

APPROVED

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ACADEMIC COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY 5 DECEMBER 2018 IN ROOM CH1.14 CAVENDISH HOUSE, 101 NEW CAVENDISH STREET.

PRESENT:	Dr Peter Bonfield (Chair) Mr John Begg Mr John Cappock Dr Simon Courtenage Dr Paul Curley (18.14 to 18.17) Professor Roland Dannreuther (Deputy Chair) Mr Adrian Dutch Professor Alex Hughes (Deputy Chair) Ms Lubaba Khalid	Professor Malcolm Kirkup Professor Terry Lamb Professor Andrew Linn Ms Caroline Lloyd Professor Graham Meikle Miss Lareb Naseem Ms Jane Stonestreet Dr Stefan van Dellen
IN ATTENDANCE:	Mrs Elaine McMillan (Secretary)	Mrs Di Yeo (Observer)
APOLOGIES:	Mr David Burt (Clerk) Ms Vedia Can Mrs Emma Standen	Professor Jonathan Stockdale Dr Leigh Wilson

18.14 ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 18.14.1 The Chair welcomed all members and observer Di Yeo, Interim Chair to the Court, to the meeting.
- 18.14.2 Apologies were noted as detailed above.
- 18.14.3 No interests were declared.
- 18.14.4 The Chair agreed to requests from members to discuss starred agenda items:
- 2.6 Admissions policy (Minute 18.20)
 - 2.7 Regulations - updates (Minute 18.21)
 - 2.8 TEF subject pilot – lessons learnt (Minute 18.22)
 - 2.9 Sub-committee terms of reference (Minute 18.23)
- 18.14.5 The Chair agreed a request to discuss a query on regulations under ‘Any other business’ (Minute 18.26).
- 18.14.6 The Chair informed members that consideration of the Academic calendar 2020-21 and 2021-22 (agenda item 2.4) is postponed to the next meeting to allow for the discussion with the academic union (UCU) on the 2019-20 calendar - agreed at a previous meeting - to take place.
- AGREED** Members delegate authority to the Chair to consider the outcome of the discussion with UCU and confirm either that the agreed 2019-20 academic calendar is implemented or that the matter is returned to Academic Council for further discussion.
- 18.14.7 The Chair introduced the agenda for the meeting, reminded members of the terms of reference for Academic Council, and invited Lubaba Khalid to lead the informal meeting evaluation at the end of the meeting.

18.14.8 Members did not raise any questions for the Chair.

18.14.9 The Chair provided members with an oral update on the outcomes from the Court of Governors meeting on 28 November 2018 and invited the Interim Chair to the Court to offer her reflections on the meeting also. The Chair informed members that he will invite one of the staff governors to provide a report on the meeting as an addendum to the Vice-Chancellor's blog after each meeting of the Court.

18.15 REFRESHED UNIVERSITY STRATEGY

18.15.1 The Chair introduced the main points of the refreshed University Strategy (Document AC 181205A) highlighting those areas that relate to the work of Academic Council and providing an overview of feedback from the strategy roadshows.

18.15.2 The Chair informed members that there will be training and development on the University's values, good governance practice and other relevant competencies for members of the University Executive Board, governors and other colleagues.

18.15.3 In response to a query from a member the Chair explained that implementation of the Strategy will be managed through the integrated planning process and the University will evaluate continuously how we are performing against the plans linked to the Strategy and against a set of key performance objectives and measures. The Chair informed members that Academic Council will reflect on performance against the Strategy also and use that learning to support decision making.

18.15.4 Members discussed consistent and broad communication of the strategy.

18.15.5 Members asserted the importance of the nexus between teaching and research, and the link between both and external stakeholders, and the way in which these add value to the student experience.

18.15.6 The Chair invited members to participate in an event outside of formal Academic Council meetings to examine and discuss the Strategy, identifying points members may wish to challenge, as well as building an understanding and ownership of the Strategy for all in the membership.

18.15.6.1 ACTION Chair and Secretary to arrange the special session.

18.15.7 Members discussed the rationale and context for the International objective, noting that the international nature of our student body coupled with our London location are reflective of the University's commitment to being a highly inclusive and diverse institution.

18.15.8 A member queried to what extent Westminster is a civic university and emphasised how the University works with all the communities of London. The Vice-Chancellor confirmed that the importance of the University's locality runs through the Strategy and much of our work.

18.16 EMPLOYABILITY STRATEGY

18.16.1 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Employability and Global Engagement) presented the strategic framework for employability ('the Employability strategy') (Document AC 181205B), which is recommended by the Teaching Committee.

18.16.2 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC) highlighted key areas of the strategy and emphasised that it builds on and draws attention to current work, and will require consistent communication across the University and from key staff.

18.16.3 The Director of Student and Academic Services presented data to support the proposed strategy.

- 18.16.4 Members discussed the employability activities and resources directed at postgraduate students. Members heard that the strategy focuses on undergraduate students as this is where the awareness gap is greatest and undergraduate students are less likely to have clarity and confidence about their career path. However, the DVC confirmed that the strategy is relevant for postgraduate students who will engage with the employability journey and employability award.
- 18.16.5 Members queried the support for students who wish to start their own business, how the University will measure the success of the strategy, and the link between employability and the National Student Survey outcomes and student recruitment.
- 18.16.6 A member commented that some students find it difficult to secure placements – often due to a lack of confidence – and members discussed how the employability journey will build confidence and raise awareness of existing transferable skills. The President of the Students' Union confirmed that the Union will work with the University to support achievement of the objectives of the strategy.
- 18.16.7 **APPROVED** Revised Employability strategy to be implemented with immediate effect.
- 18.16.8 Members noted that the DVC (Employability and Global Engagement) will provide regular feedback to Academic Council on how the comments made during this discussion have been addressed in the implementation of the strategy and how the University is performing against the strategic objectives.
- 18.17 RESEARCH PLANNING AND STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT**
- 18.17.1 The Pro Vice-Chancellor (PVC) with responsibility for research presented the strategic vision for research in 2023 and related plans for research activity (Document AC 181205C), prior to development of a new Research strategy by the Research Committee.
- 18.17.2 The PVC reiterated the earlier point that research and teaching and learning activities are synergistic and that students - undergraduate and postgraduate - benefit greatly from learning in an environment where research is being conducted.
- 18.17.3 Members received assurance that throughout the transformation programme and period of development of the refreshed strategy research has continued and the University is in a good position in preparation for the next research excellence framework exercise (REF2021).
- 18.17.4 The PVC informed members that the three Colleges are working on their College research strategies and the Research Committee will recommend a new Research strategy to Academic Council for approval in April 2019. Members heard that whilst there will be elements of knowledge exchange in the Research strategy, a separate Knowledge exchange strategy is expected.
- 18.17.5 Members discussed plans to bring together those engaged with research across the institution and the nomenclature for research groupings – e.g. communities, institutes or themes.
- 18.17.6 The PVC confirmed that central research resources and support will be aligned with the research communities; however, the Colleges and Schools retain devolved resource and the four current research communities are expected to develop, change and may be added to in the longer term. Members noted that internal funding will leverage and be supplemented by external funding for research.
- 18.17.7 A member commented that there remains anxiety amongst research staff as to whether the proposed research communities provide the institutional clarity and certainty staff would like to see. He also proposed that research communities link the three Colleges in the University structure, as Professional Services is also shown to do in the strategy document. Members heard that uncertainty will remain whilst the Research strategy is in development; however, it will reduce with time.

18.17.8 A member suggested that the new strategy should include existing research areas that are 'emerging communities'.

18.18 ACADEMIC CALENDAR

18.18.1 The Chair postponed this matter (Document AC 181205D) to the next meeting (see Minute 18.14.6).

18.19 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

18.19.1 **AGREED** Minutes of the Academic Council meeting held on 17 October 2018 (Document AC 181205E) are an accurate record of the meeting.

18.19.2 Members received and noted an update on actions from previous meetings (Document AC 181205F).

18.19.3 **Academic misconduct (Actions 18.3.5.1 and 18.3.6.1):** The Secretary informed members that the Academic Registrar provided written updates on the outcome of discussions with colleagues about essay mills and the plagiarism reporting process.

18.19.3.1 **ACTION Academic Council Secretary** to circulate the update to members.

18.19.4 **Reporting timelines (Action 18.3.8.1):** The Head of the Centre for Teaching Innovation and Jane Stonestreet confirmed that discussions have taken place; however, this is an ongoing discussion as the matter is not yet resolved.

18.19.5 **Academic Council terms of reference and membership (Action 18.4.6.1):** The Court of Governors approved the revised terms of reference and membership on 28 November 2018. The Secretary will arrange an election for the Head of School representative to include the expanded constituency.

18.19.6 **Intellectual property policy (Minute 17.22):** The PVC who leads on discussions with the academic union (UCU) informed members that the University sought advice on the concerns raised by a member of Academic Council; the external advisors have produced a revised version of the policy for discussion with UCU. The revised policy will be submitted to a future meeting of Academic Council for approval.

18.19.7 **Assessment boards (Action 17.79.2.1):** Members noted that the Assessment Process Group produced a paper that was submitted to Teaching Committee, who approved the recommendations on 21 November 2018. The paper includes confirmation that course teams may arrange informal pre-Boards if they wish.

18.20 ADMISSIONS POLICY

18.20.1 Members received the updated Admissions policy (Document AC 181205G).

18.20.2 A member queried the University's responsibilities regarding students admitted to the University who are not 18 by 1 December in their first year of studies. Members received assurance that, whilst it sits outside this policy, the duty of care towards these students once admitted is covered by safeguarding work undertaken by the Head of Student Support and Residential Life.

18.20.3 A member queried when students inform the University about any disability support needs and when action is taken to put in place that support. Members noted that applicants are invited to inform the University of their individual requirements at the application stage; however, action to address those requirements sits outside the policy.

18.20.3.1 **ACTION Director of Student and Academic Services** to ensure operational practice is in line with the agreed process to put in place support for those students who need it.

APPROVED

18.20.4 **APPROVED** Revised Admissions policy to be implemented from 1 January 2019.

18.21 REGULATIONS UPDATE

18.21.1 Members noted decisions taken by the Chair between meetings to address the issue of independence of panel chairs discussed at the last meeting (Document AC 181205H).

18.21.2 A member asked how the University objectively measures the boundary of '10-50% of the work' used in the plagiarism penalty table.

18.21.2.1 **ACTION Academic Council Secretary** to refer the query to the Academic Standards Manager for a response.

18.21.3 **RATIFIED** Revised Student disciplinary regulations to be submitted to the Court for approval¹.

18.21.4 **RATIFIED** Revised Academic misconduct regulations to be implemented with effect from November 2018.

18.22 TEF SUBJECT PILOT – LESSONS LEARNT

18.22.1 Members received an updated report (Document AC 181205I), which has been updated following publication of the Office for Students' evaluation report on the pilot.

18.22.2 A member queried which subject areas feature in the second pilot and how this impacts on the University's renewal of the Teaching and learning strategy and use of signature pedagogies.

18.23 SUB-COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE AND MEMBERSHIP

18.23.1 The PVC (Marketing and Enterprise) confirmed that the revised terms of reference and membership for the Academic Enterprise Committee are not yet ready for submission (therefore there is no Document AC 181205J for this meeting).

18.23.2 The PVC gave an oral update on the proposed changes to the terms of reference, including a proposal to rename it the Knowledge Exchange Committee.

18.23.2.1 **ACTION Academic Council Secretary** to circulate the Committee terms of reference and membership to members for approval by correspondence.

18.24 SUB-COMMITTEE BUSINESS

18.24.1 The Secretary reported that the report on the business conducted at meetings of the following sub-committees since the last meeting (Document AC 181205K) is not yet complete.

18.24.1.1 **ACTION Academic Council Secretary** to upload the completed report after the meeting.

18.25 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Wednesday 6 February 2019 2.00pm

Wednesday 10 April 2019 2.00pm

Wednesday 26 June 2019 2.00pm

All meetings take place in Room CH1.14 Cavendish House, 101 New Cavendish Street.

¹ The Court approved the changes on 28 November 2018

18.26 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Calculation of degree classifications

18.26.1 A member made a request for the University to consider the potential negative impact of the emphasis on Level 6 performance in the post-Learning Futures degree classification algorithm.

18.26.1.1 **ACTION Academic Council Secretary** to refer the query to the Deputy Registrar (Quality and Standards) and the Academic Standards Manager for consideration.

Evaluation of the meeting

18.26.2 The Chair invited Lubaba Khalid to lead an informal evaluation of the meeting.

18.26.3 Members comments included the following:

- Lots of 'meaty' material
- As a non-academic, Academic Council meetings are always an education
- Happy that members were given space to make comments; however, unsatisfied with the way the point on contractual matters was rushed
- Very good, inclusive meeting and the things members have to say are listened to. The meeting was run very well
- Space for discussion and debate is more wide ranging; however, I agree that on the contractual matter there is a concern that it appears that decision is being taken somewhere else. The outcome is very much on the discussion with UCU and that might impact (or not) on the calendar
- Very concrete things to take away
- Very positive meeting.
- Open and engaged. The Chair gave colleagues ample time to explore matters fully and nobody felt compelled to contribute or not to contribute. Community effort. Good to have research on the agenda
- Very interesting and enjoyable discussions stimulated by a strong set of papers that got people thinking
- Commend the Secretary who is an excellent guardian of processes
- Nice to have discussions on research and employability and not to have a teaching focused agenda
- Learnt a lot. The message that comes through is that members are not afraid to disagree but the disagreement is positive and constructive
- Insightful

18.26.4 The Chair responded to members' comments on the contractual matter and confirmed that he has heard their concerns and expects the PVC's discussion with UCU to reach the right outcome and, if that does not occur, the matter will return to Academic Council and in either case will be dealt with properly.

18.26.5 The Chair noted that this and the last meeting ran over time due in part to useful and positive debate, but also to discussion of starred items, which are not expected to be discussed.

18.26.6 The Chair encouraged members to raise points on starred papers with the author in advance of the meeting and only to raise those points for discussions if they do not receive a satisfactory resolution.

18.26.7 **AGREED** Future meetings will start 15 minutes earlier at 1.45pm and will finish at 4.00pm.