

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

**Minutes of a meeting held on  
15 January 2018**

**Present:**

J Scott (Chair)

A Abdulla	A Cameron
E Clapp	F Deepwell
R Dickinson	S Handa
D Lambert	L Masterman
A Moran	B Norman
M Peel	C Taylor

G Wynn

**In attendance:** B Johnson (for M05), J Kaduk (for M07) and A Petersen (Secretary)

**Apologies for absence** were received from G Green, C Hewitt, D Lockett and R Parry

**UNRESERVED BUSINESS**

**18/M01 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were made.

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

The Committee considered the minutes of the meeting that had taken place on 13 December 2017.

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

**18/M03 MATTERS ARISING**

Arising from M182 the Committee noted that the institutional response to the consultation on the Office for Students had been submitted.

**18/M04 CHAIR'S BUSINESS**

The Chair welcomed Mark Peel to his first meeting of the Committee in his new role of Director of Educational Innovation. The Committee noted that this represented an amendment to the Committee's membership and would be reported to Senate accordingly.

The Chair reported that he had taken Chair's Action on behalf of the Committee to approve the final Curriculum Transformation submissions for single honours undergraduate programmes in Politics and PGT programmes in English and History of Art and Film.

The Chair also reported that progress was being made towards the University target of 90% of teaching staff holding an Accredited Teaching Qualification (ATQ). Further work was required to ensure that there was an appropriate mix of new colleagues obtaining ATQs

with colleagues obtaining higher levels of fellowship. The Committee noted that the LLI was ready to provide support at departmental level to colleagues developing their submissions.

The Committee noted that the National Teaching Fellowship and Collaborative Teaching Award submission processes were underway, that the call for University Distinguished Teaching Fellowships would open soon and the deadline for submissions to the Teaching Enhancement Fund was 8 March. The Chair encouraged members to publicise these schemes widely to colleagues and highlight the support available to applicants.

The Chair reported that he had provided University level briefings on recent sector developments such as the Office for Students and the TEF, and that he would be happy to provide briefings at departmental level where this would be helpful.

#### 18/M05 **LEARNER ANALYTICS**

The Committee received a presentation from Becky Johnson regarding the Learner Analytics Project, which was part of the wider Business Intelligence Programme. The wider project was designed to facilitate strategic evidence-based decision making, and to present clear data drawn from multiple sources in a consistent and effective manner. This involved the creation of a data warehouse and reporting tools at institutional level.

The initial priorities within the project were to improve management information and reporting in three areas: student and programme information, research applications and grants and provision of information to support the PDD process. A major focus was the provision of information to support personal tutoring, progression and retention. A Personal Tutor Dashboard had been developed and would display current data regarding student attendance, performance and allow comparisons with the wider cohort.

The Committee noted that the Personal Tutor Dashboard would be 'soft' launched in March 2017 with a sub set of departments using and testing the facilities to provide feedback before a full roll-out later in the year. A Student Statistics Dashboard and the Research Applications and Grants Dashboard will also be launched in March.

The Committee thanked the Planning Office for the work that had gone into supporting this development and agreed that the tools presented could represent a step-change in how personal tutors and departments could engage with individual students and inform considerations around progression and retention at departmental and University level.

The Committee recommended that the team engage with the PGR Project within the Student Lifecycle Change Programme to consider opportunities for sharing developments.

#### 18/M06 **RISK MANAGEMENT**

The Committee considered a report which outlined amendments to the Strategic and Corporate Risk Registers for the Spring term 2018.

The Committee noted amendments to the wording around individual risks arising from previous feedback. The Committee considered whether the risk level associated with the impact of industrial action should be raised. It was noted that plans to mitigate the risk were in place and would be updated once the outcome of the upcoming UCU strike ballot was known, which may in turn lead to an amendment to the risk register at that point.

The Committee **endorsed** the registers for consideration by ULT and Audit Committee.

**18/M07 ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

The Committee considered a proposal for the establishment of institutional level standardised plagiarism avoidance training for all new students.

It was proposed that all first year undergraduate and PGT programmes should embed an online plagiarism tutorial within a first semester module. Under the proposal this would be a qualifying element within the module meaning that students were required to pass the component before they were able to progress or graduate.

The Committee welcomed and **approved** the proposal to establish a threshold consistent level of plagiarism avoidance training for all new students. The Committee agreed that it was important to engage students with this as part of a wider programme of training and development in terms of how to become an effective learner, and how to adopt good academic and professional practice. The Committee agreed that the emphasis should be positive and developmental rather than punitive, to maximise student engagement. In this context, it was agreed that the language of the training and guidance should focus on good academic practice and academic integrity rather than plagiarism.

Within this overall principle the Committee considered the detail of the proposal. The Committee agreed that the training should be embedded early in a first semester module and that completion of online training should be mandatory. Completion rates would be monitored and where students failed to meet this requirement they would be offered further support either via their personal tutor or follow up workshops. The Committee agreed that it would not be appropriate to establish completion of the training as a formal progression barrier, but that the possibility of automatically not allowing substantive coursework submission until the completion of the core online training should be explored.

The Committee noted the variation in departmental practice on this issue and the importance of ensuring that good context specific local practice was not lost through the implementation of a standardised system. The Committee also noted the central importance of engaging students with the design of the training. The Committee agreed that the Plagiarism Working Group should engage with representatives of the student body and also the LLI to develop a more detailed proposal for how such training might operate for consideration by the Committee at a future meeting.

**18/M08 INCLUSIVITY WITHIN THE CURRICULUM**

The Committee received an update from Mark Peel and Azza Abdulla regarding the theme of inclusivity within the curriculum. This was an area of collaboration between the University and the Students' Union, with the aim of encouraging all programme teams to consider how they might build in greater representation of ethnic, religious, sexual or gender diversity into the curricula. The Committee noted that an important component of this would be helping staff to undertake individual local reflection on how these issues were or could be represented in their own curricula.

The Committee welcomed this development and supported the establishment of a Task and Finish Group in this area. The Committee requested that a broad principles and scoping document, along with draft Terms of Reference and Membership for the Group be produced for consideration at a future meeting.

**18/M09 PREPARATIONS FOR SUBJECT LEVEL TEF**

The Committee considered an update from the Education Excellence Team regarding preparations for the Subject Level TEF.

Working Groups in each of the subject grouping areas were developing the narrative submission to accompany the initial dataset. There were a series of deadlines for draft submissions following which feedback would be provided via the TEF Steering Group.

The Committee noted that the required data had been submitted to support the teaching intensity pilot and that the teaching intensity survey of students had been completed, although the response rate had been low. The Committee wished to record its thanks to the Planning Office for supporting the significant demands of this submission.

The Committee agreed that the final submission documents should be received at a future meeting of the Committee for information.

**18/M10 NSS 2018**

The Committee received an update on preparations for the 2018 NSS. The Committee noted the range of activities underway to encourage student completion of the NSS. The Committee noted that the survey was being launched a week later at UoL than in previous years, and that the institution was targeting an 80% response rate.

The Committee agreed that it would be helpful to consider at a meeting before the end of the academic year, any evidence of which local and university level initiatives appeared to most successfully support completion rates for the NSS, and thus allow a good lead in time to develop these further in advance of the 2019 survey.

The Committee noted the example NSS checklists and action plans representing the process that the Chair and the Student Experience Team had developed and implemented with all departments during the first semester in order to target specific enhancements. These focussed on contact between staff and students, effective communication with students and the consistent application of existing policy. The implementation of these would be reviewed during the course of the academic year.

**18/M11 AMENDMENT TO REFLECT POLICY**

The Committee considered a proposal for an amendment to the Reflect Lecture Capture policy.

A request had been made by the School of Business to allow students on the MBA programme to use the download function to view content offline. The Committee noted that this was in part due to students on the DL variant of the programme having only intermittent access to the internet. It was also a requirement of continuing accreditation by the Association of MBAs (AMBA). The Committee noted that this could be restricted to individual course sites and would only be permitted where all relevant contributing staff gave their permission. The proposed policy amendment would allow this functionality under the above circumstances, and also reaffirmed that misuse such as editing or circulation of downloads by students would be considered a disciplinary offence.

The Committee supported the proposal but explored whether this might have wider implications for other programmes. It was noted that at present it was only proposed to allow this download facility where there was a demonstrable professional body requirement. The Committee agreed that it would be appropriate to reflect this in the wording of the policy. The Committee also noted that there were potential technical issues regarding the wider use of this facility that would require IT Services input.

The Committee **approved** the amendment in principle, but noted that it would be necessary to agree appropriate wording with the University Legal Services regarding the restriction with respect to specific PSRBs. It was also agreed that confirmation should be sought from IT Services regarding the technical and network capacity to support this solution.

18/M12 **OPEN DOOR APPROACH TO PERSONAL TUTORING**

The Committee noted that the College of Science and Engineering had implemented a College-wide open door policy for students, and that other departments had adopted alternative methods of ensuring that students always had access to an appropriate member of staff when needed. The Chair reported that he was exploring means by which this approach could be expanded and standardised to create a threshold level across all academic departments. The Committee fully supported the expansion and recommended that existing good practice from across those departments already operating such systems should be gathered to provide case studies for other departments to engage with.

18/M13 **PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT AND APPROVAL**

a) BSc Perioperative Practice

The Committee considered a briefing paper from the Operating Department Practice unit within the School of Allied Health Professions regarding the development of a BSc top up degree in Perioperative Practice. The Committee noted that the proposal was still in the early development phase but that a series of principles regarding the entry requirements for the programme had been put forwards for consideration and endorsement by the Committee in order to inform the development and approval process.

The Committee considered and endorsed the proposals that all students should be required to maintain their professional registration throughout their studies, and that where students did not meet the requirements in terms of recent study they should be required to undertake a return to study course.

The Committee considered a request for the programme to allow 15 credits of graded APL within the 120 BSc award. The Committee noted that this was on the basis that the majority of applicants would be existing ODPs who would have undertaking relevant professional training modules. The Committee noted that this was within the framework set out by the University Policy on Accreditation of Prior Learning and endorsed the proposal.

## b) Programme Approval Panel reports

The Committee considered reports of the Panels which had considered the following:

## i) MRes Research Methods (NPB)

The Committee considered the report of the Panel that had considered the introduction of a suite of new MRes programmes in Psychology, Neuroscience and Animal Behaviour on 1 December 2017. The Committee noted that the introduction of the programmes would replace the existing MSc Psychological Research. They would align more closely to the research themes within the discipline at Leicester, should support recruitment and provide a feeder route through to PhD study.

The Committee considered a proposal for a derogation from regulations for this programme in order to set the maximum period of registration at 24 months.

The Committee **approved** the dispensation from Regulations, **approved** the report and authorised the Chair of the Programme Approval Panel to approve the programmes for introduction, subject to receipt of a satisfactory response.

The Committee noted that the change to registration periods arose from recent funding changes for postgraduate taught programmes and it would be appropriate to review the current periods of registration in Senate Regulation 2 in light of this.

## ii) MSc Forensic Genetics and Genomics

The Committee considered the report of the Panel that had considered the introduction of a new MSc in Forensic Genetics and Genomics on 7 December 2017. The Committee noted that a number of conditions had been set for approval and that a response on these was awaited from the team.

The Committee agreed that the response should be considered at a future meeting and, if satisfactory, approval for introduction would be agreed at that time.

## iii) BSc Accounting

The Committee considered the report of the Programme Approval Panel that considered the introduction of a new BSc Accounting on 18 July 2017. The Committee noted that consideration of the academic case had taken place in line with the School of Business's Curriculum Transformation process, but that the business case for the development had only recently been approved by the College of Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities.

The Committee noted that all of the academic conditions and recommendations had been addressed through the Curriculum Change process. The Committee **approved** the programme for introduction in September 2018.

The proposal indicated that it may be desirable to seek a dispensation from Senate Regulations with respect to the re-sit procedures for certain modules, in order to ensure that students are still able to gain relevant professional accreditation. The Committee agreed that a proposal should be submitted by the team, and until this had taken place due care should be taken when marketing the programme to ensure that references to accreditation accurately reflect the current regulatory position.

- c) Initial response to the MBChB report and conditions

The Committee considered the initial response to the conditions set out in the Programme Approval Panel report for the major amendments to the MBChB curriculum.

The Committee noted that as a result of the challenging timescale for implementation the response had already been considered by a joint Panel of the Programme Approval Panel and the Academic Policy Committee and that the amendments had been **approved** for introduction commencing in January 2018.

- d) Withdrawal of the MSc Psychological Research Methods

The Committee considered the proposal to withdraw the MSc Psychological Research Methods programme. It was noted that the new suite of MRes programmes (above) was designed to replace the programme being withdrawn. The final intake for the MSc would be October 2017 and a plan was in place to teach out the remaining students. The Committee **approved** the withdrawal of the programme following the October 2017 intake.

#### 18/M14 COLLEGE ACADEMIC COMMITTEES

The Committee received reports of the meetings of the College Academic Committees that had taken place on:

- a) College of Life Sciences, 7 December 2017
- b) College of Science and Engineering, 13 December 2017
- c) College of Social Science, Arts and Humanities, 6 December 2017

#### 18/M15 APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

The Committee considered and approved the nomination of the following External Examiners:

College of Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities

##### **School of Education**

Dr Beng Huat See, University of Durham

Period of Office: September 2018 to November 2022

Programme(s): MA International Education (CB and DL variants)

DURATION OF MEETING: Two hours and five minutes

CHAIR