



ACADEMIC BOARD

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 8 December 2021

Present: Steven West (Chair), Paul Bennett, Martin Boddy, Evan Botwood (SU President), Andrew Carter (item 5.5), Sally Clark, Ellie Clark-Webster (item 5.1), Amanda Coffey, Rachel Cowie, Marc Griffiths, James Harvey, Antony Hill, Helen King, Vanique Kruger, Vikas Kumar, James Lee, Mandy Lee, Hannah Mathias (item 1.1), Fidel Meraz, Jo Midgley, Christopher Moore, Lyn Newton, Danielle Newton, Paul Olomolaiye, Carinna Parraman, Jeanette Sakel, Jim Smith, Ian Stratton (item 5.3), Richard Strange, Neil Sutherland, Sarah Todd, Sarah Ward, Thomas Wild, Neil Willey.

In attendance: Jodie Anstee, Chris Gledhill, Amy Morgan (Officer), Heather Moyes (Secretary).

Apologies: Jason Briddon, Tod Burton, Katie Jenkins, Candy McCabe, Raymond McDowell, Nicholas Ryder, Dami Okeyoyin (VP Education).

Observers: Laura Claydon (BoG observer)

AB.21.12.1 DIGITAL ENABLED EDUCATION EXPERIENCE WORKSHOP

AB.21.12.1.1 Hannah Mathias, Head of Digital Education Services, presented to the board on digitally enabled education. Members then participated in a workshop on the same theme.

AB.21.12.2 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

AB.21.12.2.1 Welcome to members

The Chair welcomed new members who were unable to attend the October board meeting:

- VC nominees: Antony Hill and Vikas Kumar
- Student representatives: Thomas Wild, Vanique Kruger, James Harvey and Danielle Newton
- SU President: Evan Botwood

AB.21.12.2.2 The Chair welcomed the Board of Governors' observer, Laura Claydon.

AB.21.12.2.3 The Chair noted all apologies.

AB.21.12.2.4 No declarations of interest were notified.

AB.21.12.3 MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

AB.21.12.3.1 Previous Minutes

Paper AB.21.12.01 was received

Members confirmed the minutes were an accurate record of the meeting held on 13 October 2021.

AB.21.12.3.2 Action Sheet and Matters Arising

Paper AB.21.12.02 was received

AB.21.12.3.2.1 The Chair confirmed that all outstanding actions were in progress or not yet due.

AB.21.12.4 STANDING AGENDA ITEMS

AB.21.12.4.1 Update from the Vice-Chancellor

Paper AB.21.12.05 was received.

AB.21.12.4.1.1 Members noted a report from the Chair on matters of relevance to the committee's remit.

AB.21.12.5.1 Update from the Students' Union

Paper AB.21.12.06 was received

AB.21.12.5.1.1 The President of the Students' Union presented the paper and members heard:

- (i) That Movember events had recently taken place including 'MenTalk' sessions, art creation sessions and sports team fundraising;
- (ii) That a sustainability committee had recently been established by the student Green Team;
- (iii) That the Students' Union's strategy for 2022 – 2027 would be launched in the new year; there would be a campaign in the coming months.
- (iv) That a short-term solution (minibus) had been approved to address the impact of changes to the 71 bus service affecting the Bower Ashton campus and that UWE Bristol would be writing to the Managing Director of First Buses regarding the issue.

AB.21.12.5 ITEMS FOR APPROVAL OR ENDORSEMENT

AB.21.12.5.1 Research Integrity Assurance Report 2020 - 2021

Paper AB.21.12.07 was received

AB.21.12.5.1.1 The Pro Vice-Chancellor: Research and Enterprise presented the paper and members heard:

- (i) That the report has been approved at the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee (RKEC) in October and would go to the Board of Governors (BoG) following Academic Board's approval.
- (ii) That the Concordat requires the University to produce an annual statement on research integrity and that the report outlined relevant actions undertaken and provided assurances that processes are robust.
- (iii) That the report confirmed there have been no formal investigations of research misconduct.

The Pro Vice-Chancellor Research and Enterprise confirmed they would investigate the lack of specific reference to the Faculties of Business and

AB.21.12.5.1.2 Law and Environment and Technology in the section addressing Faculty research governance committees.

AB.21.12.5.1.3 Academic Board **endorsed** the Research Integrity Assurance Report 2020/21.

AB.21.12.5.2 Strategic Research Risk

Paper AB.21.12.08 was received

AB.21.12.5.2.1 The Pro Vice-Chancellor Research and Enterprise presented the paper and members heard:

- (i) That the risk descriptor was an *opportunity* risk descriptor, identifying the opportunities that need to be realised;
- (ii) That the overall opportunity is to "enhance academic character and reputation of the University through research in line with Strategy 2030, through expansion of research income and intensity";
- (iii) That there are six opportunities highlighted in the risk descriptor and red text indicates new actions or issues;
- (iv) That the risk appetite indicates the risk of investing to grow research;
- (v) That there are good chances to secure and enhance opportunities for investing in research, aligning to Strategy 2030.

AB.21.12.5.2.2 The Pro Vice-Chancellor Research and Enterprise confirmed they would follow up on opportunities that were not populated with risk numbers.

AB.21.12.5.2.3 Academic Board **endorsed** the Strategic Research Risk.

AB.21.12.5.3 Student Casework Annual Assurance Report

Paper AB.21.12.09 was received

AB.21.12.5.3.1 The Head of Student and Academic Policy Enhancement presented the paper and members heard:

- (i) That the report reviews the operation of the University's student policies and procedures in the 2020/21 Academic Year and provides assurance to Academic Board that these operated effectively during that period;
- (ii) That the report reflects an abnormal year due to the covid-19 pandemic;
- (iii) That there has been an overall rise of 94 cases from 19/20 to 20/21;
- (iv) That appendix 1 presents the key learning points that will be taken forward;
- (v) That appendix 4 presents the recommendations for Academic Board to consider.

AB.21.12.5.3.2

In discussion, members noted:

- (i) That the report is a reflection of two distinct element of casework: student complaints and supporting students to succeed;
- (ii) That the casework team are working closely with the Wellbeing, Security and Accommodation teams to ensure context is captured and student behaviour on campus is monitored.
- (iii) That appendix 3 demonstrates UWE is a strong position in the OIA outcome statistics.

- (iv) That the UUK data has shown UWE is very similar to other HEIs in relation to student mental health and wellbeing.
- (v) That new ways of providing support to students are being worked on, moving from an academic personal tutor to a coaching model.
- AB.21.12.5.3.3 Academic Board **endorsed** the report and recommendations. Members noted that the Learning, Teaching and Student Committee would monitor delivery on actions identified.
- AB.21.12.5.4 Academic Calendar 2022 - 2027**
Paper AB.21.12.10 was received
- AB.21.12.5.4.1 The Head of Student Administration and Advice presented the paper and members heard:
- (i) That planning the Academic Calendar for the next five years will have significant benefits for planning/scheduling, but that there will continue to be formal 'touch points' to ensure the dates remain fit for purpose;
 - (ii) That the proposed calendar includes increased flexibility on learning and assessment;
 - (iii) That the proposed calendar outlines the two major cohorts: September and January;
 - (iv) That the Starting Block dates have been mapped based on the 2021 model and there is an ongoing challenge of how this is reflected in students' calendars.
- AB.21.12.5.4.2 In discussion, members noted:
- i) That the removal of teaching weeks would provide more flexibility and room for change.
 - ii) That the three weeks for marking and preparation after the resits period was a positive change.
- AB.21.12.5.4.3 There were various suggestions about the structure and format of Starting Block, which the Dean of Students agreed to consider and explore further via the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee.
- AB.21.12.5.4.3 Final approval of the calendar was remitted to Chair's action.
[Action: Secretary]
- AB.21.12.5.5 Admissions Policy**
Paper AB.21.12.11 was received
- AB.21.12.5.5.1 The Head of UK Student Recruitment and Admissions presented the paper and members heard:
- (i) That two main changes were proposed: an updated disabled student section (10) and the introduction of new section addressing applicant conduct (21);
 - (ii) That the proposals responded to cases that had occurred and increased use of online recruitment activities.
- AB.21.12.5.5.2 In discussion, members noted:
- (i) That the language should be softened to ensure the policy reflects UWE's supportive and considered approach to student recruitment;

- AB.21.12.5.5.3 (ii) That the policy should clarify that there were limits to the University's discretion in certain instances (e.g. PSRB requirements).
Members requested that the policy be revised further to reflect the discussion and to remit final approval of the changes to Chair's action.
Action: Head of UK Student Recruitment and Admissions/ Secretary

AB.21.12.6 ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

AB.21.12.6.1 Risk and Assurance Review

Paper AB.21.12.12 was received.

- AB.21.12.6.2 The Clerk to the Board of Governors presented the paper and members heard:
- (i) That the University is currently reviewing its assurance arrangements across the University.
 - (ii) That the current review is based on the introduction of the Board Assurance Framework and the forthcoming changes to the Office for Students (OfS) B conditions of registration.
 - (iii) That revised conditions B1, B2, B4 and B5 were expected to be published after Christmas, and that a consultation on B3 was also pending.

- AB.21.12.6.3 The Chair requested the B Conditions come to the February Academic Board agenda.

Action: Secretary

- AB.21.12.6.4 Members noted the outcomes of the review of the means by which Academic Board receives assurances regarding the effective management of strategic and tactical risks and compliance with regulatory and legislative requirements that fall within its remit.

- AB.21.12.6.5 Members were asked to email the Clerk to the Board of Governors with any comments on the review outcomes.

AB.21.12.7 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

AB.21.12.7.1 Awards Conferred 2020 – 2021

Paper AB.21.12.14 was received.

- AB.21.12.7.1.1 Members noted the distribution of undergraduate awards conferred by classification during 2020/21.

AB.21.12.7.2 Honorary Degrees Committee Report

Paper AB.21.12.15 was received.

- AB.21.12.7.2.1 Members noted a report on the activities of the Honorary Degree Committee.

AB.21.12.8 SUMMARY REPORTS FROM SUB-COMMITTEES

Papers AB.21.12.16/17/18/19/20/21 22 were received.

- AB.21.12.8.1 Members noted summary reports from sub-committees as follows:
- LTSEC (10 November)
 - RKEC (29 October)

- ACE Faculty Board (6 October)
- FET Faculty Board (13 October)
- FBL Faculty Board (3 November)
- HAS Faculty Board (6 October)
- SAPG (7 December)

AB.21.12.9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

AB.21.12.9.1 There was no other business identified.

AB.21.12.10 DATES OF 2021/22 MEETINGS

AB.21.12.10.1
Wednesday 23 February 2022
Wednesday 18 May 2022
Wednesday 6 July 2022