

**UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER**  
**ACADEMIC POLICY COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of a meeting held on  
23 June 2015**

**Present:**

Professor M Peel (Chair)  
Professor A Cashmore     Dr S Gabbott  
Professor T Lawson        Dr B Norman  
Dr T Oliviera              Dr R Parry  
Ms C Taylor                Dr D Watkins  
Professor T Yeoman

**In attendance:** Dr R Dickinson, Ms L Freeman, Ms R Holland, Ms L Patrick, Mrs L Masterman (Secretary) and Mr A Petersen (Assistant Secretary)

**Apologies for absence** were received from Professor S Hainsworth, Dr D Lockett and Professor J Scott

**UNRESERVED BUSINESS**

**15/M67 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were made.

**15/M68 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Committee considered the minutes of the meeting held on 20 May 2015.

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

**15/M70 CHAIR'S REPORT**

The Chair reported that the new University Learning Strategy would be presented to Senate at its meeting on 1 July, and had informed the development of the learning and teaching element of the wider University Strategic Plan.

The Chair also reported that a series of meetings had taken place to consider the issue of student enterprise activities across the institution. It was agreed that the Academic Policy Committee should have oversight of this theme at institutional level.

The Chair reported that there had been six recipients of University Distinguished Teaching Fellow (UDTF) awards in 2015 as follows:

Dr Clive Marsh, Vaughan Centre for Lifelong Learning  
Dr Simon Vaughan, Physics and Astronomy  
Dr Andrew Ward, Medical and Social Care Education  
Dr Chris Wilkins, Education  
Mrs Nichola Gretton, Leicester Learning Institute  
Dr Lynette Matthews, Leicester Learning Institute

The Committee also noted that the UDTF Panel had approved a proposal that previous recipients of University Teaching Fellowships should be able to use the UDTF title, should they wish.

The Committee congratulated all of the recipients on their awards.

**15/M71 POLICY ON THE ACCREDITATION OF PRIOR LEARNING**

The Committee noted that it had approved the proposed Policy on the Accreditation of Prior Learning at its meeting on 26 March 2015 subject to resolution of the issue relating to the number of credits of exemptions which should be permitted for undergraduate distance-learning and campus based programmes. Clarification on the issue had been obtained from the relevant department and the Committee considered whether the Policy should allow variation between the two modes of study.

The Committee agreed that the maximum number of credits of exemptions for undergraduate degree programmes should be set at 120 but that programmes could make a case for a higher number on pedagogic grounds as part of the programme approval process. In accordance with Senate Regulations this could not exceed half of the taught elements of a programme.

**15/M72 PATHWAYS**

The Committee received a report on the progress of the Pathways Project. Dr Parry reported that the Major and Minor Pathway in Global Studies had been approved by a Programme Approval Panel on 28 May subject to minor amendments.

It was also noted that a series of additional College Academic Committee meetings were planned in order to undertake the final consideration and academic approval for new major and minor pathways, and documentation had been developed by the Quality Office in order to support this process.

The Committee further noted that information on Pathways would be available for prospective students attending forthcoming University Open Days.

The Committee considered and **approved** in principle proposals for the establishment of new Minor Pathways in Marketing and the Management of Innovation, Science and Technology, agreeing that they should proceed to a full approval process.

**15/M73 AMENDMENTS TO SENATE REGULATION 6**

The Committee considered proposed amendments to Senate Regulation 6. The Committee noted that the proposals would introduce a scheme of assessment whereby award and classification would be made on the basis of a credit-weighted average or credit accumulation in a similar way to the undergraduate scheme. The progression requirement between the taught and project elements of the programme would be raised, and a minimum module mark for an award to be made would be introduced.

The proposals had been subject to extensive consultation, in particular with departments in the College of Science and Engineering, which had raised concerns regarding the potential impact on progression and award rates. These had been explored in depth and it had been demonstrated that the proposed revisions were broadly in line with provision across the sector. Notwithstanding the concerns articulated by a small number of departments, the

Committee agreed that the proposed regulations, including the establishment of a minimum pass mark of 40% in all taught modules contributing towards an award, were appropriate and in line with standards across the sector.

The Committee agreed that it would be helpful to clarify within the regulations that for all programmes classification would be on the basis of either credit accumulation or a credit weighted average, whichever achieved the best outcome for a student.

Subject to the addition of this clarification and other minor typographical amendments the Committee **approved** the regulations for introduction for students commencing their studies in the 2015/16 academic year.

#### **15/M74 PERSONAL TUTOR SYSTEM**

The Committee considered a report from the Students' Union regarding the operation of the personal tutor system and proposals for its development.

The report made a series of recommendations which aimed to establish greater consistency in the support provided by Personal Tutors, the enhancement of the role in relation distance learning students and greater recognition of the workload associated with personal tutoring. The Committee welcomed the report. However, it noted that there were limits to the specialist support that could be provided by individual personal tutors in areas such as careers and employability. It was further noted that the introduction of Pathways represented an opportunity to reconsider the wider framework for the personal support of students, and the role of academic and professional services staff within this.

The Committee noted that a number of the recommendations, such as those around the pastoral support of distance learning students and the recognition of personal tutoring within workload allocation and promotion and reward processes, were already being addressed through existing working groups. The Committee agreed that the other elements identified within the report would be best considered within a wider review of the overall framework for the pastoral support of students within the institution, and agreed that a task and finish group should be established in the 2015/16 academic year to consider how this would be best developed.

#### **15/M75 HIGHER EDUCATION ACHIEVEMENT REPORT**

The Committee considered a proposal from the Students' Union for the HEAR to become a more formative document. The proposal noted that as a formative document the HEAR could play an important role in helping students throughout their studies to plan their personal development and extra-curricular activities in order to enhance their employability upon graduation.

The report recommended that a formative HEAR should be developed for the 2016/17 academic year, and that this should be supported by the development of a formal support structure such as a co-ordinator and a Task and Finish Group.

The Committee welcomed the proposal. However, it noted that there was a significant project underway which was considering how best to promote student engagement across the University. The Committee agreed that the proposals should be incorporated into this project, along with any associated considerations around resources.

**15/M76 MANAGEMENT AND SUPPORT FOR DEPARTMENTS PREPARING FOR PSRB  
ACCREDITATION**

The Committee considered how University level support could be provided to departments undergoing professional accreditation.

The Committee agreed that it would be helpful to establish a common source of core information regarding institutional strategy and policy, and a network of individuals within the institution who would be available to share experience and act as critical friends for accreditation submissions. The Committee agreed that further consideration should be given to how this might be achieved, and a proposal brought to a future meeting.

**15/M77 POLICY ON VERIFICATION OF STUDY REQUESTS**

The Committee considered a paper outlining the University's current processes for the retention of student data, and proposing the establishment of a new University policy for the purposes of verification of study requests.

The Committee noted that there was an overriding statutory framework governing the retention of data, however the University's own internal policies on the issue would benefit from clarification. In particular, the establishment of a clear protocol would support the work of the Academic Model project in the re-implementation of the student records system.

The Committee considered the proposals. It was noted that award level data was maintained in perpetuity, however module level data for the provision of transcripts and reference requests could be maintained for either six or ten years following the completion of a student's programme. The Committee **agreed** that it would be appropriate to maintain this data for 10 years following completion.

**15/M77 PERIODIC DEVELOPMENTAL REVIEWS**

(i) American Studies

The Committee considered the final response to the report of the Periodic Developmental Review of the Centre for American Studies which had taken place in December 2013. The Committee noted that it had been a very positive review and response process. The Panel welcomed the final response however noted that under point e) it was not clear how the Centre had reflected on the assessment of group work. Subject to further clarification on this point the Committee approved the final response.

(ii) Health Sciences

The Committee considered the final response to the report of the Periodic Developmental Review of the Department of Health Sciences which had taken place in December 2013. The Committee noted in particular the work that had been undertaken to reviewing and revising the Department's committee structure to allow for more effective management of learning, teaching and quality assurance within the department. The Committee approved the final response.

(iii) Law

The Committee considered the report and initial response from the Periodic Developmental Review of the School of Law which had taken place in November 2014. The Committee welcomed the positive tone of the report and the response, and in particular welcomed the commitment of the School to involving students in major enhancement projects, such as that around the articulation of marking criteria and provision of feedback. The Committee approved the report and the initial response.

(iv) Museum Studies

The Committee considered the report and initial response from the Periodic Developmental Review of the School of Museum Studies which had taken place in February 2015. The Committee noted that issues discussed in relation to the distance learning provision within the School had been complex and the Committee acknowledged the response from the School on this point. However, it was pleased to note that this had resulted in a series of positive developments within the School. The Committee also noted that a number of the recommendations of the Panel required further consideration at University level, and that these would be taken forwards by the appropriate Committees. The Panel approved the report and the initial response.

(v) Physics and Astronomy

The Committee considered the report and initial response from the Periodic Developmental Review of the Department of Physics and Astronomy which had taken place in December 2014. The Panel welcomed the outcome of the review, noting as above that there were a number of issues for further consideration at University level. The Panel approved the report and the initial response.

(vi) Politics and International Relations

The Committee considered the final response to the report of the Periodic Developmental Review of the Department of Politics and International Relations which had taken place in February 2014. The Committee noted in particular the work that had been undertaken to enhance the role of Personal Tutor within the Department, and the integration of this role with the expansion of departmental feedback mechanisms. The Committee approved the final response.

**15/M78 PROGRAMME APPROVAL PANELS**

The Chair reported that as part of the implementation of the new Learning Strategy there would be a review of the current process for programme development and approval, which would emphasise the earlier development of new programme proposals and reconsider the relationship between the business and academic aspects of each programme.

(i) Postgraduate Certificate in Effective Middle Leadership

The Committee considered the report of the Programme Approval Panel held on 22 May 2015 to consider the introduction of a new Postgraduate Certificate in Effective Middle Leadership. The Committee noted that a response to the conditions and recommendations made by the Panel had been received and endorsed by the Panel Chair. On this basis the Committee approved the Panel's report and approved the introduction of the programme in September 2015.

- (ii) FDA/BA Top up in Leadership and Business Management

The Committee considered the report of the Programme Approval Panel held on 25 March 2015 to consider the introduction of a new FDA and BA Top up programme in Leadership and Business Management. The Committee noted that a response to the conditions and recommendations made by the Panel had been received and endorsed by the Panel Chair. On this basis the Committee approved the Panel's report and approved the introduction of the programme in September 2015.

**15/M79 ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK WORKING GROUP**

The Committee considered a report of the meeting of the Assessment and Feedback Working Group which had taken place on 2 June 2015. The Committee noted in particular a recommendation from the Group that following the successful pilot all academic departments should provide examination feedback to students as standard for everything other than final year second semester examinations from the 2015/16 academic year, via one of the means set out in 14/M95. The Committee noted that feedback for final year second semester examinations would only be provided on request.

**15/M81 COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS MANAGEMENT GROUP**

The Committee received the minutes of the meeting of Collaborative Partnerships Management Group held on 12 May 2015.

**15/M82 STUDENT EXPERIENCE ENHANCEMENT GROUP**

The Committee received the minutes of the meeting of the Student Experience Enhancement Group held on 3 June 2015.

**15/M83 STUDENT RECRUITMENT AND WIDENING PARTICIPATION COMMITTEE**

The Committee received the minutes of the meeting of the Student Recruitment and Widening Participation Committee held on 7 May 2015.

**15/M84 REVIEW OF TAUGHT POSTGRADUATE EDUCATION**

The Committee considered and approved the terms of reference for the newly established Task and Finish Group to review taught postgraduate education at the University, and provide recommendations for the development and implementation of a new approach to the management of the PGT offer.

**15/M85 RESERVED MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Committee considered the minutes of the meeting held on 20 May 2015.

The Committee approved the minutes as a correct record.

15/M86 **APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS**

The Committee considered and **approved** the appointment of the following External Examiners:

College of Arts, Humanities and Law

**School of Archaeology and Ancient History**

Dr Louise Steele, University of Wales, Trinity St David

Period of Office: September 2015 to July 2019

Programme(s): BA Archaeology, BA Archaeology and Ancient History,  
BA History and Archaeology

College of Medicine, Biological Sciences and Psychology

**School of Psychology**

Dr Rebecca Milne, University of Portsmouth

Period of Office: September 2014 to November 2018

Programme(s): MSc Forensic Psychology

College of Science and Engineering

**Department of Geology**

Dr Andrew Wetherelt, University of Exeter

Period of Office: September 2015 to November 2019

Programme(s): PGCert Quarry Management and Operations

College of Social Science

**Vaughan Centre for Lifelong Learning**

Ms Jacqueline Merchant, University of Sunderland

Period of Office: September 2015 to October 2019

Programme(s): Foundation Degree in Drug and Alcohol Counselling and Treatment

15/M89 **EXTENSION TO TERM OF OFFICE**

The Committee considered and approved the following External Examiner's extension for a period of two months

College of Social Science

**Department of Criminology**

Dr Stephen Tong, Canterbury Christchurch University

Programme(s): Foundation Degree and BA in Security and Risk Management

15/M88 **THANKS**

The Committee thanked Michael Rubin and Yordan Nikolov, who were finishing their terms as President and Education Officer of the Students' Union respectively, for their contribution to the work of the Committee.

The Committee also noted that Professor Peel had been appointed to the role of Provost and would therefore no longer be Chairing the Committee. The Committee expressed its thanks to Professor Peel for his leadership both of the Committee and for the development of enhancement and innovation in the management of learning and teaching in the institution over the past 12 months.

Duration of meeting: Two Hours

CHAIR