

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ACADEMIC COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY 19 OCTOBER 2022 IN ROOM M416 MARYLEBONE BUILDING AND VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

PRESENT:	Dr Peter Bonfield (Chair) Abdelhafid Benamraoui Stephen Bunbury ¹ (to Minute 22.4.7) Zahra Butt, UWSU Matthew Gooderson Professor Alex Hughes (Deputy Chair) ¹ Dr Sal Jarvis (Deputy Chair) Professor Malcolm Kirkup	Caroline Lloyd Professor Luke Mason Professor Graham Meikle Dr Andy Pitchford Jane Stonestreet Dr Kalpana Surendranath Professor Harry Thapar Dr Leigh Wilson ¹ (to Minute 22.4.10)
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IN ATTENDANCE:	David Burt (Clerk) Wayne Clark (Minute 22.5 and 22.6) Monica Deshpande (Minute 22.4) Jane Lamarque (Minutes)	Henna Patel (Observer) Jane Robson (Observer) Emma Standen
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APOLOGIES:	John Cappock Professor Janet Jones Savitha Jagannath	Professor Andrew Linn Elaine McMillan (Secretary)
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22.1 ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 22.1.1 The Chair welcomed all members and attendees.
- 22.1.2 The Chair welcomed observers Jane Robson, independent governor², and Henna Patel, Research Development Manager.
- 22.1.3 Members noted apologies detailed above.
- 22.1.4 Members did not declare any conflict of interest for the business on the agenda.
- 22.1.5 The Chair informed members of the need to discuss starred items requiring a decision due to a lack of approvals in advance via Decision Time. The Chair confirmed that there were no other requests to discussed starred items or to raise matters not on the agenda.
- 22.1.6 Members did not submit any questions in advance of the meeting.

Chair's report

- 22.1.7 The Chair highlighted the shows and events that had taken place since the last meeting.
- 22.1.8 The Chair updated members on his recent meeting with the Education Minister and spoke about the forthcoming Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) submission and the work on B3 requirements.
- 22.1.9 The Chair also reported on Graduate Outcomes and the Estates Strategy workshops.
- 22.1.10 In response to a member's query on the cost-of-living initiatives, the Chair reported that there is an array of measures in place to support the university community with the increased cost of

¹ Attended via Microsoft Teams

² Jane Robson attended on behalf of the Court of Governors for the discussion of the annual quality assurance report and as an observer for the rest of the meeting

living. The most recent development being that free breakfasts and reduced meals would be rolled out in November 2022. Free gym and society memberships, free sanitary products and support for the PhD community have also been introduced. The Chair confirmed that further measures would be considered as appropriate in due course.

- 22.1.11 A member suggested that free tea/coffee should be available before 9am.

22.2 GOVERNANCE MATTERS

Code of Conduct

- 22.2.1 **AGREED** Members reaffirmed their commitment to the Code of Conduct (Document AC 221019A).

Terms of reference and membership

- 22.2.2 **AGREED** Members confirmed adoption of the terms of reference and membership approved by the Court of Governors in May 2021 (Document AC 221019B) without proposing any changes.

Schedule of business

- 22.2.3 **AGREED** Members confirmed that the activities on the schedule of business 2022/23 (Document AC 221019B) fulfil the responsibilities of Academic Council as outlined in the terms of reference.

Sub-committee terms of reference 2022/23 (Document AC 221019C)

- 22.2.4 **APPROVED** Updated terms of reference and membership for the Course Validation Standing Panel to be implemented with immediate effect.
- 22.2.5 **APPROVED** Updated terms of reference and membership for the Portfolio Planning Committee to be implemented with immediate effect.
- 22.2.6 **APPROVED** Updated terms of reference and membership for the Research and Knowledge Exchange Steering Committee to be implemented with immediate effect.
- 22.2.7 **APPROVED** Updated terms of reference and membership for the Teaching Committee to be implemented with immediate effect.

22.3 ANNUAL QUALITY AND STANDARDS REPORT 2021/22

- 22.3.1 The Chair reminded members that independent governor Jane Robson is in attendance to participate in the discussion of the report on behalf of the Court of Governors.
- 22.3.2 The Deputy Registrar (Quality and Standards) presented the report (Document AC 221019D), which is recommended by the Teaching Committee.
- 22.3.3 The Deputy Registrar informed members that B conditions were introduced at the end of the last academic year and that the report presents information to provide assurance that these have been met.
- 22.3.4 Members heard that the data section is to be updated as the benchmarking has not yet been received. Key operating plans and workstream charters related to standards were pulled out to avoid duplication of monitoring.
- 22.3.5 In response to a member's query, the Deputy Registrar confirmed that benchmarking data would be received from JISC at the end of October 2022 and the Court will be provided with the most up to date metrics.

- 22.3.5.1 **ACTION Academic Council Secretary** to circulate the updated report to members.

- 22.3.6 In response to a query, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC) for Education confirmed that 21 potential new courses were being considered at the next Portfolio Planning Committee (PPC) meeting. She reported that each College will have a Portfolio Review Day in Spring 2023 to review data on their courses and consider expansion or closure.
- 22.3.7 A member reported that he had emailed the Secretary regarding a potential correction to page 31 of the report and confirmed that he would forward this to the Deputy Registrar for implementation.
- 22.3.8 Members heard that there has been a change in the validation and re-validation process and the PPC will look at all the evidence, allowing new courses to grow and progress.
- 22.3.9 The Deputy Registrar confirmed that five courses had closed this year.
- 22.3.10 In response to a query, the Head of the Law School confirmed that allocation of resources and future proofing are a constant conversation in all Schools.
- 22.3.11 **AGREED** Members confirm to the Court of Governors that the assurance statements have been met.
- 22.3.11.1 **ACTION Deputy Registrar** to make the minor corrections to the text identified at the meeting prior to submission to the Court.
- 22.3.12 A member observed that professional development is relevant to the next two items on the agenda – the Teaching Excellence Framework and Graduate Outcomes and highlighted the work of the Centre for Education and Teaching Innovation's (CETI) Fellowship HE Programme.
- 22.3.12.1 **ACTION DVC (Education) and the Head of CETI** to discuss induction sessions for the Fellowship HE Programme.
- 22.4 TEACHING EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK (TEF): IMPROVING THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE**
- 22.4.1 Monica Deshpande, Head of Employability and Graduate Success (EGS) joined the meeting, and the DVC (Education) introduced a presentation on the TEF.
- 22.4.2 The DVC (Education) reported that focus of the TEF is on student experience, outcomes, and progression, and that the submission is due by 24 January 2023 and covers the last four academic years.
- 22.4.3 In response to members queries, the DVC (Education) confirmed that outcome measures and experience are 50% of the weighting and that the team working on the TEF submission will draw together evidence and identify themes.
- 22.4.4 Members heard that the Students' Union will be making their own submission.
- 22.4.5 The Head of EGS reported on the University's performance against assessment criteria SO3 (positive outcomes for all), noted the contribution of programmes such as Westminster Working Culture and identified areas where further improvements could be made.
- 22.4.6 A member commented on the need to recognise that current performance will impact the scores and progress for the next TEF exercise.
- 22.4.7 Members discussed expectations and resourcing for course teams, professional development, personal tutoring, peer support, challenges faced by specific courses and potential additional qualitative evidence for the submission.
- 22.4.8 The Head of EGS informed members that there is an Employability SharePoint page for academic colleagues where information is updated, and automated emails are sent out.

- 22.4.9 In response to a member's query about the best way to employ Part Time Visiting Lecturers, the Chair confirmed that there is a variety of factors to consider.

22.5 GRADUATE OUTCOMES

- 22.5.1 Wayne Clark, Data Impact Manager joined the meeting, and the DVC (Employability and Global Engagement) presented the results from the Graduate Outcomes 2019-20 survey (Document AC 221019E).
- 22.5.2 The DVC (Employability and Global Engagement) reported that undergraduate (UG) results are showing an improvement, embedding the key points outlined earlier by the Head of EGS.
- 22.5.3 The Data Impact Manager highlighted improved performance in the highly skilled metric for undergraduate (UG) leavers, although there has been a slight fall for postgraduate (PG) leavers. He reported that progression gaps that existed three years ago have narrowed; however, this is not the case for graduates from the most deprived backgrounds.
- 22.5.4 Members discussed the launch event for the Centre for Employability and Enterprise (29 MR) and the Big Idea competition.

22.6 EDUCATION KPI REPORT

- 22.6.1 The Data Impact Manager presented the Education KPI report (Document AC 221019F).
- 22.6.2 Members heard that the Data Impact Manager is working with the Associate Heads of College to track actions and with Colleges and Professional Services Directors around the qualitative analysis.
- 22.6.3 A member queried whether the good practice at PG level could be transferred to UG courses. The DVC (Education) responded that PG provision is more likely to be active or discursive learning, more personalised and with students in smaller groups therefore expectations for personalised learning are easier to achieve for PG courses.
- 22.6.4 Members commented that where personalisation is missing there is a low score and that establishing a pipeline PhD masters is core.

22.7 B3 ONGOING CONDITION OF REGISTRATION

- 22.7.1 The Deputy Registrar presented the revised wording of the B3 Ongoing Condition of Registration (Document AC 221019G), which came into effect at the beginning of October 2022.
- 22.7.2 The Deputy Registrar confirmed that the University does not need to adjust its processes and that the Office for Students may take regulatory action if the data is not at the relevant threshold.
- 22.7.3 The Deputy Registrar informed members that the data in the report has changed since the release of the dashboard and encouraged members to look at the Qlikview dashboards.

- 22.7.3.1 ACTION** Deputy Registrar to circulate an updated report to members.

22.8 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

- 22.8.1 **AGREED** Members confirmed the minutes of the Academic Council meeting held on 22 June 2022 (Document AC 221019H) are an accurate record of the meeting.
- 22.8.2 Members noted there are no outstanding actions or matters arising from previous meetings.

22.9 STUDENT DISCIPLINARY PANEL MEMBERSHIP 2022/23

22.9.1 **AGREED** Members confirmed the Student Disciplinary Panel membership for 2022/23 (Document AC 221019I).

22.10 PROPOSED CHANGES TO HANDBOOK OF ACADEMIC REGULATIONS 2022

22.10.1 **APPROVED** Section 6 Coursework Assessment and Section 11 Mitigating Circumstances Regulations 2022/23 to be amended in the Handbook of Academic Regulations (Document AC 221019J) with immediate effect.

22.11 RATIFICATION OF DECISIONS TAKEN BY CHAIR'S ACTION

22.11.1 **RATIFIED** Members confirmed a decision taken by the Chair between meetings to allow an exemption to a progression regulation for specific students at a partner institution (Document AC 221019K).

22.12 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

22.12.1 Members and attendees were invited to share feedback on the meeting and comments included:

- Good level of diversity in membership
- Very effective Chair – kept to time and invited members to speak
- Good to see joined up systems for good academic outcomes

22.12.2 The Chair invited members to be guests on his regular blog.

22.12.3 Members discussed how to share best practice and the Chair invited Matthew Gooderson, Senior Lecturer in the Westminster School of Arts, and Kalpana Surendranath, Senior Lecturer in the School of Life Sciences to present a paper at the next meeting on how we might disseminate our endeavours better to our community.

22.13 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

All meetings start at 1.45pm and take place onsite (rooms to be confirmed) with remote participation available if colleagues are unable to attend in person.

Wednesday 7 December 2022
 Wednesday 22 February 2023
 Wednesday 29 March 2023
 Wednesday 21 June 2023