

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER
ACADEMIC POLICY COMMITTEE

**Minutes of a meeting held on
14 September 2016**

Present:

Professor J Scott (Chair)	
Professor H Atkinson	Dr A Cameron
Dr E Clapp	Dr F Deepwell
Dr R Dickinson	Ms L Freeman
Mr G Green	Dr C Hewitt
Dr C Jarvis	Mr A Mitchell
Ms C Taylor	Dr G Wynn

In attendance: Dr L Cunningham (for M81) and Mr A Petersen (Secretary)

Apologies for absence were received from Ms R Holland, Dr D Lockett, Mrs L Masterman and Dr B Norman

UNRESERVED BUSINESS

16/M79 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

16/M80 TERMS OF REFERENCE AND MEMBERSHIP

The Committee received its terms of reference and membership for the 2016/17 academic year.

The Committee agreed that the third term of reference should be expanded to include specific reference to assessment. The Committee noted that the Academic Director in the College of Science and Engineering was due to be appointed shortly and would join the Committee's membership. In addition, it was agreed that one of the co-Chairs of the Distance and Flexible Learning Group should be invited to join the Committee.

Subject to the above amendments, the Committee approved the Terms of Reference and membership for 2016/17, and noted that these would be presented to Senate.

16/M81 NSS OUTCOMES AND ACTION PLANS

The Committee received a presentation from the Planning Office regarding the University's performance in NSS 2016. The Committee was pleased to note that overall satisfaction rating had increased, and the University had improved its relative position. It was however noted that the large number of institutions within relatively close proximity in terms of overall satisfaction meant that minor changes in performance could result in a significant change in overall ranking. The Committee noted in particular that the analysis of the results by deciles and in comparison with the wider sector provided a very useful means of benchmarking at departmental level and focussing in on opportunities for improvement.

The Committee noted that departments and colleges had been provided with overall outcomes and also the free text comments. The Committee received a demonstration of the Tableau Reader tool which would allow departments and colleges to undertake detailed analysis of NSS outcomes.

The Committee received a summary of the actions that were being taken over the coming year both to address specific issues raised in the NSS, and also plan for the coming year. An NSS Working Group, Chaired by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) would define and lead the institutional strategy towards the NSS and plan the NSS campaign for the 2017 survey. Improving Student Experience Teams would continue to work with a small number of departments over the coming year, and College Academic Committees would retain oversight of local improvements through the NSS action plans incorporated within the Annual Developmental Reviews.

16/M82 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Committee considered the minutes of the meeting that had taken place on 23 June 2016.

Subject to minor typographical amendments the Committee approved the minutes as an accurate record.

16/M83 **MATTERS ARISING**

Arising from M65 the Committee noted that as part of the implementation of the Lecture Capture Policy academic staff had been provided with the webform which would enable them to waive performance rights. Where staff did not complete the waiver it was the responsibility of the relevant Head of Department to work with the staff member in question to provide an alternate means of allowing students to access material, and the LLI were developing notes of guidance to support Heads in this process.

Arising from M66 the Committee noted comments from colleagues seeking clarification regarding the issue of PGR students who are doing unpaid work but still undertake marking activities. The Chair agreed to confirm with the University Legal Advisor as to whether any amendment to the policy was necessary.

Arising from M67 the Committee noted that card readers had been installed in the majority of teaching spaces ahead of the roll out of the new attendance monitoring policy and procedure, and that the installation should be complete shortly. The next phase of the project would address monitoring of PGR student attendance.

16/M84 **CHAIR'S REPORT**

The Chair welcomed members of the Committee to the first meeting of the 2016/17 academic year.

The Chair noted that the University had recruited well for 2016/17 entry, although there had been a slight reduction in overall tariff score at undergraduate level. The LLI had developed a number of pre-induction materials for new undergraduate students to assist students with the transition to University level study.

The Chair noted that the new Students Services Centre was now operational in the Charles Wilson Building, and that the new app for students had been released.

The Chair reminded members of the importance of ensuring the publication of actions arising from Student Staff Committee meetings in order to demonstrate to students how the University is responding to the issues raised. Related to this, the Chair also noted that the revised Code of Practice for the Personal Support of Students was now in place and that the LLI was leading the development of support and training materials.

16/M85 THEMES OF WORK

The Committee considered proposed themes of work for the 2016/17 academic year

a) Implementation of the Learning Strategy

The Committee noted in particular that the Chair would be working with the Academic Directors of the Colleges to develop College strategies that would underpin the institutional commitments.

b) Preparations for the TEF

The Committee noted that further detailed information regarding the operation of TEF 2 was awaited, however a Working Group had been established to co-ordinate the University's preparations.

c) Review of Regulations (Mitigating Circumstances and Senate Regulation 5)

The Committee noted that Senate Regulation 5 governing Undergraduate Programmes of Study would be subject to consultation and review over the coming year, with a particular focus upon the rules regarding progression, classification and borderlines. In addition, the mitigating circumstances regulations within Senate Regulation 7 would also be subject to review, and the Chair noted that this would involve the consideration of a potential 'fit to sit' policy.

d) Module Evaluation and use of the outcomes

The Committee noted that this would involve both the student and staff perspective on the effectiveness and output of the module review process, and the first workshop on the issue was scheduled for 19 September.

e) Academic Framework for Kunming-Leicester University

The Committee noted that this development was subject to endorsement from Council and the success of the bid to the Chinese Ministry of Education, however if it was to proceed there would be a substantial workload associated with the academic policy and quality assurance elements of the proposal.

16/M86 CURRICULUM TRANSFORMATION

The Committee received a paper and a verbal updated from Dr Wynn regarding the Curriculum Transformation project. The Committee noted that the requirement to provide detailed pre-contract information for students under Consumer Rights Legislation had constricted the time available to complete Curriculum Transformation in order to launch revised curricula for 2017/18 onwards. Given the range and volume of provision within the institution, the University Leadership Team had agreed that it would not be possible to make the most of the opportunity provided by Curriculum Transformation under the constricted timescale. ULT had approved a proposal that the small number of

programmes which had already developed a transformed curriculum, or were close to submitting for approval would still launch in 2017/18, however the majority of programmes would defer implementation of Curriculum Transformation for 2018/19.

Arising from the revised timescale the Committee noted that the credit hours change from 7.5 to 10 working per credit would be implemented for all modules for 2017/18 and therefore updated specifications for all modules would be required to be submitted by December 2016. The Committee noted that guidance was available from the Leicester Learning Institute in terms of accurately recording the full range of contact hours, and making full use of the free text sections to articulate additional support mechanisms within guided independent study. Where programmes were deferring implementation of Curriculum Transformation until 2018/19 there would be staged deadlines for submission of May and August 2017, to allow for consideration and approval of the proposals by October 2017.

The Curriculum Transformation Project team had established a number of formal sub-groups with defined tasks, memberships and timescales, and the Committee noted that a full associated action plan would be presented for consideration shortly.

The Committee also received the report of the sub-group of the College of Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities Academic Committee which had considered amendments to the Distance Learning MBA programme via the Curriculum Transformation approval process. The Committee noted that the process had provided a useful case study for the future Curriculum Transformation work, and was pleased to note that the use of a sub-group had allowed for detailed and developmental consideration of the proposal. The Committee noted that the amendments had been approved for introduction.

16/M87 **DEVELOPMENT OF 3+1 TOP UP MODEL**

The Committee considered a paper which outlined a potential regulatory and quality assurance framework for the development of 3+1 top up degree programmes. Under the model, students from selected partners who met pre-defined academic thresholds would be able to transfer to the University of Leicester (UoL) and complete a one year programme leading to the award of a Bachelor's degree from the University. The Committee noted that this model existed in a number of other institutions.

The Committee noted that there was already the precedent and capacity within the Regulations governing undergraduate programmes to award a Bachelor's degree on the basis of a single year of study at level 6. UoL would manage, deliver and retain full authority over the study and student experience that contributed to the UoL award.

The Committee noted that as students would be entering directly into the final year of undergraduate programmes, there would need to be detailed scrutiny of their prior study. This would include a detailed review of potential partner institutions in terms of their status, subject coverage and teaching model. The Committee agreed that it would be essential to start with a very small number of high quality partners in a limited number of subject areas. The Committee agreed that it would be necessary to reflect in Regulations that direct entry into the final year of programmes would not be generally available, and would only be possible via progression through specified partnerships. The Committee also noted that it would be necessary to undertake a full detailed mapping of the partner's curricula in order to ensure that students had met all of the necessary academic pre-requisites to enter into the final year of a UK bachelor's degree, and that this would be necessary on a programme by programme basis.

The Committee noted that pedagogic approach and learning styles varied significantly internationally, and therefore in addition to the threshold academic requirements it would be essential to establish whether students would have the necessary independent learning and critical thinking skills necessary for the final year of a UK undergraduate programme, in particular in relation to undertaking a dissertation or research project. The Committee agreed that specific consideration would need to be given to this element in terms of ensuring appropriate transition and induction support, as well as ongoing study skills support for these students. Top-up programmes would also need to be designed and structured in light of these issues.

The Committee was broadly supportive of the model, however agreed that as a distinctly new approach to undergraduate provision the development and initial operation of the partnerships would require close monitoring and oversight. The Committee raised a number of points for clarification. The Committee noted the risk of a student failing their year at UoL and therefore leaving with no qualification from either institution and agreed that mechanisms for addressing this would need to be considered. The Committee also noted that strategic development of the portfolio of top up programmes must be led by UoL. The Committee also noted that while the proposals could be accommodated within the existing regulations, if the principle were to be approved then it would be helpful to consider where specific amendments should be made to regulations to provide a clearer framework for this new model of provision.

The Committee agreed that the paper should be updated to reflect the points raised above and would be circulated to the Committee for final consideration. The Committee noted that were approval of the QA and regulatory aspects of the model to be granted, the next stage would be for a full commercial assessment of the potential partnerships identified, which would need to include resources associated with issues around transition and induction identified above.

16/M88 **PROGRAMME APPROVAL PANELS**

The Committee noted that following consideration of the Panels' report and the responses from the respective programme teams the Chair had taken action on behalf of the Committee to approve the introduction of the following programmes for 2016/17:

- a) BSc Biological Sciences (with Foundation Year)
- b) BA/Major Management Studies (all specialisms) (with a year in industry)
- c) BSc/Major Accounting and Finance (with a year in Industry)
- d) BA Management and Economics (with a year in Industry)
- e) Major in HRM (with a year in Industry)
- f) Major amendments to MBChB (years 1 and 2)
- g) MSc Criminology, MSc Crime, Justice and Psychology, MSc Criminal Practice and MSc Terrorism, Security and Policing (major amendments)

The Committee considered the following Programme Approval Panel Reports:

- a) LLB Law, LLB Law with Politics, LLB Law with a Modern Language

The Committee considered the report of the Programme Approval Panel which had considered major amendments to the first year of the above programmes. The review had been prompted by the move to the 15/30 credit structure, and had included wide consultation with staff, students and external stakeholders.

The Committee noted that the School had provided a response to the conditions and recommendations in the report, and that this had been reviewed and approved by the Panel. The Committee approved the report and approved introduction of the revised programmes for 2017/18.

b) LLB Law with Criminology

The Committee considered the report of the Programme Approval Panel which had considered major amendments to the current LLB Law and Criminology degree, to become LLB Law with Criminology. This represented a proportionate shift in content between the two subject areas within the programme to become 75:25.

The Committee noted that the School had provided a response to the conditions and recommendations in the report, and that this had been reviewed and approved by the Panel. The Committee approved the report and approved introduction of the revised programmes for 2017/18.

c) MSc International Management and MSc Management (amendments)

The Committee considered the report of the Programme Approval Panel that had considered proposals for major amendments to the existing MSc Management programme and the introduction of a new MSc in International Management. The proposals were intended to refresh the curriculum of the existing MSc, to make more effective use of teaching resources across the new School, and to establish a structural model that could then form the basis of future specialist masters within the field.

The Committee noted that the School had provided a response to the conditions and recommendations in the report, and that this had been reviewed and approved by the Chair of the Panel. The Committee approved the report and approved introduction of the programmes for 2017/18.

d) BSc Psychology and MBChB Medicine (both with Foundation Year)

The Committee considered the report of the Programme Approval Panel which had considered the introduction of a Foundation Year as an entry route into undergraduate programmes in Medicine and Psychology. The Panel noted that this development particularly supported the University's widening participation agenda.

The Committee noted that the team had provided a response to the conditions and recommendations in the report, and that this had been reviewed and approved by the Panel. The Committee approved the report and approved introduction of the programmes for 2017/18. The Committee subsequently noted that only the MBChB with Foundation Year was planned for launch in 2017/18 at this stage.

16/M89 **COLLEGE ACADEMIC COMMITTEES**

The Committee received the minutes of the meetings of the College Academic Committees held on the following dates:

College of Medicine, Biological Sciences and Psychology, 26 June and 21 July

College of Science and Engineering, 6 July

College of Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities, 7 June, 8 July and 15 August

Arising from the above, the Committee noted the following:

- a) That under the policy on PGR Students who Teach all appointments for PGR students undertaking paid teaching must be administered through Unitemps, however this did not preclude a departmental process before this point. The Committee agreed that it would be helpful if wording in the policy on this point could be clarified.
- b) The Committee noted that the approval of a new Minor Pathway in Entrepreneurship with Deloitte potentially represented an exciting model for the future engagement of major employers in the development of the University's curricula. However, it was important to articulate the distinction between the Minor in question and the wider programme of Entrepreneurship activities under development by the Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Enterprise).

16/M90 HIGHER EDUCATION AND REFORM BILL

The Committee received the recently issued notes of guidance from the Department for Education regarding the new model for quality assessment and the implementation of the TEF.

The Committee noted that the new framework for quality assessment set out the revised processes for new providers gaining degree awarding powers, and a framework for risk based regulation. Subject to meeting baseline financial, governance and sustainability requirements, there would be an Annual Provider Review which would be undertaken by the new Office for Students on the basis of standard metrics and indicators, with follow up in depth Quality Review visits if further investigation was required. The reviews would be undertaken by the designated quality body. Targeted Quality Review visits could also be undertaken in response to specific concerns raised.

The Committee noted that the TEF guidance document set out further detail with regard to the staging of the implementation of the TEF.

The Committee noted that further detailed guidance on both issues was due to be released by the Department for Education shortly.

16/M91 APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

The Committee considered and **approved** the appointment of the following external examiners:

College of Medicine, Biological Sciences and Psychology

Department of Medical Education

Professor Timothy Coleman, University of Nottingham

Period of Office: October 2016 to September 2019

Programme(s): BSc Intercolated (Clinical Research) STEM Component

Cont/...

College of Science and Engineering

Department of Geology

Br Christopher Berry, Cardiff University

Period of Office: September 2016 to September 2020

Programme(s): BSc Geology with Palaeobiology, BSc Geography and Geology,
MGeol Geology with Palaeobiology

College of Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities

School of Education

Mr David Galbraith, University of Cumbria

Period of Office: September 2016 to November 2020

Programmes(s): PGCE Secondary (Core and Schools Direct)

The Committee noted that Chair's action had been taken to approve the following External Examiner appointments:

College of Medicine, Biological Sciences and Psychology

Department of Cancer Studies

Professor Peter Leth, University of Southern Denmark

Period of Office: September 2016 to November 2020

Programme(s): MSc/PGDip/PGCert Post Mortem Radiology for Natural and Forensic
Death Investigation

Department of Neuroscience, Psychology and Behaviour

Professor Clare Wood, Coventry University

Period of Office: September 2016 to September 2020

Programme(s): BSc Psychology, BSc Applied Psychology,
BSc Psychology with Cognitive Neuroscience,
BSc Psychology with Sociology

Dr Gary Jones, Nottingham Trent University

Period of Office: September 2016 to November 2020

Programme(s): MSc Psychological Research Methods

College of Social Science, Arts and Humanities

School of Arts

Dr George Green, Lancaster University

Period of Office: September 2016 to November 2020

Programme(s): MA in Creative Writing

School of Business

Dr Michael Brannan, St Mary's University

Period of Office: September 2016 to September 2020

Programme(s): BSc Human Resource Management,
Professional Diploma in Management

Cont/...

Dr Pascal Frantz, London School of Economics

Period of Office: September 2016 to November 2020

Programme(s): MSc Finance, MSc Accounting and Finance,
MSc Management, Finance and Accounting (quantitative modules)

School of Education

Dr Anna Lise Gordon, St Mary's University

Period of Office: September 2016 to November 2020

Programme(s): PGCE Secondary – Modern Languages (core and Schools Direct)

Dr Sarah Younie, De Montfort University

Period of Office: September 2016 to December 2018*

Programme(s): MA Education: Learning and Teaching (CB and DL)

** NB course running out*

International Study Centre

Dr Guy Bingham, Loughborough University

Period of Office: September 2016 to September 2017 (extension)

Programme(s): International Foundation Year (Engineering, Technology and Science
stream)

Duration of Meeting: One Hour and Forty Five Minutes