

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER

ACADEMIC POLICY COMMITTEE

**Minutes of a meeting held on
18 September 2013**

Present:

	Ms C Fyfe (Chair)
Professor A Cashmore	Mr D Flatt
Dr T Lawson	Dr R Parry
Mr M Rubin	Professor J Scott
Dr D Watkins	Professor T Yeoman

In attendance: Professor S Law, Mrs L Masterman (Secretary) and Mr A Petersen (Assistant Secretary)

Apologies for absence were received from Ms J Dunne, Professor S Hainsworth, Dr D Luckett and Dr T Oliviera

UNRESERVED BUSINESS

13/M73 MINUTES THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Committee considered the minutes of the meeting held on 25 June 2013.

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

13/M74 MATTERS ARISING

Arising from M59 the Committee noted that a revised Code of Practice on Managing Higher Education Provision with Others would be considered at its October meeting.

13/M75 TERMS OF REFERENCE AND MEMBERSHIP

The Committee considered its terms of reference and membership for the 2013/14 academic year, noting that the second representative from the College of Science and Engineering would be finalised shortly.

The Committee **agreed** that the item g) under the terms of reference should be amended to read 'review and monitor Key Performance Indicators', in order to better reflect the role of the Committee in this regard. The Committee also **agreed** that the reference to Academic Affairs Officer should be amended to read President of Students' Union.

13/M76 CHAIR'S BUSINESS

The Chair welcomed members to the first meeting of the 2013/14 academic year, in particular welcoming new members to the Committee.

The Chair reported that:

- a) The Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) Forum was now based within the Centre for Interdisciplinary Science, and was seeking to promote the inclusion of sustainability themed content within or alongside the undergraduate and postgraduate curricula. The Committee noted that the ESD Forum would welcome engagement with departments seeking to expand coverage of sustainability issues

within their programmes, and there was a range of learning materials already in existence to support this.

- b) The rolling programme of peer observation would continue in 2013/14, focussing on the peer observation of marking and feedback. The Committee agreed that engagement with the scheme should be further promoted to all academic departments [ACTION: CHAIR AND SECRETARY]
- c) Recent interviews for the post of Academic Registrar had not resulted in an appointment, and the process of recruitment was ongoing;
- d) The result of the National Student Survey for the 2012/13 academic year had been published. Despite a strong performance in some categories, the Committee noted that results in some areas such as feedback required further consideration. The Committee noted that the outcome of a recent pilot in the Department of Mathematics providing feedback to students on examination performance should help to address some of these issues. The Committee agreed to consider the NSS in more detail at its next meeting.

13/M77 DOCUMENTATION FOR PROGRAMME APPROVAL

The Committee considered a draft programme approval form designed to accompany the revised procedures for programme development and approval set out in the recently approved Code of Practice. The form had been developed following feedback from the Committee, and in consultation with colleagues throughout Corporate Services.

The form was designed to support the process of programme development and approval through better integrating business case and academic planning. It would also require programme teams to comment in more detail on a number of core design features of the proposal, thus enhancing information available to Programme Approval Panels. Support in the development of robust programme proposal would be provided by colleagues in the Quality Office and the Academic Practice Service.

The Committee welcomed the form along with the integration of the process in line with the principles set out in the Code of Practice. The Committee specified a number of minor amendments and agreed that any further amendments should be sent to the Secretary. Subject to these minor amendments, the Committee **approved** the form for introduction in 2013/14.

13/M78 POLICY ON SUPPORT FOR PREGNANT STUDENTS AND STUDENTS WITH VERY YOUNG CHILDREN

The Committee considered a draft University policy on support for pregnant students and students with very young children. The policy had been drafted in consultation with the University Welfare Service and the Equalities Unit.

The Committee welcomed the development of a policy in this area. The Committee agreed that the document established the principles of an institutional policy, however further development was required in order to reflect the more specific requirements of particular disciplines, such as those including clinical work or external placements. Additionally, it would be necessary to seek the input of the University legal team and the Students' Union when finalising the policy.

The Committee agreed that comments on the draft policy should be forwarded to the Secretary by 30 September, and that a revised version should be circulated for feedback from College Academic Committees in the Autumn Term.

13/M79 **DISPENSATION FROM REGULATIONS**

a) MSc Forensic Psychology

The Committee considered a request for dispensation from Senate Regulation 6 governing taught postgraduate programmes for the MSc in Forensic Psychology. The Committee noted that the programme was accredited by the British Psychological Society (BPS) which required that the curriculum cover a range of specific material throughout all modules on the programme.

The BPS required that students pass all of the modules on the programme in order to demonstrate their mastery of all of the required material. The School of Psychology therefore requested dispensation from Senate Regulation 6.38, to state that in order to be awarded an MSc in Forensic Psychology students may have no failed credits.

The Committee noted that this was a clear requirement from a professional body and **approved** the request for dispensation.

b) LLM Employment Law

The Committee considered a request for dispensation for the 2013 cohort from Senate Regulation 2 governing admission and registration for taught programmes for the LLM in Employment Law by distance learning. The Committee noted that the delivery pattern of the programme was such that residential weekends and external speakers had already been secured for the 2013 intake in line with the original 27 month standard period of registration.

The School of Law requested dispensation from Senate Regulation 2 to permit that the standard period of registration for the September 2013 cohort on the LLM in Employment Law remain as 27 months. The Committee **approved** the request for dispensation for the 2013 cohort only, noting that the School was undertaking a review of the programme structure in order to bring it into line with the standard periods of registration set out in the regulations from 2014 onwards.

13/M80 **DUAL DEGREE WITH XIDIAN UNIVERSITY**

The Committee considered a request from the Department of Engineering regarding the establishment of a dual degree with XiDian University, China.

The proposal, which was in the early stages of development, was to establish a dual bachelors programme in Electronic and Communications Engineering with XiDian University which would combine the XiDian curriculum with existing modules from the University of Leicester, delivered by academic staff of the University. The degree would be based entirely in China, with University of Leicester staff travelling to the XiDian campus to deliver the programme. Students would graduate with a dual undergraduate degree from both Leicester and XiDian.

While the Committee supported the exploration of new collaborative ventures, it agreed that the University would benefit from the development of a clearer strategy with respect to collaborative provision and the establishment of relationships with other HE providers. The Committee agreed that such a strategy would support the development of new programmes by providing a coherent vision of the types of activity with which the University wished to engage. The Committee agreed that the Chair should discuss the development of a University strategy on collaborative provision with the relevant members

of the senior management team before the proposal under consideration could proceed to the formal planning process.

Notwithstanding this, the Committee welcomed submission of the proposal at this early stage of development, and agreed that it would be appropriate for the programme team to continue drafting a business case for the programme, which could then be tested against the institutional strategy once approved.

13/M81 ANTI-BULLYING POLICY FOR THE MEDICAL SCHOOL

The Committee received a draft anti-bullying policy and guidance for students developed by the Medical School. The Committee welcomed the principles set out in the draft document.

The Committee agreed that although the policy was at present drafted to address bullying between students, it would be helpful to use the draft as a basis to develop a single anti-bullying policy at University level which would apply to all staff and students. The Committee noted that an institutional policy would need to be accompanied by additional specific provisions for issues relating to fitness to practice or other professional requirements for particular programmes.

The Committee agreed that the draft document provided a helpful starting point for the development of a wider policy, but that some amendments would be necessary in order to link the policy in with existing procedures such as those set out in Senate Regulation 11 governing student discipline, as well as to incorporate feedback from the Welfare Service, Equalities Unit and the University legal team.

The Committee agreed that the creation of an institutional statement on bullying should be discussed with the Senior Pro-Vice-Chancellor and the Director of HR, and supported by a working group to finalise the detail of the policy [ACTION: CHAIR]. The Committee thanked Dr Hales in the Medical School for the draft document which provided a strong base for the development of a University wide policy on the issue.

13/M82 STUDENT EXPERIENCE ENHANCEMENT GROUP

The Committee received the minutes of a meeting of the Student Experience Enhancement Group that took place on 7 June 2013.

13/M83 ISC ACADEMIC MANAGEMENT BOARD

The Committee received the minutes of a meeting of the International Study Centre (ISC) Academic Management Board that took place on 23 May 2013.

The Committee noted that the ISC appeared to accept students from the age of 16 which resulted in a significant number of students below the age of 18 joining the University following completion of their foundation year. The Committee agreed that it would be helpful to clarify the entry requirements for the ISC. [ACTION: PROFESSOR SCOTT]

DURATION OF MEETING: One hour and 30 minutes