

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

**Minutes of a meeting held on**  
**17 May 2017**

**Present:**

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

**In attendance:** Mr R Fryer (for M60) and Mr A Petersen (Secretary)

**Apologies for absence** were received from Ms L Freeman, Dr M Higgins, Ms R Holland, Dr C Jarvis and Dr D Lockett

**UNRESERVED BUSINESS**

**17/M56 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were made.

**17/M57 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Committee considered the minutes of the meeting that had taken place on 20 April 2017.

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

**17/M58 MATTERS ARISING**

No matters arising were identified that were not covered elsewhere within the agenda.

**17/M59 CHAIR'S BUSINESS**

The Chair reported that the University would receive the outcome of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) submission on 12 June, with sector wide outcomes being released on 14 June. The judgement, a justification, supporting data and the individual submission would all be published for each institution.

The Chair also reported that the University had risen to 43<sup>rd</sup> in the recently published Guardian League Table. Although this represented an improvement the outcome still demonstrated areas where further work was required. In particular the Chair noted that the value added calculation for students of the University was lower than some peer institutions, and he would be working with departments to analyse the data and identify actions that could be taken in response.

**17/M60 CAREERS STRATEGY**

The Committee considered a paper from the Career Development Service regarding the development of the University Careers Strategy for the period 2017-2020, introduced by the Director of Careers. Despite significant progress in recent years, all institutions were investing heavily in the employability agenda and significant further work would be required to improve UoL's overall position within this competitive environment. The paper presented the underpinning principles that would guide the development of the revised strategy. It focussed upon three core elements; 'In Curriculum', 'In Timetable' and 'In Market'.

The Committee welcomed the development, noting that it was critical in terms of supporting students to engage with professional development activities over the course of their studies. The Committee noted that the upcoming changes to the DELHE survey meant that students would be surveyed 15 months post-graduation. The Committee agreed that it would be necessary to consider how the University might continue to engage with and support students for a longer period post-graduation, in light of this.

The Committee agreed that it was important that the strategy align with wider strategic themes under development across the institution, particularly the digital campus, and recommended that the team work with the Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Digital) in this regard. The Committee also recommended that the team reconsider the strap line for the strategy in order to ensure that it reflected the wider audience for the strategy.

In considering the audience for the strategy the Committee noted that it would be important to strike an appropriate balance between establishing a single scalable model, whilst also accommodating the needs of particular groups. It was noted in particular that DL students would be unlikely to engage with Careers services in the same manner and that some courses such as Medicine or Education had their own statutory requirements for professional development. The Committee agreed that certain groups might require a greater level of support to develop engagement and aspiration and therefore it was essential that the strategy supported tailored interventions in such areas.

The Committee noted that there remained in some areas a risk that academic and transferable skills were viewed as being separate, rather than integrated within the overall learning experience. The Committee agreed that the development of a strategy which clearly sought to embed professional development within academic provision was a welcome step, but it would be essential to engage with academic and Professional Services across the University to ensure its success.

The Committee supported the broad framework set out in the paper and endorsed this for further development. The Committee noted that a strategic implementation plan would be worked up shortly and this, along with a full strategy document, would be presented for consideration in the Autumn Term.

**17/M61 ACADEMIC APPEALS AND STUDENT COMPLAINTS**

The Committee considered a report which summarised the number and nature of academic appeals and student complaints received in the 2015/16 academic year, and also the number of cases that had been referred to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA).

The Committee noted the overall number of appeals received which had shown a slight increase due largely to greater number of undergraduate degree classification appeals received in midsummer 2016. The introduction of an internal review within the Quality Office had dramatically reduced the number of appeals proceeding to a Panel. Students could now request a review of an appeal outcome and this had led to an increased workload, however only a very small percentage of review requests resulted in a different outcome.

The Committee was pleased to note the very small number of student complaints that proceeded to the formal stages, which indicated that local resolution of issues was often effective. The Committee considered the summary of those cases which had been referred to the OIA, which demonstrated relatively low numbers progressing to this stage. The Committee noted the ongoing issue with the OIA categorisation of institutions which did not take account of UoL's overseas distance learning provision. The Committee also noted that the largest volume of OIA cases related to academic status, typically arising from academic appeals. This further emphasised that the processes in place for the local resolution of complaints appeared robust.

The Committee explored some of the issues arising from the report in the area of academic appeals. The Committee agreed that the current regulations regarding extensions to registration where students were eligible for re-sits or re-submissions should be reviewed to ensure that students had appropriate opportunities to achieve their intended qualification. The Committee also noted comments regarding the importance of producing factual and detailed departmental reports to support the effective consideration of academic appeals. The Committee endorsed the Quality Office to take this forwards with academic departments.

#### 17/M62 **ASSESSMENT STRATEGY**

The Committee considered a draft Assessment Strategy, Self-Assessment tool and Assessment Variety checklist that had been developed by the Assessment and Feedback Task and Finish Group of the Curriculum Transformation Project.

Working from the commitments in the University Learning Strategy, the Strategy articulated a series of design principles that should underpin the assessment of students. These were accompanied by a series of priorities to demonstrate how the commitments would be delivered. These included embedding these requirements within programme development processes, regular auditing of assessment practice and bringing together the range of resources currently available to support good assessment practice.

The Committee welcomed the document and commended in particular the self-assessment tool as a means of supporting programme teams to take a holistic view of assessment across programmes. The Committee welcomed the commitment to reduce assessment to the sector average, but felt that this could be more effectively expressed within the document.

The Committee agreed that the first commitment should make a clear reference to the design of assessment in a manner which facilitated constructive feedback. The Committee considered whether the strategy should provide guidelines on the volume of assessment that was appropriate with regard to credit value. The team responded that this had been considered, however it was felt that the range of disciplinary difference was such that this was better done at College level, and there were already guidelines

available to this effect. The Committee supported this but agreed that it would be helpful for the strategy to highlight the importance of linking assessment volume to the amount of time required to undertake it, rather than simply a wordcount.

The Committee noted in particular the value of the assessment variety checklist as a tool for new programme design, but also agreed that it would be helpful to consider how this might be included with annual and periodic review processes.

The Committee endorsed the draft strategy and agreed that, subject to the above considerations, it should be circulated for consultation via College Academic Committees at the next available meetings. The strategy should then be submitted to the July meeting of APC for final approval and subsequent reporting to Senate.

#### 17/M63 **LEARNING SPACES STRATEGY**

The Committee considered a draft Learning Spaces Strategy. The development directly supported the commitment in the University Learning Strategy to imagine and advocate for a teaching estate that supported the wider strategic vision.

The strategy provided a clear direction for the development and use of learning space in the physical estate. It sought to provide overarching principles and guidance, and establish a shared understanding between all internal and external stakeholders as to the principles that should guide the design of learning spaces, emphasising effective partnership between academic and Professional Services staff to achieve this aspiration. It provided a definition of various spaces and addressed the theme of manifesting concepts from the digital agenda into the physical estate. Once finalised, the Strategy would be supported by a series of more detailed operational and implementation documents which would demonstrate how the principles articulated would be applied to specific projects within current and future capital works.

The Committee welcomed the draft strategy. The Committee agreed in particular that it should be made clear from the outset that the strategy related to all University learning space, regardless of whether it was centrally or locally administered. The Committee noted the reference to specialist teaching requirements and agreed that it would be important for the underpinning guidance to address this particular theme in more detail. The Committee also agreed that it was important to ensure that the language of the strategy and supporting documents was appropriately accessible for the various intended audiences and recommended developing executive summary documents that could be used for various internal stakeholders and external contractors.

The Committee explored the issue of electronic assessment within the context of the strategy. It was noted that the large PC rooms would not be sufficient to accommodate static computer based assessment for the largest cohorts. The Committee agreed that this was an opportunity to consider the role of personal devices in electronic assessment, and how this may impact on space usage going forwards.

The Committee thanked the team for the development of the Strategy. Subject to the points above, the Committee approved the Strategy. The Committee agreed that the implementation documents outlined above should be drawn up and circulated with the Strategy to College Academic Committees for information, in the Autumn term.

**17/M64 LECTURE CAPTURE**

The Committee received an update on the implementation and use of the Reflect Lecture Capture system in the 2016/17 academic year.

The Committee noted that levels of student usage of Lecture Capture over the course of semester 1, which demonstrated 25.7 views of material per student, and an average of 6.2 hours viewed by each student. The Committee noted that a full evaluation of 2016/17 would be presented to its meeting in September 2017 drawing upon a range of sources including student and staff feedback and an analysis of service desk and other support requests. The Committee noted the visual presentation of the evaluation with the papers and agreed that it would be helpful to replicate this for future evaluations.

The Committee noted that Phase 2 of the Reflect Project was under development, and this included issues such as capture of writing on boards, expansion of the number of rooms able to capture lectures and the ability of students to upload recordings. The Committee agreed that as part of the Phase 2 development it would be helpful to confirm the institutional policy with regard to the requirement or otherwise for video recording.

The Committee considered proposed minor amendments to the Reflect Lecture Capture Policy. The Committee noted that these were to reflect changes to the governance structure for Lecture Capture and minor amendments to wording to reflect more appropriate terminology. The Committee endorsed the amendments, but agreed that these should be subject to legal review before final approval by the Committee.

**17/M65 EXTERNAL EXAMINERS' REPORTS**

The Committee considered a report from a meeting of the Chair and the College Academic Directors which had reviewed all of the reports from External Examiners for taught postgraduate programmes in the 2015/16 academic year.

As in previous years, the reports confirmed that the Committee and Senate could have confidence in the standards of the University's awards and the operation of the external examining process. The reports also noted that the quality of the learning opportunities for students were at an appropriate level and identified many examples of good practice. Where comments related to departmental level provision reports from the relevant departments indicated that appropriate action was being taken in response. The Committee noted that there were no issues arising from the reports for further action by the Committee.

**17/M66 CURRICULUM TRANSFORMATION**

The Committee received a verbal update from Professor Wynn regarding the Curriculum Transformation project.

The Committee noted that the first submissions for Curriculum Transformation were due by 31 May. Programme teams had been provided with a new dataset demonstrating student registrations on modules and the assessment variety checklist referenced under M62 above to further inform their submissions. The Project Team was also developing guidelines for teams with regard to marketing of programmes during the transformation period, and guidelines for approval bodies considering transformation submissions.

**17/M67 SENATE REGULATION 8**

The Committee considered a proposal for a minor amendment to Senate Regulation 8 governing examinations.

The revised text confirmed that the examination timetable would be issued 4 weeks in advance of the January and May examination windows, however given the condensed period between the latter and the new re-assessment window in early August, it would not be possible to maintain the 4 week publication date at this point. The Committee noted that the text of this amendment incorporated feedback from Senate, and was intended to clarify that the 4 week publication period would still be observed for the other examination windows.

The Committee endorsed the amendment to Senate Regulation 8.3 and noted that this would be submitted to the meeting of Senate in June 2017 for final approval.

**17/M68 MODULE EVALUATION PROJECT**

The Committee received an update regarding the progress of the Module Evaluation Project. Dr Cameron, Project Lead, reported that a pilot would run for over 60 modules in semester 2 of the 2016/17 academic year, using the EvaSys system.

The project team had been engaging with other institutions that had implemented the EvaSys system. As a result of this and other work the Project Board had identified a number of themes that would need to be addressed at institutional level to support effective implementation. These included taking the time to ensure effective institutional infrastructure in both systems and personnel terms to support the management of a University wide module administration process. The report also highlighted the importance of data quality and local buy-in. The report highlighted a number of work streams underway to support development and implementation. The Committee noted in particular that a Code of Practice for Module Evaluation would be developed for consideration in 2017/18.

**17/M69 PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT, APPROVAL AND WITHDRAWAL****a) Collaborative Educational Institute with Dalian University of Technology**

The Committee received the final report of the Programme Approval Panel that had considered the introduction of three new programmes within the new Leicester International Institute, Dalian University of Technology, which had taken place on 5 April. The report had been previously approved by the Chair. The Committee noted that work was underway to address the range of conditions and recommendations

The Committee agreed that the format of the report and range of issues covered was a helpful tool to inform the development of future collaborative developments.

The Committee noted that the issue of access to facilities for students and staff through collaborative arrangements was complex, particularly with reference to licensing. The Committee noted that the Collaborative Partnerships Management Group would be considering this issue at its upcoming meeting.

## b) Withdrawal of the MSc Child and Adolescent Mental Health

The Committee considered a proposal to withdraw the MSc Child and Adolescent Mental Health programme. The Committee noted that recruitment to the programme had already been suspended and that there was only a small number of students remaining on the programme. Provision would be made to ensure that all students were able to complete the programme within the period of registration available.

The Committee approved the withdrawal of the programme with immediate effect.

## c) PGCert Academic and Professional Practice

The Committee considered a proposal to extend the maximum period of registration for the PGCert in Academic and Professional Practice to 30 months on the basis that learners on the programme were staff members and the additional period of registration would allow them to more effectively balance their professional and study commitments.

The Committee supported the proposal in principle, but noted that the circumstances of learners on this programme were similar to the majority of distance or part time learners. The Committee approved the amendment to the registration period and agreed that it would be necessary to identify whether other similar programmes should also be considered for an extended registration period in light of this.

17/M70 **COLLEGE ACADEMIC COMMITTEES**

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

College of Medicine, Biological Sciences and Psychology, 26 April 2017

College of Science and Engineering, 26 April 2017

College of Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities, 2 May 2017

17/M71 **RISK MANAGEMENT**

The Committee considered an extract from the Corporate Risk Register which set out a series of risks which fell within the area of learning, teaching and academic policy. Each risk area had an individual owner, and the Chair reported that the Committee had been asked to consider its role in monitoring the risks.

The Committee noted that although many of the themes within the extract were relevant to the Committee it was not clear what specific role it would undertake in the process of monitoring. The Committee agreed that it could, in principle, act as body to monitor these, however agreed that it would be helpful to give more detailed consideration to how this might be achieved, at a future meeting.

17/M72 **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 Neuroscience, Psychology and Behaviour**

Dr Bernadka Dubicka, University of Manchester

Period of Office: September 2017 to December 2018

Programme(s): MSc Child and Adolescent Mental Health

College of Science and Engineering

**Department of Engineering**

Professor Asa Barber, University of Portsmouth

Period of Office: September 2017 to November 2021

Programme(s): MSc Advanced Mechanical Engineering, MSc Advanced Engineering  
Master of Engineering Management, MSc Advanced Materials  
Engineering

College of Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities

**School of Business**

Professor Nigel Morgan, Swansea University

Period of Office: September 2017 to November 2021

Programme(s): MSc Marketing (Incl DL), MSc International Marketing,  
MSc Marketing for the Creative Industries, MSc Marketing for Places  
and Tourism

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

College of Medicine, Biological Sciences and Psychology

**School of Biological Sciences**

Professor Graham Scott, University of Hull

Period of Office: September 2016 to September 2017

Programme(s): Foundation Year in Biological Sciences

**Department of Neuroscience, Psychology and Behaviour**

Dr Tom Pike, University of Lincoln

Period of Office: September 2017 to Spetember 2021

Programme(s): BSc Biological Sciences (Zoology)

Cont/...

College of Science and Engineering

**Department of Mathematics**

Professor Qiwei Yao, London School of Economics

Period of Office: September 2017 to November 2021

Programme(s): BSc Mathematics programmes (Statistics),  
MSc Data Analysis for Business Intelligence

College of Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities

**School of Media, Communication and Sociology**

Mrs Emma Wood, Queen Margaret University

Period of Office: September 2016 to November 2020

Programme(s): MA Media and Public Relations (CB and DL)

Professor Karen Ross, Newcastle University

Period of Office: September 2016 to November 2017 (exceptional fifth year)

Programme(s): MA Mass Communications

DURATION OF MEETING: Two Hours