

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER
ACADEMIC POLICY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting held on
21 January 2014

Present:

	Ms C Fyfe (Chair)
Professor A Cashmore	Ms J Dunne
Mr D Flatt	Professor S Hainsworth
Professor S Law	Dr T Lawson
Dr D Lockett	Dr R Parry
Mr M Rubin	Professor J Scott
Dr D Watkins	Professor T Yeoman

In attendance: Mrs C Cryer, Dr P Dobrowolski and Mr A Petersen (Acting Secretary)

Apologies for absence were received from Dr C Jarvis, Mrs L Masterman and Dr T Oliviera

UNRESERVED BUSINESS

14/M1 MINUTES THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Committee considered the minutes of the meeting held on 17 December 2013.

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

14/M2 MATTERS ARISING

Arising from M110, the Committee noted that the Steering Group for the Pathways Project would be reporting to the February meeting of the Committee.

14/M3 CHAIR'S REPORT

The Chair had no items of business to report.

14/M4 DEPARTMENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE QUALITY ASSURANCE OF EDUCATIONAL DELIVERY PARTNERS

The Committee considered a draft paper outlining the responsibilities of academic departments with regard to education delivery partners (EDP) for distance learning programmes. The draft Code of Practice on Managing Higher Education with Others defined an EDP as 'an organisation contracted by the University to facilitate the delivery of distance learning provision.'

The Committee agreed that it was essential that following approval of the partner there was an ongoing relationship and process of monitoring key quality assurance elements such as tutor approval, staff development and student feedback. The Committee noted that one tool for achieving this monitoring was the annual developmental review process, in which departments would be required to comment on specific elements of the relationship with any educational delivery partners.

The Committee noted that the document did not include a formal requirement for visits to the partner by members of the academic department or other appropriate members of the University who were visiting the area. The Committee agreed that the normal expectation should be that regular visits are undertaken.

Subject to this and other minor amendments to the text, the Committee **approved** the guidelines for circulation to departments.

14/M5 PROPOSAL FOR COLLABORATIVE PROVISION

The Committee considered a proposal to establish a collaborative relationship with Lingnan University, Hong Kong. The proposal would involve a relationship whereby students would spend a period of study at both Universities, resulting in the award of a separate MSc in International Banking and Finance from both institutions.

The Committee noted that under the proposal students would be permitted to commence their studies in either institution. They would first complete the home institution's programme over the course of 12 months in order to achieve an MSc, before then travelling to the other partner institution to undertake a 6 month programme of study, leading to the award of a further MSc. It was proposed that the second institution would accept a number of the credits undertaken at the first institution as APEL, in order to exempt the student from the full programme of study and allow completion within the shorter timeframe. The Committee noted therefore that, as the students were following two separate programmes of study each delivered entirely by the awarding institution, this did not meet the QAA definition of either a Joint or a Dual award. In addition neither the proposed credit structure nor the period of registration aligned with the University's regulations.

The Committee noted that the proposed partner was a small institution with a liberal arts focus, and did not appear to be research led. The Committee also agreed that it was not clear what the benefits would be to University of Leicester students from undertaking this programme.

The Committee concluded that it could not approve the proposed partner on the basis of the information available.

14/M6 AMENDMENTS TO REGULATIONS

The Committee considered draft proposed amendments to Senate Regulation 7 governing the assessment of taught programmes. The draft amendments were based on the findings of the Working Group convened over the course of the autumn term to review a wide range of feedback obtained from academic departments, external examiners, the Students' Union, the Student Support Services, the Registry and the Quality Office, relating to the operation of the regulations in 2012/13.

In response to the feedback obtained the working group had proposed a small number of amendments to regulations, and a larger number of clarifications to the wording of existing regulations. The Committee noted that some of the feedback received had been contradictory and therefore it had not been possible to incorporate all of the requests for amendment. Furthermore, some feedback was in relation to practical and logistical arrangements underpinning the operation of regulations, and therefore such comments would be more appropriately addressed in accompanying detailed guidance rather than in

the regulations themselves. The revised document contained significant changes which fell into the following broad categories:

- a) Clarifying the role, function and membership of the Panel of Examiners and Board of Examiners respectively;
- b) The timing of the release of provisional marks following the Panel meetings in midsummer;
- c) Developing mechanisms to allow more swift confirmation of the outcome of mitigating circumstances submissions;
- d) Developing mechanisms to allow departments to set an alternative date for submission in the event of mitigating circumstances;
- e) Clarifying of the role of long term conditions within the mitigating circumstances process;
- f) Further clarification and operational guidance on the application of penalties for late submission;

The Committee considered the proposed amendments in detail. The Committee supported the majority of the amendments, but proposed further revisions in a number of sections. The Committee discussed the following issues:

The Committee agreed that it would be helpful to specify that the restrictions applied to the role of postgraduate research students in the assessment process also applied to Graduate Teaching and Research Assistants.

The Committee considered the revised requirements for attendance at a Panel of Examiners' meeting. The Committee supported the move to allow module convenors to nominate deputies to attend the meeting, however agreed that this should only be in exceptional circumstances. It was essential that any member of staff acting as a deputy had sufficient knowledge of the module to be able to comment on the patterns of student achievement as well as marking and moderation practices. The Committee agreed therefore that it was the role of the Chair to ensure that the attendance at the Panel was sufficient to allow the Panel to perform its role effectively.

The Committee noted that the regulations relating to late submission of coursework had been amended to allow for departments to potentially set a revised date for submission in the event of mitigating circumstances where the evidence allowed this. The Committee supported the principle, however agreed that the wording should state more clearly the circumstances under which this would be permitted, and to confirm who would be authorised to approve the revised date.

The Committee considered the mechanisms for accommodating long term conditions within the mitigating circumstances process. The Committee noted that improved arrangements with regard to the production of evidence were requested in order to minimise the potential stress on students who experienced flare-ups of long-term conditions that led to a greater than usual impact upon their studies. The Committee supported the principle, and noted that the AccessAbility Centre would be asked to propose appropriate arrangements.

Subject to the amendments outlined above and other minor amendments to text agreed at the meeting, the Committee **approved** the draft revised regulations for circulation to academic departments and colleges for consultation.

The Committee noted that the regulations would no longer apply to the taught elements of research degrees, and that it would be necessary to develop separate regulations to govern these. The Graduate Dean confirmed that the Postgraduate Research Policy Committee would draft regulations over the coming months with a view to submitting them for approval by Senate in July 2014.

Duration of meeting: Two Hours