

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER
ACADEMIC POLICY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting held on
16 June 2017

Present:

Professor J Scott (Chair)
Professor H Atkinson Dr A Cameron
Dr E Clapp Dr F Deepwell
Dr Roger Dickinson Ms L Freeman
Mr G Green Mrs L Masterman
Mr A Mitchell Professor B Norman
Professor G Wynn

In attendance: Dr M Rawlinson and Mr J Donovan (for M97), Dr C Willmott (for M101), Ms Azza Abdulla and Mr A Petersen (Secretary)

Apologies for absence were received from Dr C Hewitt, Dr M Higgins, Dr C Jarvis, Dr D Lockett, Ms C Taylor and Dr R Young

UNRESERVED BUSINESS

17/M93 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were made.

17/M94 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Committee considered the minutes of the meeting that had taken place on 17 May 2017.

The Committee **approved** the minutes as an accurate record.

17/M95 **MATTERS ARISING**

Arising from M59 the Committee noted that the Chair would be working with Academic Directors and Directors of Learning and Teaching to analyse the data from the Guardian league table, particularly in the area of value added.

Arising from M60 the Committee noted that a revised Careers Strategy would be presented for consideration at the first meeting of the Committee in 2017/18.

Arising from M62 the Committee noted that the Assessment Strategy had been sent to College Academic Committees for consultation and feedback was being collated for consideration when the final strategy was presented to the July meeting of the Committee for approval.

Arising from M64 the Committee noted that the Lecture Capture Policy had been referred to the University legal team. In the event that no further amendments were required this policy would be approved by Chair's action. If amendments were required it would be brought back to the Committee for approval.

Arising from M68 the Committee noted that the procurement process for the software to support the new Module Evaluation policy was underway.

Arising from M69 the Committee noted that the Chair had considered the response to the initial tranche of conditions regarding the new programmes to be delivered through the Leicester International Institute, Dalian University of Technology, and had taken action on behalf of the Approval Panel and the Committee to approve their introduction. Recruitment had commenced to the BSc Chemistry and the BEng (Mechanical) for 2017.

17/M96 **CHAIR'S BUSINESS**

The Chair welcomed Dr Parry to his first meeting of the Committee in his current role of Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Digital). The Chair also welcomed Ms Abdulla noting that she would be replacing Alex Mitchell as Education Officer for the Students' Union and that the Committee looked forward to working with her.

The Chair also reported:

- That he had taken action on behalf of the Committee to approve minor amendments to Senate Regulation 2 regarding the process and timescale for transferring module and programme, arising from the changes to the new academic year structure and the Student Lifecycle Change Project.
- That he had taken action to approve the withdrawal of minors in Social Research in Practice, Deviance and Society and Leisure, Sport and Consumption.
- That a revised statement on data protection and the use of student data was under consideration by a sub-group of the Committee and would be submitted for approval by Chair's action shortly. The revised statement was in response to changes in the external regulatory landscape.
- That the Longitudinal Education Outcomes (LEO) data had been released which showed graduate salaries 1, 3 and 5 years post leaving University. This data set would be incorporated into KIS returns in future

17/M97 **STUDENT DISCIPLINE**

The Committee considered a report which summarised the ongoing implementation of the recommendations of the report following the review of student discipline processes. Dr Rawlinson, Dean of Students, presented the central elements of the report.

The Committee noted the range of students and staff members at the University that required, in some form, access to information regarding the expectations with regard to student conduct and the processes that underpinned the regulations in this area. There had also been a notable growth in recent years in the number of student discipline cases, particularly in the non-academic areas. Significant work had been undertaken to map the current student discipline processes which demonstrated the complexity of the process. The report highlighted the need for an expanded programme of guidance for all staff and training for those staff performing particular roles within the process. Due to the complexity of the process and the number of roles the report also identified the risk associated with colleagues not having oversight of the whole process. The report included a series of milestones and deliverables for the development of provision in this area. The report recommended that additional resource was required to be able to act as

a single point of contact with oversight of the whole range of discipline processes. This would include the provision of training to other key role holders.

The Committee welcomed the clear progress that had been made with the implementation of the recommendations arising from the original report. The Committee supported the proposals for enhanced training, and recommended that the team work with Dr Kate Williams with regard to the equalities aspects of this provision.

The Committee noted the volume of work proposed and agreed that it was an ambitious programme for the timescale set. The team agreed and noted that the immediate priorities would be the development of student facing guidelines on all aspects of conduct. The Committee welcomed this prioritisation and recommended that the team work closely with the Students' Union, the relevant strands of the Student Lifecycle Change Programme and Emma Stevens in the Division of Human Resources.

The Committee also agreed that it would need to be clear how the discipline regulations would be applied to all groups, including DL students and PGR students. Finally, it was noted that the outcome of discipline cases often required additional work to amend the relevant student record, and the Committee recommended that the team work with the Registry in this regard. The Committee also agreed that it would be helpful if the team was able to benchmark the overall number of discipline cases against the sector if possible.

The Committee acknowledged the recommendation that additional resource be provided to support the implementation of the above proposals. The Committee agreed that this should be raised with the Academic Registrar as part of the planning process.

The Committee considered the recommendation to amend Senate Regulation 11 governing student discipline to remove regulations 11.16 and 11.23. The Committee noted that these regulations duplicated information on processes outlined elsewhere in the regulations and added unnecessary complexity when articulating the lines of authority within individual cases. The Committee approved the proposal to delete regulations 11.16 and 11.23 with immediate effect, for submission to the upcoming meeting of Senate.

The Committee expressed its thanks to Dr Rawlinson and James Donovan for all of the work achieved to date.

17/M98 **MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES**

The Committee considered a revised Mitigating Circumstances Policy and associated amendments to Senate Regulation 7. Following initial consideration by the Committee in March 2017 the policy had been revised in line with feedback from the Committee and further engagement with stakeholders across the institution.

The Committee welcomed the revised wording of the policy and agreed that this addressed the issues raised previously. The Committee particularly welcomed the clear descriptions with regard to acceptable mitigating circumstances and evidence.

The Committee noted that extensive guidance would be required for all stakeholders across the University and training would be necessary for key role holders such as administrative staff and mitigating circumstances experts.

The Committee noted that as part of this implementation plan there would be ongoing engagement with students across the institution throughout the first year of delivery in order to get feedback and take further action where required. The Committee welcomed this commitment to continuous improvement. On a wider note, the Committee agreed that for the wide range of projects under development with relation to the student lifecycle, it was essential to ensure early and effective engagement with the student body, particularly through focus groups.

The Committee noted that the amendments to Senate Regulation 7 reflected the revised policy. Specific amendments included the removal of references to Mitigating Circumstances Panels and the inclusion of Mitigating Circumstances Experts, and amending the definition of mitigating circumstances to 'an unexpected serious or significant event affecting their health or personal life.' The remaining amendments clarified the wording of several sections and reflected the revised process for the submission and consideration of mitigating circumstances.

The Committee approved the revised mitigating circumstances policy for implementation in 2017/18 and endorsed the proposal amendments to Senate Regulation 7 for submission to the upcoming meeting of Senate.

The Committee also approved the recommendation that a review of the policy take place after a year of operation. Finally, the Committee approved the recommendation that the current position on self-certification for mitigating circumstances be retained, but that this may be reviewed in due course.

17/M99 **TEACHING EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK**

The Committee noted that the release of the outcomes of the Teaching Excellence Framework had been delayed due to the uncertainty following the recent General Election. Once received the outcome would be considered at a future meeting.

17/M100 **LEARNING STRATEGY**

The Committee considered an updated Strategic Implementation Plan for the Learning Strategy which articulated in greater detail the progress, timeframe and accountabilities associated with individual projects that underpinned the delivery of the wider strategy. The report set out a series of KPIs relating to individual strategy commitments.

The Committee considered the report and welcomed the progress with many of the projects listed. The Committee considered the potential procurement of a curriculum management tool. The Committee noted that it had been necessary to prioritise the amount of resource approved through the planning round and that on this occasion there was not sufficient resource to support this development. It remained an important project and would be taken forward at a later date.

The Committee noted that the reference to the timing for the introduction of the new VLE was based upon the original proposed timescale which had subsequently been moved. The project was still on track to meet the revised schedule.

The Committee noted that the full Learning Strategy would be reviewed over the course of the summer.

17/M101 **SENATE REGULATIONS**

a) Senate Regulation 5

The Committee considered a draft of the revised Senate Regulation 5 governing undergraduate programmes which had been informed by comments from the Committee and further input from the Working Group and relevant Professional Services.

The Committee welcomed the further development of the document. The Committee noted that the removal of the compensated pass category and the reduction in the number of permitted failed credits may potentially impact upon degree classification outcomes in some areas. The Committee acknowledged the concern raised however agreed that the current regulations were not aligned with the majority of the sector and the revisions proposed would address this issue. The Committee agreed that modelling should be undertaken to assess what the extent of the impact of the revised scheme would have been for past cohorts as an indication.

The Committee noted that it would be important to ensure that the new Regulations aligned with Senate Regulation with regard to the consideration of plagiarism penalties within progression and award decisions.

The Committee noted that there remained a small number of undergraduate distance learning programmes which would not adopt the new 15/30 credit structure immediately. These programmes had been permitted a short term deferral of curriculum transformation, but would undergo the process in due course. The Committee agreed that this issue should be considered outside of the meeting.

The Committee noted that the above along with comments received from academic departments would feed into a final draft of the regulation that would be presented to the July meeting of the Committee. If endorsed it would be submitted to the following meeting of Senate for final approval. The Committee noted that the regulations would be implemented for students commencing their studies in 2018/19.

b) Senate Regulation 8

The Committee considered a proposed amendment to Senate Regulation 8 to move to 3 examination sessions per day. The Committee noted that it was not proposed to extend the examination period to include Sundays.

A comprehensive modelling exercise had been undertaken to assess the requirements for future examination scheduling, and this had informed the proposal. It was noted that the later afternoon examination session would be used as a last resort, but created essential extra capacity to accommodate future requirements.

The Committee asked whether there were any circumstances under which a student might be required to undertake three examinations in one day. Modelling on the basis of the current year's data showed that this would not have occurred for the current cohort. While it was not possible to guarantee on this basis that initial scheduling would never propose three examinations in one day, the Committee noted that there were other options to mitigate this impact. Scheduling in January 2018 was likely to prove most challenging and the Committee noted that in this case there was the opportunity to extend the examination period if necessary.

The Committee agreed that it would be helpful if the wording of the regulation could be clarified to state that there would be three examination start times in a day, so as to avoid giving the impression that this was a likely scenario. Subject to this amendment, the Committee endorsed the proposal for submission to the upcoming meeting of Senate and implementation for 2017/18..

17/M102 **ANNUAL DEVELOPMENTAL REVIEW**

The Committee considered a summary report on the output of the Annual Developmental Review process for taught postgraduate programmes for 2015/16. The Committee noted that all ADRs had been reviewed at College level committees and a number of issues for consideration had been identified for action. The summary document set out areas of good practice which were highlighted for further dissemination. The document also set out a number of areas that had been referred to the Committee from the Colleges for further consideration and action as appropriate.

The Committee welcomed the many elements of good practice identified through the reports. The Committee considered the following specific issues raised through the reports:

The Committee noted comments from the College of Medicine, Biological Sciences and Psychology regarding the provision of learning technologies at some off-site locations. The Committee agreed that these issues should be raised with IT Services and asked that the Quality Office arrange the necessary consultation between the programme team, Professional Services and the Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Digital).

The Committee noted comments from the College of Social Science, Arts and Humanities regarding the functionality of the current VLE. The Committee agreed that the process of renewing the VLE should address the points raised but acknowledged that the timescale for renewal may impact upon the refreshing of materials in the interim. The Committee asked that the Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Digital) and the College Academic Director work with the departments to clarify the issues raised and the possible support required.

The Committee noted further comments from the College of Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities relating to the operation of Senate Regulation 6 governing taught postgraduate programmes. It was noted that the College would be compiling a report of the points raised for consideration early in the new academic year and submission to APC if required.

The Committee noted comments from the College of Science and Engineering regarding the provision of different teaching aids in various rooms. The Committee noted that this issue should be addressed through the implementation of the new Learning Spaces Strategy.

17/M103 **PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT, APPROVAL AND WITHDRAWAL**

- a) Programme Approval Panel reports
 - i) Bolt-on industrial placement for MSc programmes in CSE

The Committee considered the report of the Programme Approval Panel that had taken place on 18 May 2017 considered the introduction of a standardised model for the operation of industrial placements in MSc programmes in the College of

Science and Engineering. The Committee welcomed the development, noting that it expanded the successful model already achieved at undergraduate level.

The Committee considered the issue referred by the Panel regarding the overall ownership and strategic management of placement provision at the University. The Committee noted that the expansion of placement provision was part of the Learning Strategy and a University wide approach to the strategic management of this growth would be critical. This issue was under consideration in conjunction with the Career Development Service in order to develop this approach. The Committee agreed that it would be helpful if the Leicester Learning Institute could be involved in this process.

The Committee approved the report and authorised the Chair of the Panel to approve the bolt-on model for introduction subject to receipt of a satisfactory response to the other conditions in the report.

ii) MSc Entrepreneurship suite of programmes

The Committee considered the report of the Programme Approval Panel that had taken place on 17 May 2017 to consider the introduction of a new suite of MSc programmes in the area of Entrepreneurship. The Committee welcomed the development. The Committee **approved** the report and **authorised** the Chair of the Panel to approve the programmes for introduction, subject to receipt of a satisfactory response to those conditions set in the report.

iii) MSc Economics, MSc Forecasting and Economic Analysis

The Committee considered the report of the Programme Approval Panel that had taken place on 5 May 2017 to consider major amendments to the MSc Economics programme and the introduction of a new MSc Forecasting and Economic Analysis. The Panel noted that the conditions set by the Panel were largely technical in nature, but approval of the business case for the programmes had been delayed. The Committee **approved** the report and **authorised** the Chair of the Panel to approve the programmes for introduction, subject to approval of the business case by University Portfolio Management Group and receipt of a satisfactory response to the other conditions set.

b) Proposal for the award of a Juris Doctor at level 6

The Committee considered a proposal from the School of Law to develop a programme which would lead to the award of a Juris Doctor (JD) at level 6 of the FHEQ. The Committee noted that this would be a graduate entry programme and the new title was designed to be more attractive to North American students where Juris Doctor was a well recognised award. However, it was noted that Juris Doctor did not exist as an award on the FHEQ and there were no other precedents for this award within the UK Higher Education sector

The Committee noted the potential market value of this development, but agreed that substantive market research had not been provided with the proposal to indicate the scale of the potential benefit. It was also noted that the team were already proposing a LLB (JD pathway) which was an approach that had already been adopted elsewhere in the sector. The Committee agreed that given the JD

was not a recognised qualification on the FHEQ it would not be appropriate to develop this at this time.

The Committee did not approve the proposal to create a Juris Doctor award at level 6. The Committee agreed that it would be helpful to raise the potential for developing such an award with the QAA to establish whether this may be possible in the future.

c) Proposal for the establishment of a PGCE with 90 M level credits

The Committee considered a proposal to establish a new structure for the Postgraduate Certificate in Education. The current programme consisted of 60 M level credits and 60 credits at bachelors level. It was proposed that the PGCE should include 90 credits at M level rather than 60, through the inclusion of a new module in Reflective Practice in Education. If students successfully passed all 90 credits at M level it was proposed that they should then be allowed to transfer these into a new Masters in Education programme under development within the School, via Accredited Prior Learning.

The Committee noted that this practice was growing within the sector and would allow the School to maintain its position as a provider of competitive and high quality initial teacher training and develop its position in the provision of further professional development for teachers.

The Committee noted that this would require a dispensation from both Senate Regulation 6 governing taught postgraduate programmes, and also from the Policy on the Accreditation of Prior Learning with regard to the maximum number of credits that could be considered via APL.

The Committee approved the proposal, but agreed that the relevant Programme Approval Panel be requested to scrutinise the proposed scheme of assessment for the 90 credit PGCE to ensure that it remained as consistent as possible with the wider scheme of assessment at taught postgraduate level.

d) Withdrawal of MA Historical Archaeology (DL)

The Committee considered a proposal to withdraw the MA Historical Archaeology by distance learning. Recruitment to the programme was low and the Committee noted that remaining students would be fully supported throughout the teach out period. The final intake would be June 2017. The Committee approved the withdrawal of the programme.

17/M104 **COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS MANAGEMENT GROUP**

The Committee received the minutes of the meeting of the Collaborative Partnerships Management Group that had taken place on 2 June 2017.

The Committee noted that the Group had recommended that Academic Policy Committee consider the route for the receipt of reports from the Joint Academic Committee for the new Leicester International Institute, Dalian University of Technology. The Committee agreed that the reports should go first to CPMG and then feed through to APC.

The Chair also highlighted that work was underway to review the current student and staff status categories within the University IT and other records systems. The development of collaborative partnerships and the growth of CPD provision had demonstrated a need for greater granularity in terms of the access that could be granted to different student and staff groups, particularly in terms of IT and Library access.

The Committee noted that the Group had considered an initial paper outlining various aspects of a potential franchising model in terms of risk factors and the responsibilities of the University with regards to management and quality assurance. The Committee noted that the University Leadership Team had agreed that the potential for franchising should be explored, however further noted that significant work would be required in terms of establishing an effective model for the management of such partnerships. The Committee also noted that franchising was a high risk form of collaboration.

A paper on validation and franchising would be considered by the Committee at its meeting in July.

17/M105 STUDENT EXPERIENCE ENHANCEMENT GROUP

The Committee received the minutes of the meeting of the Student Experience Enhancement Group that had taken place on 30 June 2017.

17/M106 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, 24 May 2017

College of Science and Engineering, 23 May 2017

College of Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities, 6 June 2017

Arising from the report of the College of Medicine, Biological Sciences and Psychology, the Committee noted comments relating to the assessment of students undertaking English Language programmes. The Committee agreed that the wording of the request was unclear and requested that the Academic Director for the College raise this issue with the English Language Teaching Unit and report back as may be necessary.

17/M07 THANKS

The Committee wished to record its thanks to members whose terms were ending for their contribution to the work of the Committee over the 2016/17 academic year. In particular the Committee wished to record its thanks to Alex Mitchell for his representation on behalf of the Students' Union throughout this period.

The Chair also thanked Dr Young and Dr Higgins for their input over the course of the year and noted that they would cease to be members of the Committee, following the reorganisation of the portfolio under Dr Ross Parry, Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Digital).

17/M108 APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

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

College of Medicine, Biological Sciences and Psychology

Department of Health Sciences

Professor Nick Sevdalis, Kings College London

Period of Office: September 2017 to November 2021

Programme(s): MSc Quality and Safety in Healthcare

Department of Medical Education

Mr Mark Deakin, Keele University (Royal Stoke University Hospital)

Period of Office: September 2017 to August 2021

Programme(s): MBChB (Phase 2)

College of Social Science, Arts and Humanities

School of Business

Dr James Cronin, Lancaster University

Period of Office: September 2017 to November 2021

Programme(s): MSc Marketing, MSc Marketing for Creative Industries

Dr Caroline Oates, University of Sheffield

Period of Office: September 2017 to November 2021

Programme(s): MSc Marketing, MSc International Marketing

School of History, Politics and International Relations

Dr Richard Goddard, University of Nottingham

Period of Office: September 2017 to September 2021

Programme(s): BA History, BA History and Archaeology, BA History and Politics,
BA History and American Studies

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

College of Medicine, Biological Sciences and Psychology

Department of Neuroscience, Psychology and Behaviour

Dr Bernadka Bubicka, University of Manchester

Period of Office: September 2016 to November 2017

Programme(s): MSc Child and Adolescent Mental Health

College of Science and Engineering

Department of Geography

Professor Richard Harris, University of Bristol

Period of Office: September 2016 to November 2017

Programme(s): MSc Geographical Information Systems (incl with Industry),
MSc Environmental Informatics, MRes Geography

College of Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities

School of Business

Professor Pauline Gleadle, University of Westminster
Period of Office: September 2017 to November 2018
Programme(s): MSc International Marketing

Duration of meeting: