UNIVERSITY OF FORWARD THINKING WESTMINSTER⌗

APPROVED

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF ACADEMIC COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY 6 DECEMBER 2023 AT ROOM C1.18 (PAVILION), 115 NEW CAVENDISH STREET AND VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

PRESENT:	Professor Peter Bonfield (Chair)	Anastasia Lydaki
	Professor Dibyesh Anand (Acting Deputy Chair)	Professor Luke Mason
	Taruna Bangia	Professor Graham Meikle
	Abdelhafid Benamraoui	Dr Andy Pitchford[1]
	Stephen Bunbury[1]	Henryetta Simpson
	Dr Sal Jarvis (Deputy Chair)	Jane Stonestreet[1]
	Professor Janet Jones	Ben Stringer[1]
	Professor Christos Kalantaridis	Dr Kalpana Surendranath
	Professor Andrew Linn	Professor Alexandra Warwick
	Caroline Lloyd	Dr Leigh Wilson[1]

IN ATTENDANCE:	Lynne Berry (Observer)[1]	Morgan Lirette
	Mandy Chan (Secretary)	Charlotte Morgan (Observer)
	Gustavo Espinoza Ramos (Observer)[1]	Emma Standen[1]
	Frantzeska Kolyda (Observer)	

APOLOGIES:	David Burt (Clerk)	Ian Wilmot
	Professor Alex Hughes (Deputy Chair)	

23.16 ANNOUNCEMENTS

23.16.1 The Chair welcomed all members and attendees.

23.16.2 The Chair welcomed the following new members and observers:

- Professor Dibyesh Anand – Interim Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC) for Employability and Global Engagement
- Professor Christos Kalantaridis – Head of College, Westminster Business School
- Lynne Berry and Charlotte Morgan – independent governors
- Gustavo Espinoza Ramos and Frantzeska Kolyda – participants of Academic Council Shadowing Scheme

23.16.3 All members, attendees and observers introduced themselves.

23.16.4 Members noted apologies as detailed above.

23.16.5 Members noted that Tasnim Jammal, undergraduate student representative, resigned from Council and the Secretary is working with the Students' Union for a nomination from the undergraduate students' constituency.

23.16.6 The Chair reminded all members, attendees and observers of the purpose of Council and the expected behaviour at the meeting.

23.16.7 Members did not declare any conflicts of interest for the business on the agenda.

23.16.8 The Chair confirmed that there were no requests to discuss starred agenda items (Minutes 23.23, 23.24 and 23.26).

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[1] Attended via Microsoft Teams.

23.16.9   The Chair confirmed there were no requests to raise other matters not on the agenda.

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

Chair's report

23.16.11   The Chair briefed members on sector issues and developments since the last meeting. This included:

- Latest government policies which will impact on the sector, including the international students' dependency visa and the review of the graduate visa.
- Financial challenges across the sector.
- Additional regulation from the Office for Students.

23.16.12   Despite all the challenges in the external environment, the Chair confirmed that the University:

- is financially robust;
- will continue to focus on our role in ensuring a high level of student experience and academic quality, including the two international partnerships in Tashkent and Colombo; and
- will work with the wider sector to make further improvements.

23.17   CONTINUATION RATES

23.17.1   The DVC (Education) gave a presentation on the continuation rates.

23.17.2   Members divided into four breakout groups for a 10-minute deep-dive discussion on the topic. Feedback from the breakout groups included:

- Data mining positively helps in addressing the issue.
- Good practice shared that one School takes immediate intervention measure upon receiving data on non-submission by students.
- Course representatives to help reinforce the information to fellow students in core modules.
- Targeted and tailor-made support for specific student groups.
- Council members have a shared leadership responsibility for intervention.
- For the personal tutor scheme – issues of resourcing, alignment with enrolment timeline, proportion of senior/personal tutors.

23.18   SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND THE CURRICULUM

23.18.1   Morgan Lirette, Sustainable Development Adviser (SDA); Dr Andy Pitchford, Head, Centre for Education and Teaching Innovation; Emma Standen, Deputy Registrar (Quality and Standards) jointly gave a presentation on the sustainable development goals (SDG) and the curriculum.

23.18.2   Members divided into four breakout groups for a 10-minute deep-dive discussion on the topic. Feedback from the breakout groups included:

- School Lead/Champion model to support colleagues to embed SDG into the curriculum.
- Setting a good example and maintaining SDG awareness through campus buildings and teaching spaces.
- Module manual to be adapted with a variety of presentations.
- Embed SDG into module level through existing modules instead of creating new standalone modules.
- A colleague shared his experience in rewriting a module handbook after being inspired by a workshop to embed the UNESCO competency framework in an existing module. Similar could be done for embedding SDG into existing modules.

- Create innovative assessment around SDG.
- Link our extensive SDG research with the curriculum.
- Engage students through community engagement.
- Link SDG with employability.

23.18.3   The SDA presented the timeline for achieving the goal for all courses to demonstrate an excellent level of education for sustainable development by 2029.

23.18.3.1   **ACTION** **DVC (Education)** to present an action plan on the delivery of embedding SDG into education at Council meeting on 27 March 2024.

23.19   OPEN ACCESS POLICY

23.19.1   The Pro Vice-Chancellor (PVC) for Research and Head of College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and the Director, Student and Academic Services presented the updated Open Access Policy (Document AC 231206A).

23.19.2   The PVC (Research) informed members that the University of Westminster Press held a celebration event on 4 December 2023 and champions an approach to open access that forefronts accessibility, inclusivity and equity in publishing.

23.19.3   **APPROVED** The updated Open Access Policy to be implemented from 7 December 2023.

23.20   ACADEMIC COUNCIL STANDING ORDERS 2024-27

23.20.1   The Chair briefed members on the proposed changes to the Academic Council Standing Orders 2024-27 (Document AC 231206B).

23.20.2   **APPROVED** Academic Council Standing Orders 2024-27 to be implemented from September 2024.

23.21   MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

23.21.1   **AGREED** Members confirmed the minutes of Academic Council meeting held on 18 October 2023 (Document AC 231206C) were an accurate record of the meeting.

23.21.2   Members received and noted an update on actions from the previous meeting (Document AC 231206D) and noted that all actions have been completed.

23.22   MEETING EVALUATION

23.22.1   At the Chair's invitation the observers of the meeting noted:

- Constructive and meaningful dialogues.
- More time for discussion at the breakout sessions.
- Good to have different spaces for discussion, e.g., through the chat box on Teams.
- Good time management of the discussion item.

23.22.2   Members considered that a hybrid meeting is not conducive to effective discussions for this, the supreme academic body of the University.

23.22.3   **AGREED** Academic Council will meet onsite in the future as the hybrid mode impacted on effective discussions. Colleagues who have difficulties joining the meeting in person should contact the Secretary in advance of meetings so that special arrangements can be made for their participation.

23.23   **STUDENT VOICE FORUM TERMS OF REFERENCE 2023/24**

23.23.1   **APPROVED** Student Voice Forum terms of reference 2023/24 (Document AC 231206E) to take immediate effect.

23.24   **RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE STEERING COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE 2023/24**

23.24.1   **APPROVED** Research and Knowledge Exchange Steering Committee terms of reference 2023/24 (Document AC 231206F) to take immediate effect.

23.25   **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

23.25.1   Members did not raise any other matters for discussion.

23.26   **DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

All meetings start at 1.45pm and take place onsite (rooms to be confirmed).

Wednesday 21 February 2024
Wednesday 27 March 2024
Wednesday 26 June 2024