

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER
ACADEMIC POLICY COMMITTEE

**Minutes of a meeting held on
28 November 2013**

Present:

Ms C Fyfe (Chair)
Ms J Dunne Mr D Flatt
Dr C Jarvis Dr T Lawson
Dr T Oliviera Mr M Rubin
Professor J Scott Dr D Watkins
Professor T Yeoman

In attendance: Professor S Law and Mr A Petersen (Acting Secretary)

Apologies for absence were received from Professor A Cashmore, Professor S Hainsworth and Dr R Parry

UNRESERVED BUSINESS

13/M96 MINUTES THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Committee considered the minutes of the meeting held on 18th October 2013.

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

13/M97 MATTERS ARISING

Arising from M88a) the Chair reported that following initial internal consideration three University nominees for National Teaching Fellowships had been identified. They would be invited to develop their application with the support of internal mentors ahead of submission to the Higher Education Academy (HEA).

Arising from M88c) the Committee noted that the Chair had fed back comments regarding the academic rationale for the current registration deadline to VCAC.

Arising from M92 the Committee noted that the Vice-Chancellor had written to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA), and that the Chief Executive of the OIA, Robert Behrens, had been invited to deliver a seminar at the University in the spring term, to which members of the Committee would be invited.

13/M98 CHAIR'S REPORT

The Chair reported:

- a) That Professor Jon Scott had been appointed Academic Registrar from 1 January 2014. The Committee welcomed the announcement and warmly congratulated Professor Scott on his appointment.
- b) That the December meeting of the Committee would be considering a concept paper from the Heads of the Colleges of Arts, Humanities and Law and Social Sciences regarding the proposed development of flexible pathways within undergraduate degrees.

13/M99 **QUALITY ASSURANCE FOR MASSIVE OPEN ONLINE COURSES (MOOCs)**

The Committee considered a draft procedure and supporting documentation for the quality assurance of MOOCs. It was noted that MOOCs were non-credit bearing and therefore were not automatically addressed within the existing programme development and approval processes.

Under the policy the authors of new MOOCs would be required to complete a MOOC specification form, which would be submitted for consideration by a Programme Approval Panel. In the event that there was no Panel scheduled before the launch date of the MOOC, it could be approved by Chair's action from the Chair of Academic Policy Committee. Before launch the material would be subject to the same level of external review as specified under the DL Quality Control Policy. Following this, MOOCs would be incorporated into the Annual Developmental Review process for departments.

The Committee noted that there was currently no national framework setting expectations for the quality assurance of MOOCs, however agreed that the proposal represented a robust process for scrutiny of new such courses that would likely meet or exceed requirements that may be set by the QAA. The Committee **approved** the policy, noting that it could be re-visited once national expectations had been agreed, if appropriate.

The Committee further agreed that it would be helpful to receive an update on the progress of the first MOOC, *England in the time of Richard III*, which had recently launched, following completion of the first full delivery. [ACTION: Secretary to co-ordinate]

13/M100 **REPORT FROM THE WORKING GROUP REVIEWING SENATE REGULATION 7**

The Committee received a report from the Chair regarding the work of the Working Group that was reviewing Senate Regulation 7 following the first year of operation in 2012/13. The purpose of the Group was to consider evidence relating to the operation and implementation of Senate Regulation 7, and to develop proposals for clarification and improvement where appropriate.

The Group had so far sought and considered feedback from the following sources:

- a) A summary of comments from External Examiners' reports;
- b) Comments from Academic Departments provided via a standard feedback template and individual communications;
- c) Comments from administrative colleagues in departments, the Registry and the Quality Office, gathered through a series of workshops during the summer;
- d) Comments from Academic Registrar's Representatives at exam boards;
- e) Comments from the Student Support Services, incorporating Welfare, AccessAbility and Counselling and Mental Wellbeing on the basis of their work with students over the 12/13 academic year;
- f) Comments from the Education Unit in the Students' Union on their interaction with students around a range of issues, particularly focussing on mitigating circumstances and appeals;

From this considerable body of evidence a number of themes had emerged which the Group would be seeking to address. In some instances there is no consensus in the views

expressed, requiring further discussion and reflection to arrive at an agreed position. The issues raised included:

- a) Further work was required to ensure that the centrally provided Panel and Board paperwork was in an accessible format, provided in a timely fashion and flexible to meet the additional needs of some Boards;
- b) There remained a lack of clarity regarding the role and function of the Panel of Examiners, and in particular the relevance of the Panel of Examiners in September;
- c) Further guidance was required regarding Panel and Board membership and quoracy;
- d) A more standardised timetable for the timings of Panels and Board in midsummer was required to ensure that all marks are available for consideration by Boards;
- e) Further consideration needed to be given to the regulations regarding the release of provisional marks following the Panel meetings in midsummer;
- f) In order to reduce stress and anxiety amongst students it would be helpful to have a mechanism to allow more swift confirmation of the outcome of mitigating circumstances submissions;
- g) Clarification of the role of long term conditions within the mitigating circumstances process was required;
- h) Further clarification and operational guidance on the application of penalties for late submission would be helpful.

The Committee noted that the Group would shortly agree recommendations for consideration by the Academic Policy Committee in January 2014 regarding:

- a) Amendments to the regulations;
- b) Clarifications to wording;
- c) The development of additional training and guidance for staff, students and external examiners.

Following this discussion, detailed proposals would be available for consideration by departments and College Academic Committees, with a view to a final position being agreed at APC's March meeting for recommendation to the following Senate.

13/M101 NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY

The Committee considered responses from the Colleges to the outcome of the National Student Survey for 2013.

The Committee noted that a number of issues had been raised, some of which were being addressed at departmental level whilst others required University level consideration. It was further noted that specific issues would be referred to relevant University bodies such as the Student Experience Enhancement Group and the Assessment and Feedback Working Group.

The Committee noted in particular the importance of engaging with the student body early in order to gain feedback on potential areas of dissatisfaction in order to address them where possible before students' completed their programmes.

13/M102 LECTURE CAPTURE PILOT

The Committee received a report from Professor Jon Scott regarding the pilot project for Lecture Capture that was underway within the institution.

The pilot of the Echo 360 software was underway, with the Panopto platform also due to be tested in the spring term. The recorded lectures would be made available to students via Blackboard shortly. It was noted that a business case to fund rollout of lecture capture across the institution was under development for submission to the financial planning round in the spring.

The Committee noted that it was important that guidance for students was clear that recorded lectures were just one of the learning and teaching tools available on their programme, and were not a substitute for attendance at scheduled classes. The Committee agreed that it would be helpful to analyse student use of the service during the pilot phase. It was noted that the Teaching Enhancement Fund had recently funded a project to analyse how students used their private study hours, and the Committee agreed that the use of recorded lectures should be included within this analysis. [ACTION: Professor Scott]

13/M103 CODE OF PRACTICE ON JOINT DEGREES

The Committee considered a final draft of the Code of Practice on Joint Degrees and Shared Teaching. The document had been considered by College Academic Committees and the final draft presented incorporated minor proposed amendments on the basis of feedback from the Colleges.

The Committee approved the majority of the minor amendments proposed and **approved** the Code for introduction.

13/M104 PERIODIC DEVELOPMENTAL REVIEW

The Committee considered the report of the Periodic Developmental Review of the MA in Integrated Provision for Children and Families, delivered at the Penn Green Research, Development and Training base. The review had taken place in October 2013.

The Committee noted that although the provision was of a high quality there were a number of points with regard to the management of the collaborative relationship which required attention. The Committee noted that an interim response from the Head of the Department of Medical and Social Care Education and the Head of the Penn Green Research base on these specific points was due for consideration by the Committee in March 2014, followed by a full response to the remaining conditions in June 2014.

The Committee **approved** the report.

13/M105 **DISPENSATION FROM REGULATIONS**

The Committee considered a request for dispensation from Regulations from the Centre for Labour Market Studies at the School of Management. The Centre requested dispensation from Senate Regulation 5 for the BSc in Human Resource Management and the BSc Industrial Relations. It was proposed that on both programmes an additional progression point be introduced, which would require students to pass module LM3509 (Research Methods) before being permitted to progress onto the dissertation

The Committee **approved** the dispensation.

The Committee **noted** that Chair's action had been taken to approve a dispensation from Senate Regulation 6 governing taught postgraduate programmes for the MSc in Pain Management, in order to allow stricter progression and award requirements.

13/M106 **ADDITIONAL REGULATORY PROCEDURES**

The Committee considered a proposal from the Medical School for additional regulatory procedures relating to student misconduct, academic misconduct or neglect of academic obligations, as well as additional progression requirements.

The Committee noted that the policies were in recognition of the additional professional requirements for medical students. The amendments would identify at an early stage those students who were at risk of fitness to practice concerns, and provide support to avoid escalation. The Committee noted that the additional policies were to the benefit of students in this regard, and **approved** the additional regulatory procedures. The amended Code of Practice for the Professionalism Concerns Group was approved for immediate introduction, whilst the revised progression regulations for the MBChB programme were approved for all new and returning students in 2014/15.

13/M107 **HIGHER EDUCATION ACADEMY REPORT**

The Committee considered the Higher Education Academic Report for the University for the 2012/13 academic year.

The Committee noted that although there was clear evidence of engagement with the HEA at various levels of the institution, this should be further promoted in order to achieve more even distribution across the University.

13/M108 **QAA QUALITY CODE**

The Committee noted the publication of the following elements of the QAA Quality Code:

- i) Part A: Setting and maintaining academic standards
- ii) Chapter B1: Programme design, development and approval
- iii) Chapter B6: Assessment of students and recognition of prior learning
- iv) Chapter B8: Programme Monitoring and Review

The Committee noted that the full and final Quality Code was now published, and this would therefore inform institutional preparations for the Higher Education Review of the University scheduled for the 2015/16 academic year.

Duration of meeting: 1 hour 20 minutes