

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

**Minutes of a meeting held on  
7 April 2016**

**Present:**

Professor J Scott (Chair)	
Professor A Cashmore	Dr F Deepwell
Ms T Dodman	Professor S Hainsworth
Ms R Holland	Dr C Jarvis
Dr D Lockett	Mrs L Masterman
Dr R Norman	Ms L Patrick
Dr G Wynn	

**In attendance:** Dr L Matthews (for M33) and Mr A Petersen (Secretary)

**Apologies for absence** were received from Dr R Dickinson, Ms L Freeman, Mr G Green, Dr R Parry and Ms C Taylor

**UNRESERVED BUSINESS**

16/M27 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were made.

16/M28 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Committee considered the minutes of the meeting held on 18 February 2016.

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

16/M29 **MATTERS ARISING**

Arising from M18 the Committee noted that the Working Group reviewing English Language entry requirements had a series of meetings over the summer term with final recommendations due to be presented to the Committee in June 2016.

Arising from M19 the Committee noted that the full report of the QAA Higher Education Review for the University was due to be published in the week commencing 25 April 2016.

Arising from M23 the Committee noted that Louise Masterman would be co-ordinating the process of reviewing the APC substructure and that members would be contacted regarding this shortly. The Committee also noted that the inaugural Learning and Teaching Forum would take place on 15 June at College Court.

16/M30 **CHAIR'S REPORT**

The Chair welcomed Dr Wynn to his first meeting of the Committee, noting that he was joining in his capacity as Academic Lead for the Curriculum Transformation Project.

The Chair reported that he was sitting on the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) Advisory Board considering the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF). He reported that at a recent meeting of the Board the proposed metrics were discussed in detail, however there was no indication that these would be altered significantly. The Board also discussed the contextual information that institutions would be able to provide in support of their submissions.

The Chair reported that the NSS response rate for the institution was generally strong and in line with the national average. In support of this the Chair also reported that in the future departments would be required to add a 'You Said, We Did' entry into departmental handbooks to demonstrate how feedback from students informed the delivery and assessment of programmes.

#### 16/M31 **PERSONAL TUTORING WORKING GROUP**

The Committee received an update from Lily Patrick regarding the work of the Personal Tutoring Working Group. The Working Group had agreed the following core recommendations for development of the Personal Tutor system:

- a) Completion of an online training course to be made compulsory for all personal tutors;
- b) Production of a one page signposting document for personal tutors to direct students for support, and an equivalent document for students to identify sources of support;
- c) The recording of student engagement with personal tutors and the outputs of this to be built into the Student Lifecycle Change Programme;
- d) An extensive review of the Code of Practice for the Personal Support of Students to reflect the above and to include the creation of a small number of Senior Personal Tutor roles to provide an additional level of support.

The Committee welcomed the progress that had been made to date and noted that final proposals, including revisions to the Code of Practice for the Personal Support of Students, would be presented to the May meeting of the Committee.

#### 16/M32 **CURRICULUM TRANSFORMATION PROJECT**

- a) Update on the Project

The Committee received an update on the Curriculum Transformation project from Dr Wynn. The Committee noted that following meetings of the Working Group a number of additional points of clarification had been identified which were referred to the Committee for confirmation.

These points included the introduction of an initial teaching free week for all undergraduate first years and option for a teaching free week for postgraduate and returning undergraduate students at the discretion of the department. It was also proposed that where programmes had complex curricula arising from significant accreditation or pre-requisite requirements an application could be made to the Working Group for phased introduction of the changes, however this would be on an exceptional basis. A number of other small clarifications regarding the process for shared content,

engagement with students through the process, rules for students who repeated their studies and the process for considering variation in re-assessment practice were also proposed. The Committee **approved** the amendments to the scope document.

The Committee considered a number of proposed amendments to the Terms of Reference for the Working Group and the Steering Group, which had arisen from meetings of the Working Group. The amendments related to the introduction of enhanced provision to embed employability skills and the development of a more efficient curriculum through greater sharing of content. The amendments also specifically referenced the introduction of a reduction in overall assessment load to the sector benchmark for the discipline and an increase, where possible in technology enabled assessment.

The Committee noted that there would be significant departmental variation in addressing each of the themes, however Dr Wynn emphasised that the process of curriculum transformation would be undertaken on a programme by programme basis, with the particular circumstances and requirements in each area taken into consideration as far as possible.

The Committee approved the amendments to the Terms of Reference for the Working Group and the Steering Group, subject to the minor amendment of replacing the percentage associated with technology enhanced assessment with a 'major increase'. The Committee also agreed that, in addition, the Terms of Reference should include a reference to the University Learning Strategy, and that an additional point should be included to demonstrate that an overarching principle of the transformation project would be to both protect and enhance the student experience.

b) Approval processes for Curriculum Transformation

The Committee considered a proposal for the approval of programmes going through the curriculum transformation process. The proposals were designed to be sufficiently robust to meet the requirements articulated in the Code of Practice on Programme Development, Approval and Modification, whilst also being proportionate to the extent of the change proposed for individual programmes. Externality would be achieved through a review by either the current External Examiner or appointment of an additional external advisor, depending on the scale of the change proposed.

The Committee noted that departments would receive support from the Leicester Learning Institute and Quality Office in preparing for the major changes and the proposed approval processes were based on the assumption that they had accessed support as appropriate and departmental approval mechanisms had taken place prior to formal approval at University level.

The Committee welcomed the proposals and agreed that this represented a robust framework which would ensure that the appropriate level of scrutiny was applied to individual proposals. The Committee approved the approval framework set out in the document, noting that it would be important to define for departments precisely what constituted minor assessment changes. The Committee noted that additional notes of guidance for departments completing the forms would be produced in due course and that the Quality Office would work with Dr Wynn to agree a definition for minor assessment changes to be incorporated within this guidance.

The Committee considered the supporting documentation which included a new draft module specification. The Committee noted that this had been developed in close consultation with the LLI and made more explicit the mapping of ILOs against assessment methods, and also made clear where transferable skills were both developed and assessed. The Committee made a number of recommendations for clarity within the form and the Chair agreed to review the document in light of these before final circulation.

**16/M33 HEA FELLOWSHIPS PROGRESS**

The Committee considered a report from the Leicester Learning Institute (LLI) outlining the current number of staff within the institution holding an Academic Teaching Qualification (ATQ), and the number of staff currently going through the submission process.

The Committee noted that the rate of submission and HEA accreditation had increased significantly in the past 5 months however the institution was still significantly short of the target set of 90% of staff holding ATQ by December 2017.

The Committee welcomed the progress so far however noted that further work was required and considered the recommendations for action set out in the paper. The Committee supported proposals for kick-start events in departments, celebration of success to date and for using colleagues who had recently been through the process as mentors. The Committee also approved the introduction of more formal measures as listed in the report with reference to the inclusion of requirements relating to ATQ in appointment and appraisal processes. Finally, the Committee agreed a minor amendment to the recommendations to confirm that TEF schemes would only be open to colleague who either held or were in the process of applying for ATQ.

The Committee noted that the role of Head of Department was critical in encouraging colleagues to apply for ATQ and ensuring that they had sufficient time to do so, and that this would be emphasised at the next meeting of the University Executive Board.

**16/M34 SUMMARY REPORT ON UNDERGRADUATE EXTERNAL EXAMINERS' REPORTS**

The Committee considered a report from a meeting of the Chair and the Academic Directors of the Colleges which had reviewed all of the reports from External Examiners for undergraduate programmes in the 2014/15 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.

It was noted that where comments related to departmental level provision reports from the relevant departments indicated that appropriate action was being taken in response. The summary report identified a small number of issues where further University guidance or policy development was required.

The Committee noted that the points raised regarding the operation of borderlines within the scheme of assessment would be addressed through the upcoming review of Senate Regulation 5 and that a review of the operation of mitigating circumstances regulations was also planned.

The Committee considered the points raised regarding the opportunities for external examiners to meet students, the management of the relationship between the department and its external examiners, and the format for departmental responses to external examiners' reports. The Committee agreed that all of these factors should be picked up through the provision of additional guidance to departments regarding the operation of the external examining system.

The Committee also noted that it should be further emphasised to departments that external examiners' reports should be a standing item on Student-Staff Committee meetings.

16/M35 **POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES WITH INTEGRATED PRE-SESSIONAL ENGLISH LANGUAGE**

The Committee considered a proposal to integrate pre-sessional English language tuition within existing Masters programmes at the University. This would allow students to apply for a single visa to cover the period of study. The Committee noted that the option would only be available to students who met all of the entry requirements for the Masters programme and who also had 6.0 IELTS, including 5.5 in each component. Satisfactory completion of the pre-sessional ELTU Course E would represent an internal progression point in order to proceed onto the full Masters programme.

The Committee **approved** the proposal.

16/M36 **TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

The Committee considered proposed terms and conditions of agreement relating to the offer of a place to study at the University. The Committee noted that the document had been through a detailed process of drafting led by the CMA Working Group and extensive legal input. The Terms and Conditions applied to all taught programmes at the University, however did not apply to research degrees.

The Committee **approved** the Terms and Conditions for circulation to offer holders.

16/M37 **ECONOMICS PGT PROVISION**

The Committee considered a proposal from the Department of Economics for amendments to the structure of taught postgraduate programmes within the Department, which would result in an uneven credit balance of 45:75 between semesters 1 and 2.

The Committee noted that the proposals would incorporate a number of non-credit bearing courses within the programmes that would offer students the opportunity to gain certain professional accreditations such as the CFA Claritas Certificate which were valued by employers. In order to accommodate this content it would be necessary to study fewer credit bearing modules in the first semester and increase those in the second semester, thus creating an imbalance.

The team proposing the amendments acknowledged that this would result in a higher workload for students overall within the programme, and particularly in semester 2. However, the team noted that the change to the structure of academic year in 2017/18 created additional teaching time which could accommodate the additional study, and therefore the intensity of the student workload would not vary significantly from the

current format. The marketing materials for the programme would make clear the additional content, and highlight that although the overall workload may be higher than for other MSc programmes, the resulting accreditations added extra value.

It was noted that the full changes were not designed to be implemented until 2017/18 in order to allow a full lead in for marketing. The Department intended to introduce the Claritas certificate for 2016/17 but that would not require a credit imbalance, and this proposal would be considered by the relevant College Academic Committee shortly.

The Committee **approved** the proposal for a credit imbalance between semesters for the programmes in question. The Committee noted however that this approval was granted on the basis of clear benefit to students through the provision of additional employer facing content. The Committee agreed that this did not represent approval of the general principle for credit imbalance, and that future requests for such a structure would be considered on their individual merits.

#### 16/M38 **PROGRAMME APPROVAL PANELS**

The Committee noted that following consideration of the Panel's report and the response from the programme team the Chair had taken action on behalf of the Committee to approve the introduction of the following programmes for 2016/17:

MSc Biomedical Engineering  
Master of Engineering Management

##### a) MSc Astrophysics

The Committee considered the report of the Programme Approval Panel that had taken place on 26 January to consider the introduction of an MSc in Astrophysics. The Committee noted that this built upon existing level 7 material within the Department's MPhys programmes and welcomed the development. The Committee approved the report and authorised the Chair of the Panel to **approve** the programme for introduction in 2016/17 subject to a satisfactory response to the conditions set.

##### b) MA Creative Writing

The Committee considered the report of the Programme Approval Panel that had taken place on 1 March to consider the introduction of an MA in Creative Writing. The Committee noted that this was an area of strength within the School of English and complemented the development of a minor in this area for 2016/17. The Committee welcomed the development and noted that the department had provided a response to the minor conditions and recommendations made which had been endorsed by the Programme Approval Panel. On this basis the Committee approved the report and **approved** the programme for introduction in 2016/17.

##### c) MA Museum Studies and MA Art Museums and Gallery Studies

The Committee considered the report of the Programme Approval Panel that had taken place on 1 March to consider major amendments to the MA in Museum Studies and the MA in Art Museum and Gallery Studies. The Committee noted that the amendments were designed to refresh the curricula, respond to developments in the sector and maintain the School's competitive position within the market.

The Committee noted that the programmes included a proposal for the progression point within the programme to be set after 90 credits, which was out of line with the standard requirements articulated in Senate Regulation 6. The Committee noted however that this had been designed to incorporate a placement module after the completion of the project which allowed students to apply their learning in a professional setting. The Committee therefore approved the request for a dispensation from Senate Regulation 6 with reference to the progression point for these programmes.

The Committee noted that the programme team had provided a satisfactory response to the conditions set by the Panel and this had been endorsed by the Panel Chair. The Committee **approved** the programmes for introduction in 2016/17.

d) MA Socially Engaged Practice

The Committee considered the report of the Programme Approval Panel that had taken place on 1 March to consider the introduction of a new MA/MSc in Socially Engaged Practice in Museums and Galleries, along with Postgraduate Diploma and Certificate awards, and the option to study individual modules. The Committee noted that this represented a new model of flexible delivery whereby students may elect to study individual modules and build up towards an award. The Committee also noted that there was a collaborative element to the degree with support for one module being provided by National Museums Liverpool. The Committee noted that the flexible model was complex however this had been developed in consultation with the DL Hubs and tested by the Programme Approval Panel.

The Committee welcomed the development of the programme and the new model of delivery. The Committee noted that the programme team had provided a satisfactory response to the conditions set by the Panel and this had been endorsed by the Panel Chair. The Committee **approved** the programmes and individual modules for introduction in 2016/17.

16/M39 **PERIODIC DEVELOPMENTAL REVIEWS**

a) School of Law

The Committee considered the final response to the report of the Periodic Developmental Review of the School of Law that had taken place in November 2014.

The Committee noted the positive tone of the review and response process. The Committee welcomed in particular the development of student engagement projects within the School, the progress that had been made with the diversification of assessment methods and the introduction of a robust scheme for students to obtain examination feedback. The Committee noted the School's comments regarding the admissions processes for 2016/17 entry.

The Committee **approved** the final response.

b) School of Museum Studies

The Committee considered the final response to the report of the Periodic Developmental Review of the School of Museum Studies which had taken place in February 2015.

The Committee welcomed the School's ongoing development of its provision, including the creation of a flexible model of distance learning (M38 (d) above refers). The Committee also welcomed the manner in which the School had reflected upon the outcome of the review process to generally enhance its provision.

The Committee **approved** the final response.

16/M40 **STUDENT EXPERIENCE ENHANCEMENT GROUP**

The Committee received the minutes of the meetings of the Student Experience Enhancement Group held on 14 January and 25 February.

The Committee noted that the Standing Together Campaign was underway to promote gender equality and would inform the development of a set of communications and resources on this theme for new and returning students. The Committee also noted that the University Distinguished Teaching Fellowships scheme was underway for 2015/16, and that the series of LLI events 'Focus on...' had commenced. The Chair encouraged members to publicise both of these to colleagues throughout the institution.

16/M41 **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 Medicine, Biological Sciences and Psychology,

College of Science and Engineering,

College of Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities,

16/M42 **ISC ACADEMIC MANAGEMENT BOARD**

The Committee received the minutes of the meeting of the ISC Academic Management Board that had taken place on 26 February 2016.

16/M43 **COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS MANAGEMENT GROUP**

The Committee received the minutes of the meeting of the Collaborative Partnerships Management Group that had taken place on 23 February 2016.

16/M44 **APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS**

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

College of Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities

**School of Management**

Professor John Hassard, University of Manchester

Period of Office: September 2016 to November 2020

Programme(s): MBA (Qualitative modules)

Dr Anab Majumdar, Imperial College London  
Period of Office: September 2016 to November 2020  
Programme(s): MSc Risk, Crisis and Disaster Management

The Committee considered the following nomination, however agreed that there was not sufficient evidence presented regarding the profile of current external examiners within the School to confirm whether the nomination as appropriate. The Committee agreed that this should be identified and then, if appropriate, Chair's action should be requested to approve the nomination.

#### **School of Museum Studies**

Mrs Sara Hilton, Heritage Lottery Fund  
Period of Office: September 2015 to November 2019  
Programme(s): MA/MSc/PGDip Museum Studies (DL) and  
MA/MSc/PGDip Heritage and Interpretation (DL)

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

College of Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities

#### **School of Archaeology and Ancient History**

Dr Fraser Stuart, University of Southampton  
Period of Office: September 2016 to November 2020  
Programme(s): MA Archaeology, MA Historical Archaeology (DL)  
And MA Archaeology and Heritage (DL)

DURATION OF MEETING: Two hours