

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

**Minutes of a meeting held on**  
**16 January 2017**

**Present:**

Professor J Scott (Chair)  
Dr A Cameron                      Dr E Clapp  
Dr F Deepwell                      Dr R Dickinson  
Mr G Green                          Dr C Jarvis  
Mrs L Masterman                      Mr A Mitchell  
Dr B Norman                          Ms C Taylor  
Dr G Wynn

**In attendance:** Ms E Bailey and Mr A Moseley (for item M08), Dr Mr Rawlinson (for item M07), Dr C Willmott (for M10) and Mr A Petersen (Secretary)

**Apologies for absence** were received from Professor H Atkinson, Ms L Freeman, Dr C Hewitt, Ms R Holland, and Dr D Lockett

**UNRESERVED BUSINESS**

**17/M01    DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were made.

**17/M02    MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Committee considered the minutes of the meeting that had taken place on 1 December 2016.

Subject to a minor typographic amendment in M118 the Committee **approved** the minutes as an accurate record.

**17/M03    MATTERS ARISING**

Arising from 16/M112 the Committee noted that the plagiarism training and guidance Working Group had commenced its work, and was due to present an action plan to the March meeting of the Committee.

Arising from 16/M114 the Committee noted that the draft templates to support the establishment of a single, consistent process for module evaluation across the institution were out for consultation with College Academic Committees.

Arising from 16/M116 the Committee noted that the Project Team for the USA MBChB Initiative was developing the timeline for submission for internal and external approval. The Committee noted that the development of this initiative would need to align with the approval of the new MBChB curriculum, and requested that Dr Norman work with both teams to ensure a co-ordinated approach.

Arising from 16/M117 the Committee considered revised Terms of Reference for the MOOC Review Group and the Learning Technologies Advisory Group. It was noted that the latter would report into the Student Experience Enhancement Group, and that this body had endorsed the revised Terms of Reference. The Committee approved the Terms of Reference and Membership of both groups.

**17/M04 CHAIR'S REPORT**

No items were raised.

**17/M05 CURRICULUM TRANSFORMATION**

The Committee received a verbal update from Dr Wynn on the Curriculum Transformation Project.

The Committee noted that the mapping of modules for the multiphase roll out of Curriculum Transformation was complete and a paper regarding the proposed solution for students on Pathway combinations would be presented to the upcoming meeting of the Pathways Steering Group. The Committee noted that the range of Sub Groups supporting the work of the Curriculum Transformation Working Group were all underway. In particular Dr Wynn reported that the Group considering the implementation of the new academic year structure had held its first meeting, and that a new sub group focussing on programme enhancement would be created.

**17/M06 LEARNING STRATEGY**

The Committee considered a series of documents regarding the implementation and monitoring of the Learning Strategy.

The Committee received a copy of the report to Council from November 2016 which represented a high level summary of the progress against the KPIs set out in the Learning Strategy. The Committee also considered a Strategic Implementation Plan which articulated in greater detail the progress, timeframe and accountabilities associated with individual projects that underpinned the delivery of the wider strategy. The Committee noted that it would consider the Strategic Implementation Plan on a termly basis as part of its responsibility for monitoring the implementation of the Learning Strategy. The Committee also agreed that it would be helpful for the documents to be circulated to the College Academic Committees for information.

The Committee considered a number of specific issues arising from the report:

- a) Actions to support the effective utilisation of the talents of teaching focussed staff

The Curriculum, Learning and Teaching Forum had commenced work in this area, and it was noted that staff of Teaching Focussed contracts formally had a proportion of their time given to undertaking pedagogic research. The Committee noted however that additional work could be undertaken in this area and agreed that a further mechanism would be for such colleagues to lead specific Task and Finish Groups in Colleges.

- b) How to measure the success of the new peer mentoring scheme

A Working Group had been established and would undertake an exercise to evaluate the experience of students who took part in the programme during 2016/17.

## c) Timeframe for the Development of an Assessment Strategy

The Assessment and Feedback Working Group was leading this piece of work. The development of the Strategy would be discussed at the upcoming Curriculum, Learning and Teaching Forum (31 January) and a high level principle document would be presented to the Committee by Easter 2017. The timeline for development of the strategy would be clarified with Dr Hewitt as Chair of the Group.

## d) Building Internationalisation and Sustainability into the curriculum

The Sustainability Sub Group of the Curriculum Transformation Project was supporting the embedding of these themes in revised curricula.

## e) Timeframe for the development of a Learning Spaces Strategy

Dr Deepwell was leading the development of strategy and high level implementation plan for submission to the Committee before the end of the 2016/17 academic year.

## f) Priorities for phase two of the Lecture Capture programme

The Committee noted that potential developments included consideration of the role of video within standard capture, however this would form part of a consultation on phase two development in the 2017/18 academic year.

## g) Establishment of a strategy and targets for developing use of online assessment and marking

This would be considered as part of the development of the Assessment Strategy (see c) above)

## h) How to approach a review the institutional approach toward student retention and non-continuation

The Committee noted that there were pockets of excellent activity in this area, however this would benefit from greater co-ordination and agreed that a Working Group should be set up to address this particular theme.

The Committee endorsed the overall process for the monitoring of strategic implementation, and agreed that this would be a regular item on future agendas.

17/M07 **STUDENT DISCIPLINE REVIEW**

The Committee considered the final report of the Student Discipline Working Group.

The Working Group had undertaken a detailed study of practice within the sector, and had taken account of external documentation such as the recently published UUK 'Changing the Culture' report. The latter in particular had highlighted the duty of care held by institutions to ensure that they have in place appropriate local measures to address issues of student misconduct, in addition to any criminal proceedings. The Committee noted that a series of regulatory changes had previously been approved for immediate implementation, and the final report of the Group included a range of recommendations regarding wider University processes, training and guidance in this area.

The Committee considered the recommendations within the report. In addition to the publication of clear information for students to contact regarding student conduct issues (1), it was recommended that work should be undertaken to embed a single, consistent process and a single central system for recording and following up upon the reporting of student conduct issues across the University (2-3). Further recommendations addressed the availability of guidance and training for staff in the area of student conduct, and the publication of information for students regarding these expectations, and the consequences of breaching them (4-6). The Committee **approved** Recommendations 1-6 within the paper.

The Committee considered Recommendation 7, which proposed using Security Office staff to support the work of Authorised Officers investigating cases of non-academic misconduct. The Committee noted that there was an opportunity to consider whether the role of Authorised Officer remained the most appropriate means of investigating allegations. It was noted that an alternative approach might be to develop a group of staff within the Professional Services as a dedicated resource for the purpose of investigating such cases, and who would work with academic and other Professional Services staff as appropriate. The Committee agreed that it would be helpful to explore this option, and therefore requested that Recommendation 7 be referred for further consideration, initially between the Dean of Students and the Academic Registrar.

The Committee noted that the report contained an emphasis upon misconduct within University premises and explored the issue of student conduct within the wider community. It was noted that there were a number of initiatives with local communities and with other institutions within the area to promote positive community relations. It was also noted that the recent revisions to Senate Regulation 11 expanded the definitions of misconduct to address these issues.

Following this, the Committee noted that the report did not contain specific reference to distance learning students. It was noted that same regulations and processes applied to all students of the University, however there were certain issues which may be more or less prevalent among different groups. The Committee agreed however that the development of supporting document, for example in the area of social media or other online practice could be tailored for DL students where appropriate.

The Committee wished to record its particular thanks to Professor John Goodwin for Chairing the initial Working Group, and to Angie Roberts for supporting its work.

#### 17/M08 **VIRTUAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

The Committee considered a report from the Working Group that had been established in January 2016 to consider the future requirements for the University's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) in line with the implementation of the Learning and Digital Strategies and the forthcoming end of the current provider contract.

The Working Group had undertaken a wide ranging and detailed consultation with stakeholders from across the University to establish the requirements for the VLE and had compared this list against a range of platforms in use across the sector to test the scope of possible provision against our current offer.

The Working Group had identified a number of key areas that would be required in the make up the overall digital learning environment. These included a single access portal, the core learning and teaching environment, tools to support assessment, marking and

feedback, storage of digital media and the provision of data and analytics. The Group had concluded that no single system among those reviewed was capable of delivering this full digital ecosystem, and that there were benefits to be gained from retaining a level of in-house approach to service provision, within which internal developers could work with external providers directly.

Arising from this detailed review the Group proposed that the University seek to procure a core learning and teaching system, however for other elements such as assessment, media storage, data and analytics could use separate systems integrated with the core module. It was proposed that all would be locally developed and maintained, or web hosted, thus removing the costs associated with managed hosting.

The Group recommended that procurement and development commence early in 2017, however, irrespective of the nature of the future provision, there should be a significant period of overlap with the current VLE, which would require an extension of the license agreement for a further period to September 2019. During this development period, students would be employed within departments to help migrate material. Any new system would be piloted in departments before the full switch over.

The Committee thanked the Group for the detailed work that had been undertaken and considered the recommendations in detail. The Committee considered whether the resources proposed for the project would be sufficient for delivery. The Group responded that the proposals represented a significant increase in IT development capacity and within the LLI team. Although it was noted that there were a number of variables which could impact upon the financial projections, the Committee agreed to endorse the full resource plan, noting however that elements may be revisited within future planning rounds in light of developing circumstances.

The Committee also noted that the projected launch date overlapped with that proposed for the new timetabling system, and that it would be essential to ensure sufficient development resource and co-ordination of both projects.

The Committee **approved** all of the recommendations within the report. The Committee requested that updates on the progress of the procurement, development and implementation be received regularly.

#### 17/M09 **TEACHING EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK**

The Committee considered a further draft of the Provider Submission to accompany the Teaching Excellence Framework metrics. The Committee noted that the document had been subject to significant further revision by the TEF Working Group, and that subject to further final amendments, was due to be submitted by 26 January.

The Committee noted that the document had been through several drafts in order to achieve the correct balance of evidence based statements and case studies. Members of the Committee made a number of minor technical recommendations, and noted that any further comments should be sent to the Academic Registrar by Friday 20 January.

The Committee noted that the submission would undergo further detailed internal review before final submission. The Committee expressed its particular thanks to the Chair and to the Academic Registrar for their significant input into the development of the submission.

**17/M10 REVIEW OF SENATE REGULATION 5**

The Committee considered a proposal for the Terms of Reference and Membership of the Task and Finish Group that would be established to review Senate Regulation 5 governing Undergraduate Programmes of Study. The Group would be chaired by Dr Chris Willmott, and the Committee noted that there was a balance of academic and Professional Services staff and students on the Group. Academic Directors were asked to nominate an academic member of staff to sit on the Group.

The Committee **approved** the Terms of Reference and membership for the Working Group.

The Committee noted that the Group would undertake its work over the first 6 months of 2017, with an initial consultation and evidence gathering phase followed by consideration of draft regulations in March 2017 for further consultation with College Academic Committees. Final revised regulations would be presented for approval by Senate in June 2017.

**17/M11 DL SURVEY**

The Committee received a summary of the output of the DL Survey which had been undertaken by the Flexible and Distance Learning Group in order to undertake an assessment of needs of distance learning students.

The Committee noted the key findings of the report which addressed students' motivation for study and their study patterns and their reflections on their experience of the University both in terms of their course and as part of the wider institutional community. The report highlighted that DL students did not appear to feel a strong sense of belonging to the University community, or be aware of the range of services available for DL students. The report recommended that the University develop its DL offer in this respect. This would be the focus of the Group going forwards and a half day summit was organised with the Students' Union, CDS, Student Support Services and other elements of the Professional Services to explore this theme.

**17/M12 PROGRAMME APPROVAL**

The Committee considered the report of the Programme Approval Panel that had considered the BA Ancient History on 9 December 2016.

The Panel had recommended approval of the programme subject to completion of a series of conditions. Subsequent to the Panel it had been agreed that approval could be granted before conditions were completed in full, on the basis of an action plan, and the Chair of the Committee had taken action to approve the programme for introduction in September 2018. The Committee approved the report and noted the Chair's action.

**17/M13 INTERNATIONAL STUDY CENTRE ACADEMIC MANAGEMENT BOARD**

The Committee received the minutes of the meeting of the ISC Academic Management Board held on 22 November 2016.

**17/M14 REPORTS FROM COLLEGE ACADEMIC COMMITTEES**

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

College of Science and Engineering, 30 November 2016

College of Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities, 6 December 2016

**17/M15 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 Health Sciences**

Professor Thozhukat Sathapalan, Hull York Medical School

Period of Office: September 2016 to November 2020

Programme(s): MSc/PGDip/PGCert Diabetes (DL)

**Department of Medical Education**

Dr Jon Dorling, University of Nottingham

Period of Office: September 2016 to November 2020

Programme(s): MRes Clinical Sciences

College of Science and Engineering

**Department of Chemistry**

Dr Alan Brisdon, University of Manchester

Period of Office: September 2016 to November 2020

Programme(s): MSc Chemical Research(Biological/Green/Physical)

College of Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities

**School of Law**

Professor Tonia Novitz, University of Bristol

Period of Office: September 2016 to November 2020

Programme(s): LLM Employment Law (DL)

**International Study Centre**

Ms Evelyn Sandra Leigh, University of Nottingham

Period of Office: September 2016 to November 2020

Programme(s): Academic English Skills (levels 3 and 4) for IFY and IY1

The Committee **noted** that Chair's action had been taken to approve the following external examiner appointments:

College of Science and Engineering

**Department of Physics and Astronomy**

Dr Jon Duffy, University of Warwick

Period of Office: September 2016 to September 2020

Programme(s): BSc/MPhys Physics, BSc/MPhys Physics with Astrophysics,  
BSc/MPhys Physics with Space Science,  
BSc/MPhys Physics with Nanotechnology,  
BSc/MPhys Physics with Planetary Science

DURATION OF MEETING: Two Hours