UNIVERSITY OF FORWARD THINKING WESTMINSTER▦

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ACADEMIC COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY 22 JUNE 2022 IN ROOM M416 MARYLEBONE BUILDING AND VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

PRESENT:		
	Dr Peter Bonfield (Chair)	Professor Andrew Linn
	Abdelhafid Benamraoui	Professor Luke Mason[1]
	Stephen Bunbury[1]	Professor Graham Meikle[1]
	Zahra Butt, UWSU	Jane Stonestreet
	John Cappock[1]	Dr Kalpana Surendranath[1]
	Matthew Gooderson[1]	Professor Harry Thapar[1]
	Professor Alex Hughes (Deputy Chair)[1]	Dr Leigh Wilson[1]
	Dr Sal Jarvis (Deputy Chair)	
	Professor Janet Jones	
	Professor Malcolm Kirkup	
	Dr Nicholas Lambrou	

IN ATTENDANCE:		
	Professor Franz Buscha (Minute 21.48)[1]	Elaine McMillan (Secretary)[1]
	David Burt (Clerk)[1]	Professor Gregory Sporton (Minute 21.48)
	Professor David Cunningham (Minute 21.48)[1]	Emma Standen[1]
	Dr Miriam Dwek (Minute 21.48)	

APOLOGIES:		
	Savitha Jagannath	Olivia Otts
	Caroline Lloyd	Dr Andy Pitchford

21.46 ANNOUNCEMENTS

21.46.1   The Chair welcomed all members and attendees.

21.46.2   The Chair welcomed observer Trishna Patki, who has recently joined the governance support team and attended as part of her induction.

21.46.3   Members noted apologies detailed above.

21.46.4   Members did not declare any conflict of interest for the business on the agenda.

21.46.5   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.

21.46.6   Members did not submit any questions in advance of the meeting.

Chair's report

21.46.7   The Chair highlighted the shows and events that took place since the last meeting.

21.46.8   The Chair and noted that planning for next academic year is underway and student recruitment is good.

21.46.9   The Chair reported that the University had achieved excellent Research Excellence Framework (REF) outcomes, especially on impact, noting that this is a significant achievement.

---

[1] Attended via Microsoft Teams

21.47 BEING WESTMINSTER 2022-29

21.47.1 The Chair briefed members on the refreshed Being Westminster strategy, noting that much of the content relates to the remit of Academic Council and has been informed by the work of Academic Council.

21.47.2 The Chair informed members that measurable strategic key performance indicators will be shared with Academic Council in the Autumn relating to the measures of success in the Strategy and for which colleagues can be held accountable.

21.47.3 The Chair noted that the Strategy will be cascaded to directorates and teams, will link with the professional development review process and has already been integrated into planning processes (e.g., the workstream charters) for 2022/23 to ensure that all colleagues are clear about how they contribute to achievement of the Strategy.

21.47.4 The Chair reminded members that Academic Council has a responsible to steward key elements of the Strategy throughout its seven-year timeframe.

21.48 RESEARCH AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTMINSTER – NOW AND IN THE FUTURE

21.48.1 The Pro Vice-Chancellor (PVC) for Research introduced an interactive session considering the outcomes of the recent REF exercise, their impact on research at the University, and further development of the Research Strategy (Document AC 220622A).

21.48.2 The PVC (Research) explained the purpose and process of the REF exercise and briefed members on the University's results in the REF 2022.

21.48.3 Members split into four breakout groups (three onsite and one online) to discuss their views on what the REF outcomes mean for the University. Each of the onsite groups discussed one of the following topics: growth, students and impact. The online group discussed all three topics.

21.48.4 Members returned to the main meeting and representatives of each group provided an oral summary of their discussions, which covered:

Growth
- Whether to establish a centre for educational research to contribute to the next REF
- Impact as a priority and continuing to align the research environment to our values
- Research mentoring programmes and investment in colleagues and facilities
- Monthly research event at Regents Street Cinema and the Graduate School Festival
- A framework for academic colleagues who are not given opportunities to engage in research currently, to be classified as researchers, or to move from teaching focused positions to research positions
- Adopting a broader definition of early-career researcher recognising teaching and professional routes into research
- Positive action to progress underrepresented groups in our research community
- Communications and leadership of research communities driving progress and growth
- Senior research colleagues undertaking collaborative research projects with colleagues and students to achieve a broader inclusive environment
- The Code of Practice and mitigating risks, especially for colleagues designated as researchers

Students
- Inclusion of students in planning and delivering Quintin Hogg Trust funded projects
- Research-informed curriculum and module design that ensures research-related learning outcomes
- How to link and build capacity around employability and research
- All students to get some research experience
- Wide engagement with pedagogical research to be organised to ensure it is effective

- Engaging students at every level with the activities of research communities
- Co-creation of knowledge (e.g., through PhD supervision) to be used to develop authentic learning and teaching and in pedagogical practice at other levels
- Authentic assessment as a vehicle for research-informed teaching
- Positive action for underrepresented groups will provide role models for our students

Impact
- Encouraging all academics to identify the impact of their work and identifying opportunities to build on this to REF level impact
- Design impact into research and ensure early or mid-career researchers understand and consider impact before they produce their paper or research output
- Focus on stakeholder needs, practical application and community impact (e.g., health); to generate impact narratives that ensure the University's research is connected to local stakeholders
- Long-term planning around colleague recruitment and retention, especially senior research colleagues/research leaders

21.48.5 One group commented that absolute metrics are needed to test whether these suggestions result in a better research environment, outcomes, outputs and impact.

21.48.6 Professor David Cunningham, REF Director, informed members that there is further analysis of the REF outcomes to be done and thanked the Research and Knowledge Exchange Office for their work on the submission.

21.49 COMMISSIONING BRIEF 2022/23

21.49.1 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC) for Education presented the proposed updated brief for the next academic year (Document AC 220622B).

21.49.2 A member proposed that 'economic' is added to the challenges to be addressed through the portfolio.

21.49.3 **APPROVED** Commissioning brief 2022/23 to be implemented from July 2022, with economic being included in the description of challenges to be addressed through the portfolio.

21.50 COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE 2022/23

Student Experience Committee/Student Experience Forum

21.50.1 The Student Experience Committee Co-Chairs (the DVC for Education and the UWSU President) presented a proposal for changes to the governance around the student experience (Document AC 220622Ci).

21.50.2 The Committee Co-Chairs explained that the proposed changes aim to make the group more representative, meetings more action focused, to improve the student voice and to help students to feel that their inputs have outputs.

21.50.3 A member queried whether such a large forum could be effective. The DVC (Education) explained that meetings of the proposed Forum would use smaller group discussions where necessary and that it is important that all student representatives are included. The UWSU President informed members that UWSU will train and develop student leaders to ensure they understand their role and that of the Forum, and they can communicate what students need and want. She added that after the first Forum meeting the Co-Chairs will reflect on how it has worked and will be open to recommendations from members about how it could improve.

21.50.4 **AGREED** The Student Experience Committee to be defunct with effect from 31 August 2022.

21.50.5 **AGREED** Student Voice Forum to be established with effect from 1 September 2022.

21.50.6   **APPROVED** Student Voice Forum terms of reference and membership 2022/23 to be implemented from 1 September 2022.

Course Validation Standing Panel

21.50.7   The Deputy Registrar (Quality and Standards) presented a proposal for changes to the membership of the Course Validation Standing Panel (Document AC 220622Cii).

21.50.8   The Deputy Registrar explained that the interim co-chairing approach is proposed to allow time for a new appointee to learn about the University before taking on the role of Chair.

21.50.9   **AGREED** 'Sabbatical Officers nominated by the Students' Union (2)' to be amended to 'Student representatives nominated by the UWSU President'. The UWSU President noted that this role is a good development opportunity for student representatives.

21.50.10   **APPROVED** Course Validation Standing Panel terms of reference and membership 2022/23 to be implemented from 1 September 2022 as proposed, subject to the amendment agreed at the meeting.

21.50.11   On behalf of Academic Council, the Chair thanked Dr Tony Burke, Director of Curriculum Development, for his leadership of the Panel.

21.51   INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY POLICY

21.51.1   The PVC (Knowledge Exchange) confirmed to members that UCU had confirmed their agreement with the proposed changes to the policy (Document AC 220622D).

21.51.2   **APPROVED** Updated Intellectual property policy to be implemented with immediate effect.

21.52   ADMISSIONS POLICY

21.52.1   **APPROVED** Members re-confirmed the Admissions policy (Document AC 220622E).

21.52.2   A member commented on two matters relating to implementation of the policy.

21.53   MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

21.53.1   **AGREED** Members confirmed the minutes of the Academic Council meeting held on 6 April 2022 (Document AC 220622F) are an accurate record of the meeting.

21.53.2   Members received and noted an update on actions from previous meetings (Document AC 220622G).

21.53.3   **APPROVED** **Timetabling policy (Action 21.38.7):** Members confirmed minor updates to the policy that clarify approval processes.

21.54   ACADEMIC REGULATIONS 2022/23

21.54.1   **APPROVED** Updated academic regulations (Document AC 220622H) to be implemented with effect from 1 September 2022.

21.55   RESEARCH DEGREE ACADEMIC REGULATIONS 2022/23

21.55.1   **APPROVED** Updated research degree academic regulations (Document AC 220622I) to be implemented with effect from 1 September 2022.

21.56   VALIDATION AND REVIEW 2021 – OVERVIEW REPORT

21.56.1   Members received a report on the outcomes of the validation and review process in 2021 (Document AC 220622J), which has been considered by the Teaching Committee.

21.57   DIVERSITY AND DIGNITY AT WORK AND STUDY POLICY

21.57.1   Members received a copy of the updated policy (Document AC 220622K), which had been approved by the University Executive Board.

21.58   LIST OF APPROVED COURSE CLOSURES

21.58.1   Members received a list of course closures approved by the Portfolio Review Committee (Document AC 220622L).

21.59   OFFICE FOR STUDENTS B CONDITIONS MAPPING

21.59.1   Members received a copy of the B conditions mapping document (Document AC 220622M), which had been considered by the Teaching Committee.

21.60   DRAFT SUMMARY OF ACADEMIC COUNCIL DECISIONS 2021/22

21.60.1   Members received a copy of the draft summary report for communicating Academic Council decisions to sub-committees (Document AC 220622N), which will be updated to confirm the decisions taken at this meeting.

21.61   ANY OTHER BUSINESS

21.61.1   The Chair informed members that he is concluding a review for the Engineering and Physical Research Council about the future of engineering research and will include a future agenda item to discuss the differences and what they might mean for the University.

21.62   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 19 October 2022
Wednesday 7 December 2022
Wednesday 22 February 2023
Wednesday 29 March 2023
Wednesday 21 June 2023