

APPROVED

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ACADEMIC COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY 6 DECEMBER 2017 IN ROOM CH1.14 CAVENDISH HOUSE, 101 NEW CAVENDISH STREET.

PRESENT:	Professor Graham Megson (Chair) Mr Mark Baldwin Mr John Begg Mr John Cappock Dr Maria Chondrogianni Dr Daniel Conway Professor Roland Dannreuther	Ms Liz Duff Ms Kate Hayes Professor Simon Joss Professor Andrew Linn Dr Anthony McNicholas Professor Kerstin Mey Mr Keith Patrick
IN ATTENDANCE:	Mr David Burt (Clerk) Mrs Elaine McMillan (Secretary)	Mr Dan Seamarks Mrs Emma Standen
APOLOGIES:	Professor Stephen Brookhouse Ms Vedia Can Dr Paul Dwyer Dr Julio Gimenez Professor Alex Hughes	Professor Malcolm Kirkup Professor Terry Lamb Ms Caroline Lloyd Mr David Shacklady Ms Freya Thompson

17.17 ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 17.17.1 Apologies were noted as detailed above and members noted that Dan Seamarks attends on behalf of Freya Thompson.
- 17.17.2 The Chair agreed to a request from a member to un-star item 2.5 Intellectual Property Policy (Minute 17.22).
- 17.17.3 The Chair informed members that he received a request in advance of the meeting from one of the staff unions – UCU – to withdraw the Intellectual Property Policy and the Academic Calendar (Minute 17.21) as UCU consider both have implications for academic staff contracts. In both cases the Chair rejected the request and reminded members that through its terms of reference Academic Council has a right to discuss any matter relating to the academic activities of the University. The Chair informed members that, should they agree the recommendations, the Secretary will note for the record that there may be contractual implications; those implications will need to be addressed through the usual channels after the meeting.
- 17.17.4 The Chair confirmed that there were no requests from members to raise any items for discussion under ‘Any other business’.
- 17.17.5 Members did not raise any questions for the Chair.
- 17.17.6 The Chair did not have any matters to report that do not appear on the agenda for the meeting.

17.18 TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME

- 17.18.1 Presented by the Chair. Members received and considered a report on progress in the implementation of the transformation plan (Document AC 171206A).
- 17.18.2 The Chair provided an oral summary of the information provided in the report.

- 17.18.3 In response to concerns raised by members that the new academic structure would be reviewed and revised on appointment of the Vice-Chancellor, the Chair assured members of the expectation for the new Vice-Chancellor to continue to deliver the transformation plan, which has been agreed by the University Executive Board and has the support of the Court of Governors.
- 17.18.4 In response to a member's query as to whether the additional income from above baseline student recruitment in 2017-18 will impact on the planned restructuring the Chair informed members that there remains significant volatility in the sector and the University requires sufficient surpluses to deliver a sustainable institution.
- 17.18.5 Members discussed the feedback from colleagues that despite the confirmation of the new academic structure, staff will continue to feel unsettled until such time as they receive clarity as to their position within the new structure. The Chair acknowledged the concerns of staff in these matters.
- 17.18.6 The Chair noted a request from the University of Westminster Students' Union representative for the Students' Union to be involved in the appointment of the Heads of Schools.
- 17.18.7 The Chair confirmed that students will be involved in a consultation around the proposed centralisation of teaching activities in the West End.
- 17.19 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING**
- 17.19.1 **AGREED** Minutes of the Academic Council meeting held on 18 October 2017 (Document AC 171206B) are an accurate record of the meeting; subject to the addition of Mr John Cappock to the list of those present.
- 17.19.2 Members received and noted an update on actions from previous meetings (Document AC 171206C).
- 17.19.3 **Student engagement week (Action 17.3.3.1):** The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) confirmed that faculties have received a reminder about the introduction of the student engagement week and informed members that this matter was discussed at a recent meeting of the Teaching Committee.
- 17.19.4 **Proposal to rescind an award (Action 17.6.5.1):** Members noted that the student has been informed of the rescindment of the award and exceptionally was offered a new extended deadline for re-enrolment. The student has since re-enrolled and is planning to submit a new thesis.
- 17.19.5 **Research and knowledge exchange: preparation for REF2021 (Action 16.70.4.1):** The Chair informed members that the University is currently collecting information in support of the mini-REF and that HEFCE have published guidance on which staff should be returned for REF2021. Members noted that the outcomes of the mini-REF will inform the next stage of the development of research institutes as part of the transformation plan.
- 17.20 OFFICE FOR STUDENTS – REGULATORY FRAMEWORK FOR HIGHER EDUCATION**
- 17.20.1 Presented by the Chair and the Associate Director, Academic Quality and Standards. Members received and considered the University's draft response to the consultation (Document AC 171206D).
- 17.20.2 The Associate Director reported to members the University's proposed response to the Yes/No questions as to whether or not the Quality Assurance Agency meets the requirements to be the designated quality body and whether or not the Higher Education Statistics Agency meets the requirements to be the designated data body.
- 17.20.3 The Associate Director informed members of the submission deadline of 22 December 2017.

- 17.20.4 **AGREED** Associate Director to submit the University's response as presented.
- 17.20.5 Members discussed the conditions for registration and noted that they are outlined in the consultation guidance document¹.
- 17.20.6 **AGREED** Members delegate authority to the Interim Chief Operating Officer to lead the registration process including the preparation of the University's submission to the Court of Governors.
- 17.20.6.1 **ACTION Clerk to the Court** to add agreement of the University's registration submission on 21 March 2018 to the Court of Governors' schedule of business.

17.21 ACADEMIC CALENDAR

- 17.21.1 Presented by the Chair. Members received and considered the academic calendar 2019-20 and the draft academic calendar 2020-25 (Document AC 171206E), which is recommended by the Teaching Committee.
- 17.21.2 Members noted and reconfirmed the principles underpinning the framework of the academic calendar.
- 17.21.3 Members noted that UCU has raised an objection to the proposal to add an additional week for the end of year moderation and ratification, which would extend this period of activity to run from week beginning 18 May 2019 to Friday 12 June 2020.
- 17.21.4 The Chair confirmed that any significant change to the normal number of teaching weeks would be made only after consultation with staff and the recognised Unions. The Chair noted that the discussion at Council today and previously at the Teaching Committee is consulting with staff and that a separate exercise would be required to consult with the recognised Unions.
- 17.21.5 Members discussed the potential response from staff to the proposal in the context of other significant changes taking place in the University currently.
- 17.21.6 The member elected by the academic staff of the Faculty of Science and Technology outlined concerns raised by academic colleagues (summarised in tabled Document AC 171206N) in relation to the proposed changes and about appropriate governance. This included an assertion that a decision by Academic Council on this matter may undermine the current legal relationship between the University and its academic employees.
- 17.21.7 The Chair reiterated the point made at the outset of the meeting - that it is within the remit of Academic Council - as the University's supreme academic deliberative and decision making body responsible for strategic oversight of all academic provision – to discuss how the University manages its academic affairs. The Chair repeated that if such discussions and/or decisions have implications for the academic contract then the outcomes will have to go through a separate process prior to implementation. The Chair confirmed that Academic Council is not being asked to make a decision about staff contracts or to instigate a change to staff contracts; the proposal relates to how the University organises staff time and Council will note as appropriate any implication of the proposal for an extra week that may be inconsistent with the academic contract.
- 17.21.8 Two other members elected by the academic staff of their faculties expressed the view that there is too much change at the University currently due to the Transformation programme and considered that the proposed change to the calendar is unnecessary at this time.
- 17.21.9 Members discussed the definition of teaching weeks, the importance of academic engagement with students during enrolment and induction and vacation periods.

¹ <http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Pages/ofs-regulatory-framework-consultation.aspx>

APPROVED

- 17.21.10 Members noted that the proposed change would cause scheduling difficulties for the School of Law's progression school and other summer schools.
- 17.21.11 Members acknowledged that the proposal is made in response to feedback (primarily from academic staff) about the unsustainable workload involved in completing all marking and moderation processes within the current available timescale. Members noted that both academic and Professional Services staff are under pressure to deliver within the current timescale and are dependent on each other to complete these processes efficiently and effectively. Members noted that academic staff will need to guarantee that marks will be submitted by the specified deadlines if they are to rely on reduced numbers of Professional Services staff to process the data in time for assessment boards.
- 17.21.12 Members considered that a wider consultation with staff is required and noted that, due to the necessary notice period, this would mean that the University would retain the current timing of graduation ceremonies in 2019-20.
- 17.21.12.1 **ACTION Teaching Committee** to review how other institutions manage this process and report on the outcomes to Academic Council in February 2018.
- 17.21.13 **AGREED** Having reviewed the report from the Teaching Committee in February, Academic Council will decide whether a wider consultation with staff on the proposed solution to 17.21.11 is necessary.
- 17.21.14 A member suggested that the University Executive Board representatives commence discussions with the Unions on the potential contractual issues now. This would enable Academic Council to make a decision in February.
- 17.22 INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY POLICY**
- 17.22.1 Presented by the Chair. Members received and considered the revised policy (Document AC 171206F), which is recommended by the Research Committee.
- 17.22.2 Members noted that UCU has raised an objection to the discussion of the policy at this meeting and provided a summary as to whether the Union considers there are issues between the policy and the academic staff contract. The Chair agreed that in some places the wording of the policy needs amendment/clarification and stated that other issues highlighted by the Union are a matter of interpretation.
- 17.22.3 The Chair outlined a response to issues raised by the Union concerning the definition of scholarly activity, copyright of computer software, work done outside the course of employment and assigned duties from the University, and materials and confidential information.
- 17.22.4 The member elected by the academic staff of the Faculty of Science and Technology outlined concerns raised by academic colleagues (summarised in tabled Document AC 171206N) in relation to the proposed changes.
- 17.22.5 A member proposed that the paper be withdrawn and this was seconded by a second member. The member expressed discomfort with the references to legal advice from both the Chair and the member elected by the academic staff of the Faculty of Science and Technology, noting that other members of Academic Council party to the decision have not had the benefit of legal advice on the matter. The Chair confirmed that the University is not seeking a legal view from members but asking them to consider the policy in the light of their experience and expertise.
- 17.22.6 **AGREED** A new version of the policy, which has been reviewed and revised to take account of discussions at this meeting, will be considered by Academic Council in February 2018. The paper will highlight through track changes what has been changed since the version submitted to this meeting.

17.23 COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

17.23.1 Members received a proposal from the Student Experience Committee for amendments to the terms of reference and membership (Document AC 171206G).

17.23.2 **APPROVED** Student Experience Committee terms of reference and membership to be amended, with immediate effect, to add the Chief Operating Officer or nominee to the membership.

17.24 MINUTES FROM PRECEDING SUB-COMMITTEE MEETINGS

17.24.1 Members received and noted a summary of the business conducted by sub-committees during the period since the last meeting of Council (Document AC 171206H).

17.24.2 Members received and noted minutes (Document AC 171206I) from the following sub-committee meetings:

- i. Graduate School Board – 15 November 2017
- ii. Research Committee – 22 November 2017
- iii. Student Experience Committee – 8 November 2017
- iv. Teaching Committee – 11 October 2017

17.24.3 Members noted that the Secretary did not receive minutes from the Teaching Committee meeting on 22 November 2017 in time for submission to this meeting. These minutes will be circulated with papers for the February 2018 meeting of Academic Council.

17.25 TEACHING EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK

17.25.1 Members received and noted an update from the University Executive Board and the Court of Governors (Document AC 171206J).

17.26 UG EXTERNAL EXAMINER OVERVIEW REPORT 2017

17.26.1 Members received and noted the overview report for 2017 (Document AC 171206K), which has been considered by the Teaching Committee.

17.27 VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REPORT TO THE COURT – NOVEMBER 2017

17.27.1 Members received and noted the Vice-Chancellor's November report to the Court (Document AC 171206L).

17.28 ACADEMIC COUNCIL SCHEDULE OF BUSINESS 2017-18

17.28.1 Members received and noted the updated schedule of business for 2017-18 (Document AC 171206M).

17.29 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Wednesday 7 February 2018
Wednesday 11 April 2018
Wednesday 20 June 2018

All meetings take place from 2.00pm in Room CH1.14, Cavendish House

17.30 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

TEF subject pilots

- 17.30.1 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) informed members that Deans have received communications with their faculty data sets and requests for subject submissions. The outcomes of the University's submission to the pilot exercise is confidential to the institution.
- 17.30.2 Members noted that there is an internal briefing on Monday 11 December 2017 and a further HEFCE briefing in January 2018.