



ACADEMIC BOARD

Minutes of the Academic Board held on Wednesday 5 December, 2018.

Present: Steve West (Chair), Paul Bennett, Martin Boddy, Elizabeth Cleaver, Sonja Dragojlovic – Oliveira, Lucy Dumbell, Maria Foster, Jane Harrington, Catherine Hobbs, Rachael Johnson, James Lee, Elena Marco, Fidel Meraz, Christopher Moore, James Murphy, Giang Nguyen, Paul Olomolaiye, Carinna Parraman, Ayrden Pocock, Gerry Rice, Jane Roscoe, Sarah Todd, Callum Tucker, Donna Whitehead, Neil Willey, Aylwin Yafele.

In attendance: Jodie Anstee, Rachel Cowie, Chris Gledhill, Heather Moyes (Clerk), Derek Norris, Amanda Oliver (Deputy Clerk)

Apologies: Jason Briddon, Peter Clegg, Sanja Dogramadzi, Lisa Harrison, Katie Jenkins, Candida McCabe, Jo Midgley, Steven Neill, Nicholas Ryder, Jeanette Sakel, Rosie Scott Ward, Patricia Voaden, Ralitsa Wilcox.

AB 18.12.1 MEMBERSHIP

AB 18.12.1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and announced the new members of the Board as follows:

Representative Professor from the Faculty of Arts, Creative industries and Education (ACE)

Carinna Parraman

Representative Professor from Faculty of Environment and Technology (FET)

Sanja Dogramadzi

Representative Professor from Faculty of Business and Law (FBL)

Nicholas Ryder

Representative Professor from Faculty of Health and Applied Sciences (HAS)

Candida Susan McCabe

Representative of Teaching Staff from Faculty of Business and Law (FBL)

Paul Bennett

Representative from those with responsibility for Learning and Teaching Management from Faculty of Environment and Technology (FET)

Sonja Dragojlovic-Oliveira

Representative from those with responsibility for Learning and Teaching Management from the Faculty of Arts, Creative industries and Education (ACE)

Jeanette Sakel

Elected Student Representatives:

Post Graduate Taught:
Ralitsa Wilcox

Undergraduates :
Callum Tucker and Rachael Johnson

It was noted that the Post Graduate Research Student Representative vacancy remained unfilled:

AB 18.12.1.2 The Chair advised new members to read the Terms of Reference for Academic Board and highlighted the importance of respecting items marked confidential. Members noted that there was no plan to move to a “reserved business” model at present but that it remained an option. Members with concerns about information contained in committee papers were encouraged to either raise them in the meeting or discuss them with the Chair separately. The Chair expressed concern that confidential papers had been shared and then made public to the press. The paper was a draft paper and not therefore for wider circulation as was still under review and scrutiny. The Board was invited to raise any concerns and agree to the need to respect the status of confidential reports. No questions or issues were raised and the Board agreed.

AB 18.12.2 MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING NOT ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA

Paper AB 18/12/01 was received

AB 18.12.2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 10 October, 2018 were **approved** as a true and accurate record.

AB 18.12.2.2 *AB18.10.4.2 refers:* Members noted that the revised Terms of Reference for Academic Board had been approved by the Board of Governors.

AB 18.12.2.3 *AB 18.10.9.4 refers:* Members noted that a letter had been sent from the Chair of Academic Board to clinical partners on the future of the Gloucester Campus.

AB 18.12.2.4 *AB 18.10.10.4 refers:* Members noted that a task group was being established to develop a model based on four student intakes a year which would be chaired by the Deputy Director Student and Academic Services (Policy Development & Student Experience).

AB 18.12.2.5 *AB 18.10.11.3 refers:* Members noted that the Annual Report from Academic Board was presented to and approved by the Board of Governors at its meeting on 14 November 2018.

AB 18.12.2.6 *AB 18.10.13.2 refers:* Members noted that the proposed changes to the Terms of Reference for Faculty Research Degree Committees were made.

AB 18.12.2.7 *AB.18.10.17.4 refers:* Members noted that the establishment of a “People’s Committee” to consider development and support for staff throughout their career was being explored with HR and that a People Plan would be developed as part of the 2030 Strategy.

AB 18.12.2.8 Members of Academic Board were also asked to note that a response to the action:

AB 18.12.2.9 *AB 18.7.13.3 refers: the URKEC Appeals Procedure - Academic Board had expressed concern about academic judgement being excluded from the grounds for appeal and had asked that this was relayed to URKEC had been received. The Chair wished to discuss the matter further with the URKEC Chair and would report the outcome to Academic Board in February.*

ACTION: Chair and Deputy Clerk to Academic Board

AB 18.12.3 **New Format for Action Points**
Paper AB 18/12/02 was received.

AB 18.12.3.1 Academic Board Members approved the new format for tracking action points arising from Academic Board.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

AB 18.12.4 **Vice Chancellor's Update**

AB 18.12.4.1 Academic Board received an update from the Vice Chancellor and noted:

- i. the Minister for Science and Universities, Sam Gyimah, had resigned and the new Minister was Chris Skidmore, MP for Kingswood. The Vice Chancellor stated his interest in working with the Minister and hearing his views on the future for universities. He expected the new Minister to continue to position students at the heart of decision-making.
- ii. That publication of the Augar Review of Post-18 Education and Funding had been delayed further and was now expected at the end of February. Whilst there had been some speculation in the press about its recommendations, there were no clear indications as to the outcome.
- iii. universities would find it challenging to accommodate a fee reduction without compensation from Treasury and that such a change could have significant financial implications for the sector. For instance, this may lead to some universities renegotiating loan terms with lenders which may impact on the sector's risk rating, drive up interest rates and put the financial sustainability of some institutions under strain. The previous Minister had advised that struggling Universities would not be "bailed out" and that this was one of the reasons OfS was focused on ensuring robust student protection plans were in place.
- iv. the financial uncertainty of the current climate was compounded by proposed pension increases and uncertainty surrounding Brexit. However this was impacting on UWE investment decisions and the institution was not at risk of needing to trigger its Student Protection Plan in response. Members heard that UWE was solid financially and academically. Contingency plans to mitigate the effects of shocks were in place and any adverse changes would be addressed on a case by case basis.

AB 18.12.4.2 The Vice Chancellor notified the Board that the University had been shortlisted for funding from the Challenge Fund to support its work on mental health, specifically for a collaborative project with the Universities of Bristol, Birmingham, Liverpool and UCL that was designed to support better connectivity with the NHS and across institutions. A meeting would be held the following week to bring together all projects shortlisted and explore opportunities to cross-fertilise funding. The outcome of the bid would be reported to the Academic Board meeting in February.
ACTION: Pro Vice-Chancellor Student Experience and Head of Student Inclusivity

AB 18.12.5 Strategy 2030

Paper AB 18/12/03 was received.

AB 18.12.5.1 Academic Board received an update on progress made on the development of Strategy 2030. The Chair advised that members would receive regular updates on the consultation process and emerging views.

AB 18.12.5.2 Members heard that the draft strategy had been presented to Board of Governors, who had feedback that the Strategy should be more ambitious. This would be addressed in a revised version. The University was also exploring ways of engaging the Students' Union and the wider student body in the Strategy.

AB 18.12.5.3 The Chair highlighted what he perceived to be the challenges for the University in developing and delivering the Strategy, namely:

- i. ensuring the Strategy speaks to audiences outside of UWE, with a language, narrative, and connectivity that goes beyond the higher education sector and positions the University as having a global outlook with a purpose that goes beyond the individual. Potential was noted to use videos and animations that inspire and show the relevance the University has to local, national and international economies;
- ii. developing the notion of service, i.e. the wider non-financial benefits that UWE graduates offer to society which could be overlooked with an enterprise focus;
- iii. ensuring the Strategy is agile and recognises the importance of the economy and community engagement;
- iv. the ability to work across the University to identify potential and new areas where the University could develop services, as well as the importance of creating space for the emergence of new disciplines;
- v. having goals and values that are evident around the University, support partnership working and are engaging and accessible for all audiences;
- vi. making more explicit student outcomes and how they take these into society;
- vii. the importance of having some "big statements" that make UWE distinctive from the rest of the sector.

AB 18.12.5.4 Members proposed areas where the Strategy could be developed and improved, including:

- i. ensuring it reflects UWE's existing professional partnerships;
- ii. strengthening commitments to inclusivity, and to becoming a more representative campus ;
- iii. articulating more clearly the distinctive role of higher education institutions in addressing major societal challenges;
- iv. reflecting that being part of UWE is associated with fun, pride, and enjoyment; and
- v. the importance of the Strategy being sharp and focused with measurable outputs.

ACTION: Chair

AB 18.12.6 Review of Academic Governance Update

- AB 18.12.6.1 Academic Board received an update from the Director of Student and Academic Services on progress made against the action plan agreed as part of the review of academic governance.
- AB 18.12.6.2 Members heard that she was reviewing the accountability and engagement of students in academic governance and that consideration was also being given to how best the University can provide assurance to Board of Governors on academic governance.
- AB 18.12.6.3 An update was received on work reviewing the interface between faculty and academic governance structures, including a meeting held with Executive Deans and Pro-Vice Chancellors. A further meeting with Chairs would take place in the New Year to agree responsibilities of Committees reporting to Academic Board and assurances Academic Board needs. Regular updates will be provided to Academic Board on progress made.

ACTION: Director of Student and Academic Services

AB 18.12.7 Update on the recent UKVI Audit

- AB 18.12.7.1 The Director of Student and Academic Services reported the University was still waiting for the report from the recent UKVI audit and that Academic Board members would be informed of the outcome as soon as possible.
- AB 18.12.7.2 Members were told the auditor was very complimentary about the work the University undertakes in this area, but had identified attendance monitoring and retention periods for documentation on English language tests as areas for improvement.
- AB 18.12.7.3 Members heard the University monitors engagement and has trialled various attendance monitoring software solutions, but as yet no suitable option has been identified so monitoring continues to be a manual exercise. The value of engagement monitoring data for learning analytics was noted, especially for identifying students experiencing poor mental health. Members recognised that the University is currently making a significant investment to replace the student records system, which will improve capacity in this area, but noted that this is a complex, four/five-year project.
- AB 18.12.7.4 The Director of Student and Academic Services and the Chair recognised the hard work and engagement of teams across the University in preparing for the audit and expressed their thanks to all involved.

ACTION: Director of Student and Academic Services

AB 18.12.8 Code of Practice for Research Excellence Framework 2021

Paper AB 18/12/04 was received.

- AB 18.12.8.1 Academic Board was invited to discuss and comment on the proposals set out in the paper.
- AB 18.12.8.2 Members were informed that all universities were required to develop, agree and publish a Code of Practice which sets out the policies and procedures developed in respect of the Research Excellence Framework (REF). The Pro Vice-Chancellor: Research & Business Engagement noted that successful engagement with REF was important to maximise the financial and reputational benefits for the University.

He noted it was the University's opportunity to demonstrate research with impact and that there was only one opportunity every seven years. Members were also advised that the new Code of Practice was more focused and detailed than its predecessor.

AB 18.12.8.3 The Pro Vice-Chancellor: Research & Business Engagement outlined the key points in the consultation document, which included processes for ensuring decisions about staff outputs and eligibility were clear transparent and equitable. He reported that it is expected that all eligible will have at least one output to submit.

AB 18.12.8.4 It was noted that there will be a formal consultation period and individual staff, committees and representative bodies will be invited to comment on the proposals.

ACTION: Pro Vice-Chancellor Research & Business Engagement

AB 18.12.9 Academic Apprenticeships Framework

Paper AB 18/12/05 was received.

AB 18.12.9.1 Members were informed that this was an important area of work for the University and an area of academic development that was aligned with the political and policy agenda of Central Government. It was acknowledged that Apprenticeships in Higher Education are very different from Further Education (FE) Apprenticeships and that competencies at degree level are more complex and need to be aligned with graduate attributes.

AB 18.12.9.2 Members were advised that the Framework includes the core components of a UWE Higher or Degree Apprenticeship programme and highlights the importance of relationships with colleges and schools in creating pipelines of opportunities for students to progress to areas of higher study.

AB 18.12.9.3 The Chair noted that Apprenticeships initially had been a project for the University but were now mainstream business, and that the Framework supports the University to meet the growing demand for bespoke, employer-led provision in the apprenticeship arena in a flexible and agile way. In particular, Nursing and Allied Health Professions consider Higher and Degree Apprenticeships to be a way of increasing the number of people entering health and social care employment. He also noted that the University were trail blazers for the level 8 PHD Apprenticeship.

AB 18.12.9.4 The Chair informed members that the Framework had been developed by professional services and academic colleagues and expressed his thanks for their hard work. He also highlighted that the Framework had been heavily scrutinised.

AB 18.12.9.5 Members recognised that this was a fantastic opportunity for students and looked forward to receiving updates on progress made.

AB 18.12.9.6 Recommendations made in relation to the Framework were:

- Section 6 "Developing an Award" – to include "an indicative timeline for development" as an Appendix cross referenced to this section
- Section 9 on student feedback and evaluation needs to reference the NSS whilst recognising that much of an apprenticeship is delivered outside the University. The Director of Learning and Teaching agreed to establish a group to look at this in more detail.

ACTION: Director of Learning and Teaching

AB 18.12.9.7 It was also noted that the Appendices still need to be reviewed and updated. The Director of Learning and Teaching advised members that these would be brought back to Academic Board for discussion.

ACTION: Director of Learning and Teaching

AB 18.12.9.8 The Chair emphasised that the paper was commercially sensitive so was for internal use only. He also thanked John Lanham for his service to the Board as Assistant Vice Chancellor - Director Strategic Regional Partnerships , recognising it was his last meeting.

ITEMS FOR APPROVAL

AB 18.12.10 Suicide Prevention Plan - Confidential item

Two tabled papers were received. Paper AB 18/12/09 and Paper AB 18/12/10

AB 18.12.10.1 The Chair advised that Bristol University had consented to the joint Suicide Prevention and Response Strategy being shared with Academic Board, however, the action plan was a draft and was strictly confidential.

AB 18.12.10.2 Members were informed that UWE had done lots of work around prevention with the NHS and that the draft Suicide Prevention Plan was based on the JED Model of mental health promotion and suicide prevention. The Model focuses on the importance of strategic planning around seven key areas namely: social connectedness; restricting access; the identification of students at risk; increasing help-seeking behaviour; the provision of mental health and substance abuse services; following crises management procedures and, developing life skills.

AB 18.12.10.3 The Deputy Director of SAS (Student Support and Wellbeing) highlighted that developing life skills was the most important of these, however, restricting access had a significant impact on prevention.

AB 18.12.10.4 He reported that, for the purpose of the action plan, the key areas of the JED Model had been grouped under the following headings:

- Strategic Planning
- Prevention
- Intervention, and
- Post-vention

AB 18.12.10.5 It was recognised that partnership working across the UWE community including the Students' Union, Professional Services and academic departments would be essential for connected delivery and needs to be a core element of the action plan. It was reported that governance of the action plan would via the Mental Wealth Strategy Group and Safeguarding Group.

AB 18.12.10.6 Comments were made on:

- the importance of stratified training which reflects the needs of all staff groups. It was suggested that training should be mandatory and accredited;
- the impact of prescription charges for students;
- the availability of out of hours services. It was agreed that the University would explore the feasibility of having a laminated business card that

could be issued to all staff with contact numbers for out of hours services – it was suggested that one option would be to use the ID card;

- everyone being able to identify an individual in distress and feel confident about asking “Are you OK?”;
- that non-specialist staff should be signposting to services, not giving advice which they may not be qualified to give.

AB 18.12.10.7 It was agreed that the Deputy Director of SAS (Student Support and Wellbeing) would undertake further work on the Plan, which would be brought back to Academic Board. This would include identifying a named individual/ role holder against each action.

ACTION: Deputy Director of SAS (Student Support and Well-being)

REPORTS AND UPDATES

AB 18.12.11 Report on awards conferred in 2017-18

Paper AB 18/12/06 was received

AB 18.12.11.1 The Chair contextualised the report by highlighting the narrative in the media around the increase in first class degrees awarded. He highlighted that the University will continue to monitor qualifications.

AB 18.12.11.2 It was reported that overall there was minimal movement in degrees awarded by each Faculty across the three year period, however, there were some shifts in grades. Members were advised that the report had also been reviewed by LTSEC

AB 18.12.11.3 and Faculty Boards.

AB 18.12.12 Complaints and Appeals Annual report 2017-18

Paper AB 18/12/07 was received

AB 18.12.12.1 Members of Academic Board were advised that during 17/18 that there had been an increase in complaints and associated casework.

AB 18.12.12.2 The Head of Complaints and Appeals reported that, while liaison with professional services and faculties over the handling of Stage 1 complaints continued to be successful, Stage 2 complaints received had increased by 36% on the previous academic year. While it was noted that a large proportion of these complaints were related to tuition fees, members were informed that a more in-depth analysis was required to fully understand the reasons.

AB 18.12.12.3 It was also recognised that this level of complaints amongst 30,000 students was low. An area of concern, however, was complaints from those with learning difficulties which are relatively high compared to those from the general population and it was agreed that the reasons for this would be explored and reported to Academic Board.

ACTION: Head of Complaints and Appeals

STANDING ITEMS

AB 18.12.13 Update on Mental Wealth Strategy

AB 18.12.13.1 It was agreed that, as there had been extensive discussion on this issue during the meeting, the Deputy Clerk would circulate the slides.

ACTION: Deputy Clerk Academic Board

AB 18.12.14 Update from The Students' Union at UWE

AB 18.12.14.1 There was no update from The Students' Union.

ITEMS TO NOTE

AB 18.12.15 Annual report on Sustainability

Paper AB 18/12/08 was received

AB 18.12.15.1 Members of Academic Board were told that the report was discussed at Board of Governors and The Students' Union had challenged the University on carbon reduction targets.

ACTION: Assistant Vice Chancellor: Environment and Sustainability

AB 18.12.16 Minutes of Sub-Committees

AB 18.12.16.1 Members noted that the latest available minutes from LTSEC and RKEC were available on the website.

AB 18.12.17 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

AB 18.12.17.1 Nominations for Honorary Degrees Committee

AB 18.12.17.2 Members of Academic Board were advised that Sanja Dogramadzi (FET) and Nicholas Ryder (FBL) had been nominated to sit on the Honorary Degrees Committee.

AB 18.12.17.3 Academic Board approved the nominations.

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

All meetings scheduled will be held from 14:00 – 17:00

Wednesday 27 February 2019

Wednesday 15 May 2019

Wednesday 3 July 2019