

## **ACADEMIC BOARD**

Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Board held on Wednesday 6 December 2017.

**Present:** Jane Harrington (Chair), Hadi Abulrub, Sarah Bennett, Martin Boddy, Tracy Chalk, Jon Dovey, (SU), Alex Franklin, Manuel Frutos-Perez, Nadine Fry, Georgina Gough, Jamie Jordon (SU), Lim Yang Kit; Lynne Lawrance, Fiona Lawrence, James Lee, James Longhurst, Lamine Mahdjoubi, Steven Neill, Giang Nguyen (from minute) Paul Olomolaiye, Glenn Parry, Adam Pinfold, Darren Reynolds, Gerry Rice, Jeanette Sakel, Donna Whitehead, Tracy Willis, Aylwin Yafele.

**In attendance:** Rachel Cowie, Delia Bean (minutes), Chris Evans (until minute AB17.000) Sian Hampson (SU) Alastair Osborn, Jayne Storey (until minute) Maggie Westgarth (until AB17.000), Tracy Willis

**Apologies:** Lucy Dumbell, Alex Franklin, Catherine Hobbs, Mandy Lee, Jo Midgley, Nicholas O'Regan, Jane Roscoe, Rachel Sales, Rosie Scott-Ward, Steve West, Ben Weir,

### **AB17.12.1 Membership**

AB17.12.1.1 Elected Student Representatives  
Members welcomed the recently elected Student Representatives to Academic Board.

### **AB17.12.2 Minutes and Matters Arising**

*Paper AB17/12/01 was received*

AB17.12.2.1 Minutes  
Minute AB17.10.12.6v was clarified as 'Professional Services staff' not 'Technical Services staff'.

The minutes of the meeting held Wednesday 11 October 2017 were **approved**.

AB17.12.2.2 *AB17.10.10.6 refers:* members noted that changes to the Academic Board Annual Report to the Board of Governors had been approved through Chair's Action and the annual assurance statements to HEFCE had been confirmed by the Board on 15 November 2017.

AB17.12.2.3 *AB17.10.11.2 refers:* Members noted that revised terms of reference were approved through Chair's Action.

## **ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

### **AB17.12.3 Vice-Chancellor's Update**

AB17.12.3.1 Members received a presentation and update from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC) and the Head of Business Intelligence.

AB17.12.3.2 Office for Students (OfS)  
The Vice Chancellor remained the only Vice-Chancellor appointed to OfS.

Other Board Members appointed to OfS included Martin Coleman (Deputy Chair); David Palfreyman; Carl Lygo; Gurpreet Dehal and Kate Lander. The OfS, as regulator for the Higher Education sector would be fully operational in April 2018, replacing the Higher Education Funding Council.

AB17.12.3.3 Strategy 2030

The development plan for Strategy 2030 was based on three main stages:

- exploration of major external developments;
- testing of the 'big ideas' as the basis for the new strategy
- consultation on final document and development of implementation

Strategy 2030 workshops for emergent ideas and forces had been held for colleagues and Future thinking and key themes explored.

AB17.12.3.4 Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)

The University's newest TEF results showed positive indicators in all categories and specifically those of Academic Support and Employment. Longitudinal data reflected positively on the University's progressive social mobility agenda and outcomes. Colleagues across the University were praised for their hard work to sustain improvement across all categories.

**AB17.12.4 Office for Students Consultation**

AB17.12.4.1 Proposed response to Office for Students Regulatory Framework Consultation Paper AB17/12/02 was received and OfS consultation responses were tabled

AB17.12.4.2 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Director of Student and Academic Services presented the University's response to OfS consultation on the regulatory framework.

Members noted that:

- i. comment on the responses should be received by the Director of Student and Academic Services no later than Friday 8 December 2017
- ii. the response was due to be submitted to OfS by 22 December 2017 and outcomes published by OfS on 18 January 2018
- iii. there were broad themes and matters for consideration, in particular:
  - the change from self-regulation to regulation by Department of Education
  - the shift from quality assurance and enhancement back to quality assessment
  - and a move from focus being on the student body as a whole to focus on the student as an individual
- iv. one concern was the use of the regulatory framework to respond to micro-political and press interests (VC pay and grade inflation) rather than profiling the sector alongside its strategic regulatory role
- v. the Student's Union would be included in the response

AB17.12.4.3 Academic Board agreed that the final response would be signed off by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Chair of the Board of Governors and circulated to members. The Vice-Chancellor would not sign the response due to his role with OfS.

**ACTION: Deputy Vice-Chancellor to approve and submit OfS response on behalf of Academic Board.**

## AB17.12.5 Distribution of Good Honours

*Paper AB17/12/03 was received*

- AB17.12.5.1 The Deputy Director and Head of Learning and Teaching Enhancement and Head of Business Intelligence presented on the standard of awards conferred by the University and the discussion across the sector and government about grade inflation.
- AB17.12.5.2 Members noted that 'Degree inflation' would be included as a measure in the third year of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) and that standards and comparisons would be increasingly scrutinised.
- AB17.12.5.3 Members considered the comparison of the University's grade inflation data between the sector and UK Alliance universities between 2007/8 and 2015/16 and noted that:
- i. the data flat-lined and evened out in the recent timeframe
  - ii. there was a similar start and end point between the University's data and that of the University alliance
  - iii. across the sector whilst the upper second honours figures remained constant, awards of lower second class degrees had decreased and first class degrees had increased
  - iv. Faculty and subject data was available
  - v. there was more volatility in the data for smaller cohorts (ACE)
  - vi. FBL had a lower performance point than the rest of the market
  - vii. FET awards had had some degree of deflation
  - viii. HAS was broadly in line with the rest of the market
  - ix. the data did not explain the reason behind fluctuations eg. changes to curriculum, modules or regulations
  - x. the sector did not use standard deviation
  - xi. HEFCE had run a pilot of grade point average (GPA), however there was argument against GPA, which could be calculated differently
  - xii. Employers increasingly preferred transcripts listing individual subjects and results rather than just a candidate's degree classification
- AB17.12.5.4 Members noted that for the TEF grade inflation metrics, the University would scrutinise the subject data. Business Intelligence would offer further support with provision of programme level and demographic data. Members noted that the spread of marks across modules should be considered at the early stages for any outliers, as there might be issues with particular modules. The Head of Business Intelligence confirmed that presentations of the data would be available to all Faculties.
- AB17.12.5.6 Members noted that any action and recommendations would be consistent and measured across the University.

Members **agreed** that the Academic Standards and Quality and the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committees would consider the issues around grade inflation and make University-wide collective recommendations to Academic Board at Easter. The Chair noted that this should not stop individual result anomalies from being addressed as part of the University's usual practice and governance.

**ACTION: Academic Standards and Quality Committee and the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee to present findings to Academic Board in 2018.**

## **AB17.12.6 Programme Viability**

*Paper AB17/12/04 was received*

AB17.12.6.1 The Deputy Director and Head of Learning and Teaching Enhancement noted that Academic Board had previously agreed that for programmes to be viable they required 25 enrolled students for undergraduate programmes and 15 for postgraduate programmes.

Members noted that more programmes had been introduced than discontinued, (33 new programmes had been introduced in 2016/17 and only one programme discontinued) and that an increase in programme titles did not lead to an increase in recruitment, and could be detrimental to student experience.

AB17.12.6.2 Members noted that:

- i. that dormant programmes were regularly removed. however all programmes should be routinely considered for continuation in terms of their cohort viability and the student experience (25 UG, 15 PG) at Faculty level
- ii. Academic Board should advocate a more pro-active and co-ordinated response to those programmes that consistently had low numbers through the University Curriculum Panel
- iii. rationalising at programme level, not subject level, would improve student experience and cohort identity –a proliferation of programme titles did not increase student recruitment - just fragmented it
- iv. marketing analysis could help improve the offer and viability of those programmes that under-recruited
- v. the University would be required to inform OfS of programmes that had been removed/discontinued
- vi. Business Information would provide 'clean' intake, module and programme data
- vii. when programmes shared modules it was usually to make the modules viable, not the programmes
- viii. students deserved a vibrant learning community which required a minimum number of students per cohort to achieve

AB17.12.6.3 Academic Board **agreed** the recommendations to proactively manage low-recruiting and dormant programmes through the University's Curriculum Panel and the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee.

## **AB17.12.7 Annual Report on Student Behaviour and health**

*Paper AB17/12/013 was received (item taken earlier than specified in the agenda)*

AB17.12.7.1 Members received the report from the Head of Strategy and Executive Services. The report had commentary on cases managed under policies in 2016/17 of:

- Student Conduct (academic programmes)
- Professional Suitability
- Fitness to Study
- Safeguarding

AB17.12.7.2 The Head of Strategy and Executive Services reported that an anti-social behaviour culture, often associated with alcohol and drug misuse, had continued in 2016/17, culminating in the disciplinary action and sanctions for twenty students involved in drunken confrontation at the 2017 Varsity Rugby Match.

AB17.12.7.3 The Head of Strategy and Executive Services reported that this anti-social culture and behaviour was a trend in certain student groups, notably male Student Union sports societies and was often fuelled by alcohol and substance misuse.

AB17.12.7.4 While the data showed that the most popular form of complaint was about noise, members noted that there had been a notable increase of reporting about sexual harassment and assault in 2016/17 and reflected the national trend increase in reported incidences. Incidences had been made easier to report through the introduction of an online reporting tool.

The Head of Strategy and Executive Services noted that the University had won an award from HEFCE to lead in safeguarding and for the Bystander intervention initiative to combat sexual violence and harassment.

AB17.12.7.5 Although still a low proportion of the total student population, the Head of Strategy and Executive Services reported an increase in students citing anxiety issues and poor mental health.

The Students' Union (SU) VP Community & Welfare would share the findings of SU Student Wellbeing Survey and noted that alcohol and drug taking was a factor in poor mental health. The University is one of three universities to take a lead role to pilot the Step Change Framework, working in partnership with UUK and Student Minds UK.

**Action: VP Community & Welfare**

AB17.12.7.6 Members noted that:

- online bullying and harassment on social media affected students' welfare
- that the reports/complaints from students about harassment could be multi-faceted
- that a series of sanctions was available to the University to correct anti-social behaviour - from warnings through to expulsion from University or its accommodation
- that race hate and sexual harassment or assault had a higher disciplinary 'tariff'

AB17.12.7.7 The data and findings of the report all pointed to how the University promotes positive health, behaviour and community amongst students and staff. The Head of Strategy and Executive Services reported that the Student Life Board would address this through its Community and Citizenship strand.

## ITEMS FOR APPROVAL

### Proposals from the University Knowledge and Exchange Committee

**AB17.12.8.1** Policy on Intellectual Property  
*Paper AB17/12/05 was received*

AB17.12.8.1.1 Members noted the University's revised Policy on Intellectual Property (IP) had been endorsed for Academic Board approval by the University Knowledge and Exchange Committee following consultation with IP legal experts.

Members noted the general points relating to employer, staff and students' IP ownership and the policy on commercialisation. The Pro Vice-Chancellor Research and Business Engagement reported to members that the main reason for having the policy in place was to protect the University's research interests and grant bids as the grant sector required confirmation that the University owned the IP before research grants were awarded. The Pro Vice-Chancellor Research and Business Engagement noted that it was rare that any university was able to commercialise or make any significant financial gains from IP ownership.

AB17.12.8.1.2 The Pro Vice-Chancellor Research and Business Engagement agreed to consult with the Assistant Vice Chancellor, Director Strategic Regional Partnerships, on a model for sharing IP between apprentice, employers and University.

**Action: Pro Vice-Chancellor Research and Business Engagement**

Academic Board **approved** the revised Policy on Intellectual Property.

**AB17.12.8.2** New Research Centre proposal for Bristol Centre of Public Health and Wellbeing  
*Paper AB17/12/06 was received*

AB17.12.8.2.1 The Pro Vice-Chancellor Research and Business Engagement introduced the proposal for the Bristol Centre of Public Health and Wellbeing which would have a multi-disciplinary approach to public health study within the Faculty of Health and Applied Science.

AB17.12.8.2.2 Members noted that the title had been discussed in terms of work across the region, however it was requested that the title be reconsidered through Strategic Communications as 'Bristol' did not connect with, or recognise, the University and the centre therefore may be aligned with other universities.

**Action: Pro Vice-Chancellor Research and Business Engagement**

AB17.12.8.2.3 Academic Board recognised the work and time that had gone into the paper and **approved** the proposal to set up this new research centre.

**AB17.12.8.3** Animal Welfare Ethics Committee Policy Statement  
*Paper AB17/12/07 was received*

AB17.12.8.3.1 The Pro Vice-Chancellor Research and Business Engagement noted that the Animal Welfare Ethics Committee Policy Statement had been formed by the University's Animal Welfare and Ethics Committee in relation to animals and animal by-products in teaching, research and education.

AB17.12.8.3.2 Members noted that the University did not perform research on live animals and that it did not hold the Home Office Licence to perform this research.

Members also noted:

- the University Ethics and Animal Welfare Committees considered any impact on animals in the environment when University research was conducted
- moving the third paragraph (3 'r's') towards the beginning of the statement to set the tone
- the phrase 'and cannot take place' should be removed from the fourth paragraph and that 'currently' is factually true.

**Action: Animal Welfare Ethics Committee**

Academic Board **approved** the statement.

**AB17.12.9** Academic Committee Calendar 2018/19  
*Paper AB17/12/09 was received*

AB17.12.9.1 Members received the proposed Academic Committee Calendar for 2018/19 which had been produced in consultation with committee chairs, officers and the Faculties.

AB17.12.9.2 Members noted that:

- Departmental Committees should be revisited with Faculties as these should not be scheduled or held on the same dates as Academic Board

- professional development afternoons were set aside on Wednesdays
- that the Freshers' Fair listed in the Academic Calendar as 20 September 2018 would be removed
- provision was in place for students that observed religious events during assessment periods and students' personal circumstances would be dealt with in the usual way

AB17.12.9.3 Academic Board **approved** the Academic Committees Calendar with the caveat that this was subject to a review of the Departmental Committee dates and Academic Governance review.

**Action: Governance and Academic Services**

#### **AB17.12.10 Nominations for Emerita Professors**

*Papers AB17/12/10 and AB17/12/11 were received*

Academic Board **approved** the nominations for emeritus/a professor for:

Professor Ed Lloyd-Cape  
Professor Nichola Rumsey

Members recognised their excellent contribution and outstanding reputation.

### **REPORTS AND UPDATES**

#### **AB17.12.11 Annual Report of Complaints and Appeals**

*Paper AB17/12/12 was received*

AB17.12.11.1 The Deputy Director and Head of Learning and Teaching Enhancement highlighted the difference of complaints and appeals - that complaints by students and staff were general and that appeals were against the decisions of award boards.

Members noted that:

- there was an increase in the complexity of the complaints lodged - even though numbers submitted had decreased
- the cases cited within the report were representative
- there was an increase in the amount of legal action and that the sector was challenged by increase
- very few cases had been referred to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator and only one of these had been upheld
- the Complaints team had the interests of both the students and the University at heart of their work

AB17.12.11.2 The Director of Student and Academic Services noted that the merger between Academic and Student Services meant that there were aspects of cross-over in complaints and appeals that were lodged with the Complaints Team and separately with the Student Casework team.

AB17.12.11.3 Members also noted that:

- the cases cited within the report were very useful
- Faculties should try to establish more regular complaint feedback to gauge themes and for possible earlier intervention and resolution
- that a further breakdown and comparison of the demographics of those students making complaints and appeals would be useful
- that the learning points from resolution and themes from complaints would be very useful

AB17.12.11.4 The Deputy Director and Head of Learning and Teaching Enhancement informed members that a revised supervision policy had been produced in response to complaints and that all colleagues could co-create and respond to learning points as the power to resolve and intervene usually lay within the Faculties, rather than the complaints team.

**AB17.12.12 UWE Destinations of Leavers (DHLE) Annual Report 2017**

*Paper AB17/12/12 was received*

AB17.12.12.1 The Deputy Director Student Services/Head of Employability and Enterprise led members through the details of the confidential report, which detailed the outcomes of the Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey of 2016 leavers.

AB17.12.12.2 Members noted that:

- i. DHLE was very important to the University and would feed into TEF and league tables
- ii. the University DLHE KPIs were ahead of the market
- iii. the top line outcomes had been very good
- iv. this data was based on 2016/17 leavers and that recent improvements made by the University would reap results in future DHLE
- v. the University should focus on increasing the number of students into further study especially inter-departmental study e.g. Humanities students into Business postgraduate courses
- vi. other universities had Masters courses in Business that appeared to target humanities graduates
- vii. that the data reflected the University's great work towards social mobility
- viii. great results were no guarantee of future success and that other Universities were learning from UWE's progress and success
- ix. the University had to encourage aspiration amongst students as there were thousands of good graduate vacancies in the region that students were not applying for
- x. employment fair sub-rounds were utilised by other universities in an effort to raise aspirations of students
- xi. 2-week high quality work placements as part of a module were to be encouraged to embed experience in study with an expectation on students to be tenacious in their applications
- xii. sandwich placements made a 25% positive difference to student outcomes
- xiii. a work stream would take these suggestions forward under Learning 2020

**Action: L2020 Programme Manager**

AB17.12.12.3 The Chair thanked the Deputy Director Student Services/Head of Employability and Enterprise on behalf of the University for her outstanding work and effort over the years and wished her a very happy retirement.

**B17.12.13 Recording of Educational Activities Policy 2018/19**

*Paper AB17/12/08 was received (taken later than itemised in the agenda)*

AB17.12.13.1 The Deputy Dean (FET) noted the contents of the report and the background to the installation of lecture capture facility (Panopto).

The Policy had been drafted in collaboration with academic colleagues, staff unions HR and the Data Protection Officer following a wide consultation with staff, students, HR, IP specialists and sector guidance. Panopto had been installed in teaching spaces across all campuses and training, guidance materials and support offered to staff. The policy had been considered at Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee.

- AB17.12.13.2 Members noted key issues including:
- Informed consent – ensuring all stakeholders’ knowledge that they would be recorded (audience and presenter)
  - students had requested this for a very long time
  - the normalisation of technology involved – application and use by academic staff
  - that the technology would benefit students and programmes
  - that the recordings would be archived for a maximum of five years on Blackboard
  - IP issues only affected content not performance under IP policy
  - GDPR special categories
  - further training requirements for staff
  - permissions were part of the student contract and staff had to reconfirm their consent to being recorded at every presentation
  - Panopto would be rolled out throughout 2017/18 and 2018/19 and would operate on a full scale basis in 2019/20

AB17.12.13.3 Academic Board noted that several changes including reformatting the policy had been recommended by LTSEC and Academic Board **agreed** the principles within the Policy.

#### **B17.12.14 Updates from Student Representatives**

*Paper AB17/12/15 was received*

B17.12.14.1 The VP Education and VP Community & Welfare presented an update of the Students’ Union activities and ongoing initiatives including:

- Global Majority Campaign as part of Black history Month in October
- Anti-Islamophobia Awareness Month in November with the largest student-led campaign
- World Mental Health Day – SU survey and new committee launched
- Hong Kong SHAPE visit and Hong Kong student Society dinner hosted for students
- Sustainability and Green Awards 2017, Green Impact and Responsible Futures Accreditations
- SU presence and surgeries held across all campuses

#### **B17.12.14.2 Sustainable Development Goals Teach-in**

Members received an update from VP Education and the Senior Lecturer in Education for Sustainable Development about the Students’ Union involvement in, and commitment to the UN sustainable goals.

Members were asked to pledge support and encourage academic staff to include sustainability within curriculum, as requested by students. Academic Board supported the initiative.

#### **AB17.12.15 Updates from Faculty Boards**

AB17.12.15.1 *Faculty of Health and Applied Sciences (HAS)*  
HAS Faculty Board had discussed student employability: 99% across two departments and ways to develop this across HAS with plans that fed directly into the HAS action plan.

- AB17.12.15.2 *Faculty of Environment and Technology (FET)*  
FET Faculty Board had discussed feedback from the 2017 staff survey, recognition of good practice and noted staff appreciation of the working environment.
- AB17.12.15.3 *Faculty of Arts & Creative Industries and Education (ACE)*  
ACE Faculty Board had discussed value for money in all programmes for students from a student and management perspective.
- AB17.12.15.4 *Faculty of Business and Law (FBL)*  
FBL Faculty Board had discussed the positive feedback and results from 2017 staff survey and had matched the comments with FBL's Action Plan including enhancement of the staff voice and involvement in decision making

## ITEMS TO NOTE

- AB17.12.16 Honorary Degrees Committee**  
*Paper AB17/12/16 was received and noted.*
- AB17.12.17 Academic Board Chair's Actions**  
Members noted that on behalf of Academic Board, the Chair had approved the following:  
  - i. UWE and Hartpury College Research Degree Provision Schedule 2017/18 (Schedule 8 to the Academic Agreement).
  - ii. Revised LTSEC, ASQCs and Validation PER Panels terms of reference.
- AB17.12.18 Minutes of Sub-Committees**  
Members noted that the latest available minutes of subcommittees were available from the SharePoint Site.
- AB17.12.19 Any Other Business**
- AB17.12.19.1 The VP Education noted that the Student Union's Plan would be endorsed at the Board of Trustees in January 2018
- AB17.12.19.2 Academic Board formally thanked the Director of Strategic Communications and Engagement for her work and wished her the best for the future.
- AB17.12.20 Dates of future meetings**  
All meetings scheduled to be held from 14:00 - 17:00.
- |           |                  |            |
|-----------|------------------|------------|
| Wednesday | 28 February 2018 | Dartington |
| Wednesday | 16 May 2018      | Dartington |
| Wednesday | 4 July 2018      | Dartington |