07.5.5 Sub-Committee Assurance Reports**

*Papers AB/21/07/15, AB/21/07/16, AB/21/07/17, AB/21/07/18, AB/21/07/19 were all received.*

AB.21.07.5.5.1 The Chair highlighted to members that work that is being undertaken over the summer to strengthen the approach to the management of assurance and risk. An update will be brought to the next meeting of Academic Board and may need some endorsement via correspondence or Chair's Action.

**Action: Secretary/Officer to Academic Board**

AB.21.07.5.5.2 The Secretary to the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience committee presented the LTSEC Assurance Report 20/21.

Members heard:

- (i) That there was debate and different opinions about how effective meetings had been online via Microsoft Teams;
- (ii) That an area for the committee to strengthen is the links between other committees;
- (iii) That the committee has overseen the quality of the student experience during the pandemic;
- (iv) That the committee have taken oversight of Starting Block and Block Zero and has been actively involved in the design of this;
- (v) That the committee has had a number of items across the 'Transforming Futures' learning and teaching strategy;
- (vi) That the committee is confident it has met its Terms of Reference and the paper indicates a number of actions for the Board to consider.
- (vii) That the committee will continue to review how it is ensuring the flow and assurance is robust through different committees.

The Board confirmed they were assured that LTSEC had met its terms of reference for the Academic Year 20/21.

AB.21.07.5.5.3 The Chair of the Research, Knowledge and Exchange Committee presented the RKEC Assurance Report 20/21.

Members heard:

- (i) That the Committee members agreed it had operated within its Terms of Reference and had sufficient oversight of the work of its subcommittees and that the Committee's work has added value to the university during the current academic year;
- (ii) That three key actions had been created from the action plan as part of the report which can be noted from the paper;
- (iii) That David Evans was the new Chair for the Research Ethics Sub-Committee from November 2020;

The board confirmed they were assured that RKEC had met its terms of reference for the Academic Year 20/21.

AB.21.07.5.5.4 The Executive Dean of HAS presented the HAS Faculty Board Assurance Report 20/21.

Members heard:

- (i) That membership and engagement had sometimes been difficult within the board;
- (ii) That there had been a challenge with attendance from the Student Union;
- (iii) That Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity had been a firm feature through the 20/21 Academic Year;
- (iv) That that board had provided an opportunity for networking and colleagues to discuss key work enabling rich conversations and debates.

- The Executive Dean of ACE presented the ACE Faculty Board Assurance Report 20/21.
- AB.21.07.5.5.6 Members heard:
- (i) That the board had been productive over the year and attendance had been strong;
  - (ii) That the student insight in the faculty board often kickstarted conversations;
  - (iii) That there were a number of outcomes from the meetings to take forward into 21/22;
  - (iv) That the board existed as a useful mechanism to engage with broader staff groups.
- AB.21.07.5.5.7 The Executive Dean of FET presented the FET Faculty Board Assurance Report 20/21.
- Members heard:
- (i) That the board have struggled to obtain a student representative however this is something to address in the new academic year;
  - (ii) That the board have navigated the implementation of the EDI agenda within the faculty;
  - (iii) That the board serves as a forum for the Faculty Executive to receive constructive feedback, on both strategy and operations, from a wider group of staff.
- AB.21.07.5.5.8 The Executive Dean of FBL presented the FBL Faculty Board Assurance Report 20/21. A formal thanks was given to Catherine Davies for putting together the report.
- Members heard:
- (i) That the board has had similar experiences with the lack of engagement and attendance from students;
  - (ii) That the report includes four key actions for the next academic year including an action to invite a representative from the Faculty EDI Taskforce to attend future Faculty Board meetings;
  - (iii) That the board are looking into how they can operate face to face meetings for the future.

The Academic Board confirmed they were assured that all Faculty Boards had met their terms of reference for the Academic Year 20/21.

<b>AB.21.07.6</b>	<b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b>
AB.21.07.6.1	<b>Academic Board Effectiveness Review 20/21</b>
AB.21.07.6.1.1	The Secretary asked members to note that a committee effectiveness review survey would be issued to members shortly.
AB.21.07.6.1.2	Members noted this would provide an opportunity to comment on how the committee has operated over the past year.
AB.21.07.6.1.3	



Members noted a summary of the results would be shared with members, but individual responses will only be viewed by the Academic Governance Team and the Chair.

**AB.21.07.7**

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Wednesday 13 October 2021, 14:00-17:00