



ACADEMIC BOARD

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 13 October 2021

- Present:** Steven West (Chair), Paul Bennett, Laura Bennett, Martin Boddy, Sally Clark, Amanda Coffey, Marc Griffiths, Helen King, James Lee, Mandy Lee, Fidel Meraz, Hannah Mathias, Jo Midgley, Christopher Moore, James Murphy, Paul Olomolaiye, Carinna Parraman, Jeanette Sakel, Jim Smith, Deborah Sturge, Neil Sutherland, Sarah Todd, Neil Willey.
- In attendance:** Jodie Anstee, Chris Gledhill, Amy Morgan (Officer), Heather Moyes (Secretary).
- Apologies:** Evan Botwood (SU President), Jason Briddon, Tod Burton, Rachel Cowie, Antony Hill, Katie Jenkins, Helen King, Vikas Kumar, Candy McCabe, Raymond McDowell, Lyn Newton, Nicholas Ryder, Dami Okeyoyin (VP Education), Richard Strange, Sarah Ward.
- Observers:** David Tansley (BoG observer)

AB.21.10.1 COMMITTEE DIVERSITY TOOLKIT WORKSHOP

Paper AB.21.10.01 was received

- AB.21.10.1.1 Suzanne Carrie, Deputy Director (Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity): Library, Careers and Inclusivity and Frances Bathurst, Inclusive Practice Officer, presented to the board on work to enhance committee diversity.
- AB.21.10.1.2 Members heard:
- (i) That it was important to ensure there is a diversity of thought within university groups that make key decisions and that senior committees needed to lead by example and contribute actively to delivering the University's Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity goals.
 - (ii) The committee diversity toolkit is made up of data on committee diversity, as well as intranet guides and training and development.
 - (iii) The committee diversity data aimed to provide each committee with an overview of its membership and highlight any gaps, although it was important to recognise that there were limitations as the data were only as accurate as HR systems recorded, were based on self-disclosure and did not include student representatives.
- AB.21.10.1.3 Members split into groups to reflect and discuss approaches to diversity and inclusion within Academic Board and other university committees. A summary of discussions is captured within Appendix 1.

AB.21.10.2 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

AB.21.10.2.1 Welcome to new members

The Chair welcomed new members:

- Jim Smith, Professor in Interactive Artificial Intelligence, FET
- Neil Sutherland, Senior Lecturer in Organisation Studies, FBL.

AB.21.10.2.2 The Chair welcomed the BoG observer, David Tansley.

AB.21.10.2.3 The Chair noted all apologies and reiterated the importance of prioritising attendance at Academic Board meetings to ensure diversity of thought in decision making.

AB.21.10.3 ACADEMIC BOARD 2021/22

AB.21.10.3.1 Academic Board Terms of Reference

Paper AB.21.10.02 was received

AB.21.10.3.1.1 The Chair noted no changes were proposed, other than the addition of the new Strategic Academic Portfolio Group (SAPG) as one of the senior committees reporting to Academic Board.

AB.21.10.3.1.2 Members agreed that a representative of Technician staff would be co-opted on to the committee.

Action: Secretary and Officer

AB.21.10.3.2 Academic Board Membership 2021/22

Paper AB.21.10.03 was received

AB.21.10.3.2.1 The Chair noted there were two vacancies due to recent changes: Representative Head of Department (HoD) FET and Representative Learning and Teaching FET and that a by-election would be held in due course.

AB.21.10.3.3 Academic Board Schedule of Business

Paper AB.21.10.04 was received

AB.21.10.3.3.1 The committee noted the indicative schedule of business for the 2021/22 academic year.

AB.21.10.4 MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

AB.21.10.4.1 Minutes

Paper AB.21.10.05 was received

Members confirmed the minutes were an accurate record of the meeting held on 7 July 2021.

AB.21.10.4.3 Chair's Actions

AB.21.10.4.3.1 *Paper AB.21.10.07 was received*

Members noted the approval of Capital University of Economics and Business China as an Affiliate Institute of UWE Bristol.

AB.21.10.4.3.2 *Paper AB.21.10.08 was received*

Members noted the approval of Neusoft Institute Guangdong as an Affiliate Institute of UWE Bristol.

- AB.21.10.4.3.3 *Paper AB.21.10.09 was received*
Members noted the successful Emeritus Professor Application for Rob Atkinson.
- AB.21.10.4.3.4 *Paper AB.21.10.10 was received*
Members noted the approved amendments to Section H of the Academic Regulations for 2021/2022.
- AB.21.10.4.3.5 The Chair noted the two new partnerships in China were of particular strategic significance and gave a special thanks to all colleagues in the International Office/ Asia Pacific Team, the Quality Enhancement Team and Faculties for their hard work and concerted effort in securing these partnerships.
- AB.21.10.4.3.6 Members heard that a new set of Academic Regulations would be coming to the board in March 2022. It was confirmed these would be incorporated into the development of the new student information record management (SIRM) system.
- AB.21.10.4.3.7 Some concerns were raised regarding the implementation of the changes to Section H of the Academic Regulations, which it was agreed were operational management matters to be addressed outside of the meeting.

AB.21.10.5 STANDING AGENDA ITEMS

AB.21.10.5.1 Update from the Vice-Chancellor

Paper AB.21.10.11 was received.

- AB.21.10.5.1.1 Members heard:
- (i) That the University would continue to maintain its commitment to freedom of speech, mindful of recent events at the University of Sussex.
 - (ii) That the University would consider the outcome of the Government spending review information in due course.
 - (iii) That there were concerns about potential government action to place restrictions on university admissions, which were at odds with longer term aims of the government around access and inclusion.
 - (iv) That increased student numbers arising from A-level grade inflation had put accommodation in the city under pressure and that the University was working with the University of Bristol to support better forward planning for the future.
 - (v) That the University was no longer under enhanced OfS monitoring of the Access Participation Plan.

AB.21.10.5.1 Update from the Students' Union

Paper AB.21.10.12 was received and noted by members.

AB.21.10.6 ITEMS FOR APPROVAL OR ENDORSEMENT

AB.21.10.6.1 Academic Board Annual Assurance Statement and Report 2020/21

Paper AB.21.10.13a was received

- AB.21.10.6.1.1 The Deputy Director of Student and Academic Services presented the paper and members heard:
- (i) This was the final year the annual report would be in this format, as proposals would be brought forward in December for a different approach to the oversight of risk and assurance across Academic Board's remit.
 - (ii) The report set out how the Board of Governors received assurance in relation to the areas of activity delegated to Academic Board and includes an enhancement action plan.

- AB.21.10.6.1.2 *Paper AB.21.10.13b was received*
The Deputy Director of Student and Academic Services presented the paper and members heard:
- (i) The report set out how the Academic Board conducted its business in the 20/21 academic year.
 - (ii) The Executive Summary of this paper would go to the BoG for review.

- AB.21.10.6.1.3 Members endorsed the Assurance Statement and Report 2020/21 for onward consideration by the Board of Governors.

AB.21.10.6.2 Changes to the Academic Governance Structure

Paper AB.21.10.14 was received

- AB.21.10.6.2.1 The Deputy Director of Student and Academic Services presented the paper and members heard:
- (i) The proposal, which had been endorsed by LTSEC, was to establish a new Quality and Standards Sub-Committee (QSSC), reporting in to LTSEC.
 - (ii) The new committee would allow for more detailed scrutiny of quality and standards matters and will free up LTSEC to focus on student experience.
 - (iii) Faculty ASQCs would have a solid reporting line to QSSC and a dotted line to Faculty Boards.
 - (iv) The Degree Apprenticeship Board and Graduate School Sub-Committee would be sub-committees of QSSC.
 - (v) The Partnership Quality Sub-Committee would be dissolved and business would go to the QSSC.

- AB.21.10.6.2.2 In further discussion, members heard:
- (i) Membership of the QSSC would be on the basis of job roles, rather than through election, due to its specialist nature.
 - (ii) The new sub-committee would help evidence to the OfS there is a robust mechanism for quality and standards oversight across the whole taught portfolio.

- AB.21.10.6.2.3 Members approved the changes to the Academic Governance Structure.

AB.21.10.6.3 Variant Regulations for Integrated End-Point Assessments

Paper AB.21.10.15 was received

AB.21.10.6.3.1 The Deputy Director of Student and Academic Services presented the paper and members heard that the intention of the proposal was to streamline the approach to accommodating the specific requirements of degree apprenticeships in the regulations, whilst ensure Academic Board continued to have oversight.

AB.21.10.6.3.2 Members approve the proposal is that authority be delegated to the Director of Student and Academic Services to approve the variants and report on these annually to Academic Board.

AB.21.10.7 ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

AB.21.10.7.1 League Table Analysis

Paper AB.21.10.15 was received

AB.21.10.7.1.1 The Senior Business Intelligence Analyst presented to members the recent league table data analysis.

AB.21.10.7.1.2 The Chair noted:

- (i) The importance of focussed action to recover the University's position quickly and present the University positively.
- (ii) The decline in NSS results had been a surprise to faculties, and that there was a need to strengthen mechanisms for gaining real-time feedback from students about their experience.
- (iii) The need to recognise the disruption to education that students had experienced and to provide additional support where needed.

AB.21.10.7.2 2021 NSS results and the University's response

Paper AB.21.10.16 was received

AB.21.10.7.2.1 The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) presented, and members heard:

- (i) Delivering a great student experience is central to S2030 and the NSS results are proxy measure of success.
- (ii) The current ways of operation were hindering the student experience and so work was underway on a new target operating model.
- (iii) Student satisfaction fell by 11pp in 2020/21 and UWE Bristol was placed 53rd overall.
- (iv) All programmes and services were currently pulling together action plans to identify what differences could be made in the short term.
- (v) Additional resources had been put in place for certain courses – Nursing, Law, Business and Management and Computing and Engineering, including programme coordinators, communication officers and coaches to support academic colleagues in those areas.

AB.21.10.7.2.2 In further discussion, members heard:

- (i) There was a focus on navigating the complexity of the University structures and work was in progress to ensure more connectivity between professional services and academic teams.

- (ii) The NSS “bounceback” actions would be reviewed on a 30-day cycle, to ensure feedback is captured in real time.
- (iii) The programmes that scored 100% were very honest and clear which all communications and engagement was constant.

AB.21.10.8 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

AB.21.10.8.1 **Academic governance election results**
Paper AB.21.10.17 was received and noted.

AB.21.10.9 SUMMARY REPORTS FROM SUB-COMMITTEES

AB.21.10.9.1 **LTSEC** (22 September)
Paper AB.21.10.18 was received and noted.

AB.21.10.9.2 **SAPG** (5 October)
Paper AB.21.10.19 was received and noted.

AB.21.10.10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

AB.21.10.10.1 There was no other business identified.

AB.21.10.11 DATES OF 2021/22 MEETINGS

AB.21.10.11.1 Wednesday 8 December 2021
Wednesday 23 February 2022
Wednesday 18 May 2022
Wednesday 6 July 2022

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

Appendix 1 – Summary of group discussions on committee diversity

What did members think of the data?

- Some members were surprised by the data, more diverse than expected.
- Half the members of AB are elected, and half are through 'job positions'.
- Some factors might be out of the group's control stemming from larger issues such as, diversity in recruitment.
- Committees should be more ambitious with diversity targets and should be representative of the student population and staff body.
- A recommendation for targets to be for every 10 members, rather than for a committee of over 10 members.
- It would be useful to have a timeline of when there would be reflections on other characteristics.
- It is important to look into recruitment of new members and how to do this without calling on the same people each time.

How has AB considered a range of voices and what more can be done?

- Apologies from members to meetings has an impact on the diversity of voice at meetings.
- Actions can include inviting others to speak, using inclusive and inviting language.
- There should be more consider when meetings take place, to make it easier for everyone to attend.
- The messaging around elections and communications to members is important – diversity of thought should be highlighted.
- There is room for improvement showing where something has come from and what route it as gone through to Academic Board.
- A senior technician should be part of the board membership to represent technicians.
- Training to support the chair and officer of the board is important to demystify, reduce inaccessible terminology and make people feel welcome.