

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER
ACADEMIC POLICY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting held on
17 September 2014

Present:

Professor M Peel (Chair)	
Professor A Cashmore	Professor S Law
Dr D Lockett	Mr Y Nikolov
Dr B Norman	Dr T Oliviera
Dr R Parry	Mr M Rubin
Professor J Scott	Dr D Watkins

In attendance: Mrs L Masterman (Secretary) and Mr A Petersen (Assistant Secretary)

Apologies for absence were received from Professor S Hainsworth, Dr C Jarvis, Professor T Lawson and Professor T Yeoman

UNRESERVED BUSINESS

14/M64 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

14/M65 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Committee considered the minutes of the meeting held on 24 June 2014.

The Committee **approved** the minutes as a correct record.

14/M66 MATTERS ARISING

Arising from M48, Dr Parry reported that a programme of workshops was underway to consider the student and departmental perspectives and priorities with regard to the Pathway approach to undergraduate degrees. It was also noted that the project team was considering the role of joint degrees within the Pathways structure, to ensure that the combinations offered retained a genuine intellectual cohesion.

Arising from M49, Professor Scott reported that the consultation documents regarding the restructuring of both the academic year and the University credit framework would be circulated to colleagues throughout the institution shortly. Consultation would take place over the course of September and October and would be supported by a range of workshops, with final proposals being presented for consideration by Senate in November 2014.

Arising from M50, the Chair reported that further meetings were taking place to bring together the work undertaken by various groups in the area of flexible masters provision.

14/M67 **TERMS OF REFERENCE AND MEMBERSHIP**

The Committee considered its terms of reference and membership for the 2014/15 academic year.

The Committee noted that in accordance with Terms a) and b) it would need to commence a review of the University's Learning and Teaching Strategy during the forthcoming academic year. The Committee agreed that in order to support this development it would be helpful to ensure that sufficient time was allowed within its schedule of business to consider wider strategic themes alongside ongoing operational and regulatory issues.

The Committee agreed that members should identify themes for discussion, at its October meeting.

The Committee noted that arising from Term f), in addition to receiving the annual report and analysis on the operation of the programme approval process it should revert to the practice of receiving the reports of all programme approval panels.

The Committee **agreed** that its membership should be amended to specifically reflect that the second representative from the Students' Union would be the Education Officer.

14/M68 **NAMING AND APPROVAL OF SHORT COURSES AND CPD PROVISION**

The Committee considered a proposal to establish standard University naming conventions and approval procedures for short courses which do not lead to the award of a degree or other qualification. The paper proposed approval procedures for short courses which would mirror the principles set out in the current Code of Practice on the Development, Approval and Modification of taught programmes. However, in order to allow the University to respond to market opportunities effectively, the proposals would permit Colleges to approve the majority of business cases and low risk academic cases. University level academic approval would still be required where modules were combined to form a programme, however this would be undertaken by a standing Panel. The Committee **approved** the proposed approval procedures for short courses, noting that where such courses were non-credit bearing, their academic approval should be managed at departmental level and reported to the College Academic Committee.

The Committee considered the proposals for the naming of short courses. It was noted that certain terms including 'certificate' carried particular significance within the existing qualifications framework, and it had therefore been necessary to propose alternative titles. The Committee acknowledged this consideration, but agreed that the proposed titles might not be understood or marketable externally, as they did not clearly demonstrate the nature or level of the achievement. The Committee recommended that consultation should take place with the Division of External Relations regarding potential naming conventions and how these may be recognised within the marketplace. The Committee also agreed that further consideration should be given to whether the term 'certificate' could be used.

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The Committee noted that following the approval of naming and approval conventions, there were a significant number of issues relating to the governance and administration of short courses which would require consideration. The Committee agreed that the range of issues identified in the paper should be presented for its consideration over the course of the coming year.

14/M69 **SENATE REGULATION 6 GOVERNING TAUGHT POSTGRADUATES PROGRAMMES OF STUDY**

The Committee considered a proposal from the Academic Registrar for amendments to Senate Regulation 6. The proposals had been informed by feedback received from external examiners and academic departments, as well as issues raised through the recent review of Senate Regulation 7.

The revised regulations proposed the introduction of a credit weighted average method for the classification and award of postgraduate qualifications as an alternative to the existing credit accumulation methodology. This mirrored the undergraduate scheme of assessment. In addition, the threshold requirements for progression between the taught and research element of masters degrees would be raised and there would be a limit on the amount of failed credit permitted for both the award and classification of a qualification.

The Committee noted that overall the proposals represented a raising of the threshold for the award of a Masters degree. It agreed, however, that this was essential to ensure that students had achieved the intended learning outcomes associated with each programme of study and therefore assure the overall standards of the University's awards.

The Committee also noted that there had been some feedback with respect to borderline categories for taught postgraduate degrees. It agreed, however, that this would be addressed in a more general review of borderlines linked to the review of Senate Regulation 5.

The Committee **endorsed** the proposals and agreed that they should be circulated to Departments and College Academic Committees for consultation. The Committee further agreed that comments should be received and collated for consideration at its January meeting, in order that final revisions could be approved by Senate in March 2015.

14/M70 **SENATE REGULATION 12 GOVERNING COMPLAINTS**

The Committee considered a proposal for minor amendments to Senate Regulation 12. The amendments were proposed with the intention of clarifying sections of the regulations, particularly the submission of evidence to support complaints, the process for collective complaints, and the process for stage two consideration.

The Committee **approved** the revised regulations for submission to Senate.

14/M71 **RECORDING OF PLAGIARISM ON STUDENT TRANSCRIPTS**

The Committee considered a paper discussing the recording instances of plagiarism on a student's transcript.

The Committee considered whether plagiarism should continue to be recorded on a student's transcript, noting that this could potentially have a detrimental impact upon their career progression. The Committee agreed that following the application of internal penalties for plagiarism it was not appropriate to then further penalise a student in this manner. The Committee therefore agreed that while it was necessary to record instances of plagiarism for internal reference by Panels and Boards of Examiners, these should not be published on a student's transcript.

The Committee noted that the Academic Registrar and colleagues from the Quality Office would be meeting with departmental Plagiarism Officers shortly to discuss the operation of the current plagiarism policies, and that feedback from this meeting would be reported to the Committee in due course.

14/M72 **PERIODIC DEVELOPMENTAL REVIEW**

The Committee considered the final response to the report of the Periodic Developmental Review of the Diploma in Higher Education in Operating Department Practice, which had taken place in December 2012. The Committee **approved** the final response.

14/M73 **SCHEDULE OF BUSINESS FOR 2014/15**

The Committee considered its schedule of business for the 2014/15 academic year.

Duration of meeting: Two hours