

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ACADEMIC COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY 6 APRIL 2022 VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

PRESENT:	Dr Peter Bonfield (Chair) Abdelhafid Benamraoui (from Minute 21.37) Stephen Bunbury John Cappock Professor Alex Hughes (Deputy Chair) Dr Sal Jarvis (Deputy Chair) Professor Janet Jones (from Minute 21.37) Professor Malcolm Kirkup (to Minute 21.38) Dr Nicholas Lambrou	Caroline Lloyd (from Minute 21.39) Professor Luke Mason Professor Graham Meikle Olivia Otts Dr Andy Pitchford (from Minute 21.37) Jane Stonestreet (to Minute 21.37.1) Dr Kalpana Surendranath Professor Harry Thapar Dr Leigh Wilson
IN ATTENDANCE:	David Burt (Clerk) Mark Humphreys (Minute 21.38) Elaine McMillan (Secretary)	Wyn Morgan, Halpin (Observer) Emma Standen
APOLOGIES:	Zahra Butt, UWSU Matthew Gooderson	Savitha Jagannath Professor Andrew Linn

21.36 ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 21.36.1 The Chair welcomed all members and attendees.
- 21.36.2 The Chair welcomed observer Wyn Morgan from Halpin, who was attending as part of the Court of Governors governance effectiveness review.
- 21.36.3 Members noted apologies detailed above.
- 21.36.4 The Chair reminded members of the role of Academic Council and the Code of Conduct and summarised the agenda for the meeting.
- 21.36.5 Members did not declare any conflict of interest for the business on the agenda.
- 21.36.6 The Chair informed members of the need to discuss the ratification of decisions taken by Chair's action between meetings (agenda item 11.0) and confirmed that there were no other requests to discussed starred items or to raise matters not on the agenda.
- 21.36.7 Members did not submit any questions in advance of the meeting.

Chair's report

- 21.36.8 The Chair reported that the Court of Governors approved the refreshed University Strategy in March 2022 and that work to implement the refreshed Strategy is underway.
- 21.36.9 The Chair informed members of his discussions with Government around proposed changes to the sector, including through London Higher.
- 21.36.10 The Chair noted that the end of term is approaching, and that guidance is available for students on the assessment period, which will start shortly.

21.37 B3 AND TEF PERFORMANCE BRIEFING

- 21.37.1 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC) for Education presented on the University's performance against the B3 conditions of registration and the Teaching Excellence and Student Experience Framework (TEF) metrics (Document AC 220406A).
- 21.37.2 Members discussed the implications for implementation of the refreshed Strategy. The discussion included the following comments:
- Course Leaders are key influencers for the learning experience and National Student Survey (NSS) outcomes and should be empowered, through sufficient time and training, to support students and to encourage them to engage with the support and initiatives that are already available
 - Heads of School and other senior colleagues are key influencers to increase the visibility of - and promote engagement in – the tools, training, and development programmes that are already available for Course Leaders
 - Opportunities to bring teaching closer to research and research-led innovations
 - Professional body recognition for our programmes
 - Digital literacy and its impact on student learning, including support from the Centre for Education and Teaching Innovation and programmes on offer to develop digital literacy for our students and colleagues
 - What we do day-to-day – that is not measured by the TEF - and how we use evaluation to improve outcomes and experience for our students continually
- 21.37.3 The Chair informed members of work to develop KPIs for the refreshed Strategy that will include measures showing where we need to close gaps in outcomes for different groups of students.

21.38 TIMETABLING POLICY

- 21.38.1 The DVC (Education) and the Timetabling Project Lead (Mark Humphreys) presented the updated proposed policy (Document AC 220406B).
- 21.38.2 The DVC (Education) reported to members that extensive discussions had taken place since the last meeting of Academic Council with colleagues across the institution and with UCU. She thanked the Timetabling Project Lead for all the work he had done with colleagues to progress the matters raised at the last meeting.
- 21.38.3 The Timetabling Project Lead briefed members on how feedback from Academic Council has been addressed in the updated policy. He highlighted one area that is to be resolved at the meeting and proposed a solution to the matter.
- 21.38.4 In response to members' queries, the Timetabling Project Lead and the DVC (Education) confirmed:
- Foundation level modules are included in point 10a re. prioritisation
 - The Policy does not propose or allow 6-hour consecutive teaching slots
 - The 5-7pm teaching slot is for exceptional use only and it is proposed it is subject to prior approval from the relevant Head of School
 - The Policy includes a requirement (in Appendix B) for colleagues and students to have a minimum one-hour break between 12noon and 2pm
 - If a Part Time Visiting Lecturer has other commitments on a day/s allocated in the block system, the Policy allows for an exception (ideally as a short-term solution); where there

are exceptions (for this reason or any other) students must be informed in advance if it is outside the block system

- Option modules may be outside the block for the core modules; students will be aware of that when they select the module
- The example timetable provided is comprehensive and covers a large course with various constraints; smaller courses can be more complex, and the more complex courses will be scheduled first

21.38.5 Acknowledging members concerns, a member referred to their experience at other universities where a similar system had been implemented successfully and led to benefits for colleagues, students, and the university. The Timetabling Project Lead gave two examples of universities using the system and noted that the Policy is in line with consultancy reports from people who have worked in other universities.

21.38.6 The DVC (Education) thanked members for their contributions to the discussion.

21.38.7 **APPROVED** Timetabling Policy to be implemented with immediate effect, subject to the following additions:

- Addition of Foundation level modules to bullet point 10.1 a)
- Clarification that slots which run from 5-7pm on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays should only be used in exceptional circumstances with the specific approval of the relevant Head of School
- Appendix B Breaks and Free Slots – new bullet point (under the first bullet point) to read 'For the avoidance of doubt, this means that neither staff nor students should have 6 hours (or more) of consecutive teaching and learning without breaks'
- Inclusion of digital accessibility statements as per University guidance

21.39 STUDENT CASEWORK POLICIES

21.39.1 The Deputy Registrar (Quality and Standards) presented the proposed revised Student Code of Conduct, Student Disciplinary Regulations and Student Complaints Policy (Document AC 220406C).

21.39.2 The Deputy Registrar highlighted that the changes reflect work that has been done by the University and UWSU to support students who bring cases to the University and to clarify for students the powers of the University, and limits to those powers, when addressing these cases.

21.39.3 In response to members' queries, the Deputy Registrar confirmed:

- Access to all the evidence in an investigation would not always be appropriate, for example if a student submitted medical evidence
- Retention of data for six years is in line with the retention schedule and with the delay that can occur for legal cases

21.39.4 Members discussed whether to include disciplinary issues (Sections A to D) in the Code of Conduct. Some members considered the Code should be solely a statement of positive values the community is expected to uphold. Other members supported the inclusion of this information. The Deputy Registrar informed members that their inclusion is in line with legal advice, is supported by UWSU and is to ensure that the penalties that might apply if the Code is breached are transparent to students.

- 21.39.5 Members commended the Deputy Registrar and colleagues for their work and for the quality of the revised documents.
- 21.39.6 **AGREED** Student Code of Conduct to be recommended to the Court of Governors for approval.
- 21.39.7 **AGREED** Student Disciplinary Regulations to be recommended to the Court of Governors for approval.

- 21.39.8 **APPROVED** Student Complaints Policy to be implemented from 1 September 2022, subject to clarification in paragraph 5.3 of why colleagues may not always receive the full evidence.

21.40 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

- 21.40.1 **AGREED** Members confirmed the minutes of the Academic Council meeting held on 8 December 2021 (Document AC 220406D) are an accurate record of the meeting.
- 21.40.2 Members received and noted an update on actions from previous meetings (Document AC 220406E).
- 21.40.3 **EDI and Education (Action 21.27.1.1):** Members noted that the presentation slides and video link are available in the February 2022 meeting folder in SharePoint.

21.41 RATIFICATION OF DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE CHAIR BETWEEN MEETINGS

- 21.41.1 The Chair presented two decisions taken between meetings (Document AC 220406F).
- 21.41.2 **RATIFIED** Members confirmed that with effect from 10 March 2022, Regulations 4.4.1 in Section 17 Undergraduate Framework and 18.73 in Section 18 Postgraduate Framework are amended to “*Module marks will not be rounded. The absolute module mark, to the maximum number of decimal places calculated and recorded by the student record system, will be used in the calculation of the award classification. For the purposes of transcripts and other records of student achievement, the published module mark will display the whole number and not decimal places*”. Members noted that the Academic Registrar’s Department will provide extra information to any students who failed and will be rounded up to 50 in case they need extra explanation or support.
- 21.41.3 **RATIFIED** Members confirmed the Chair’s approval for relevant marks and results at a Progression and Award Board for Postgraduate January starters held in the week commencing 7 March 2022 to be ratified exceptionally without the presence of a Chief External Examiner at the Board. Members noted the explanation and assurances provided to the Chair prior to the decision and that the decision allowed the students to receive their results on 11 March 2022 as set out in the academic calendar. When appointed, the Chief External Examiner will review the Progression and Award Board paperwork to confirm that they are content with the awards to be conferred.

21.42 ANNUAL REPORTS CONSIDERED BY THE TEACHING COMMITTEE

- 21.42.1 Members noted the following reports and the recommendations agreed by the Teaching Committee:
- Annual monitoring Stage 2 report 2020/21 (Document AC 220406G)
 - Annual External Examiners report 2020/21 (Document AC 220406H)
 - Good Honours report (Document AC 220406I)

21.43 APPRENTICESHIP SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT AND QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

- 21.43.1 Members received and noted the report and action plan (Document AC 220406K).

21.44 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 21.44.1 The Chair requested feedback on the meeting and members commented on the high-quality discussions, that all members have a voice, and that those voices are listened to.
- 21.44.2 Members discussed the difficulty of addressing lengthy, complex and/or detailed feedback provided shortly before the meeting (including when submitted 24 hours in advance as requested) as members do not have time to consider the points fully. The Chair will consider how this may be resolved.

21.45 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

All meetings start at 1.45pm and take place in Room M416 Marylebone Road (remote participation available).

Wednesday 22 June 2022

Wednesday 19 October 2022

Wednesday 7 December 2022

Wednesday 22 February 2023

Wednesday 29 March 2023

Wednesday 21 June 2023