

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

**Minutes of a meeting held on  
20 November 2017**

**Present:**

J Scott (Chair)

A Abdulla	F Deepwell
R Dickinson	G Green
S Handa	D Lambert
D Lockett	L Masterman
A Moran	B Norman
R Parry	C Taylor

G Wynn

**In attendance:** J Kaduk (for M170), H Naimi and A Petersen (Secretary)

**Apologies for absence** were received from A Cameron, E Clapp and C Hewitt

**UNRESERVED BUSINESS**

17/M165 **WELCOME**

The Chair welcomed Professor Hadji Naimi, Professor of Microbiology at the University of Kabul and Afghan Government lead for quality assurance in higher education, who was observing the meeting.

17/M166 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were made.

17/M167 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Committee considered the minutes of the meeting that had taken place on 24 October 2017.

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

17/M168 **MATTERS ARISING**

Arising from M149 the Chair agreed to liaise with the Academic Directors to identify an academic lead for the Working Group on further embedding employability skills.

Arising from M152 the Committee noted that the revisions to Senate Regulation 5 for current students in 2017/18, and the new Senate Regulation 5 for students commencing their studies from 2018/19 had both been approved at the recent meeting of Senate.

Arising from M159 the Committee noted that the draft Academic Annual Assurance statement had been approved by Senate for submission to Council.

17/M169 **CHAIR'S BUSINESS**

The Chair reported that he had taken Action on behalf of the Committee to:

- a) Approve the reduction of the IELTS requirement for LLM Law to 6.5, with specific requirements in individual components for 2018/19 cohort onwards.
- b) Approve the final transformed curricula for undergraduate programmes in Accounting and Finance, Mathematics and Psychology.

The Chair also reported that:

- a) The institutional metrics for TEF 3 demonstrated an improvement in the area of employability but retained the negative flag against assessment and feedback. Although the University was not re-entering the 2018 institutional level TEF, it had been selected to be part of the Model B subject level pilot which would involve aggregation of the disciplines across seven subject areas and would submit to three of the five pilot areas regarding Teaching Intensity, namely Business and Management, Engineering and History and Archaeology. The results would not be public but the University would have access to all pilot institutions' data and outcomes for the purposes of benchmarking. The Teaching Intensity Survey targeting all students, was due to commence before Christmas 2017.
- b) The development programme for Directors of Learning and Teaching, delivered by NOUS Consulting, had commenced at the recent Curriculum, Learning and Teaching Forum. A follow up webinar event was scheduled, which would include guidance for those who had been unable to attend the forum as well as further developmental activities and the Chair encouraged all relevant colleagues to engage with this.
- c) The recent BBC documentary had demonstrated the level of risk associated with certain forms of validated provision and this served to highlight the importance of robust development and approval processes and scrupulous monitoring.

The Committee also wished to record its congratulations to those colleagues that had won Discovering Excellence Awards, in particular to Sandeep Handa and Sarah Gretton for their contribution to student experience and learning and teaching.

17/M170 **REFRESHED LEARNING STRATEGY**

The Committee considered a revised Learning Strategy for 2017 to 2021, and an accompanying 'Priorities on a Page' document.

The Strategy had been reviewed over the course of several meetings of various different stakeholder groups including members of the Committee, the Students' Union and the Career Development Service. The review had identified where progress had been made and reconsidered the projects and priorities in light of changes in internal and external environments. The 'Priorities on a Page' document highlighted the 3 key themes of work underpinning the strategy, namely Curriculum Transformation, Education Excellence and the further embedding of employability, and aligned these directly with the Student Experience Framework and the Learning Strategy Priority areas.

The Committee considered the balance between the learning and teaching focus of the strategy, and the use of metrics. The Committee recognised the importance of measures to demonstrate progress against strategic aims, but agreed that it would be helpful to review the wording in places to ensure that the references to metrics complemented the

core learning and teaching focus. The Committee suggested that it might be appropriate to include a smaller number of metrics that were linked directly to specific projects.

The Students' Union (SU) noted that it would be helpful to clarify the wording regarding the shared student voice to reflect the autonomy of the SU, and that the statement regarding delivery of a distinctively flexible and exciting curriculum could be strengthened by incorporating a reference to inclusivity within this commitment.

The Committee welcomed the 'Priorities on a Page' document as a means of drawing out the key themes from the strategy in an accessible manner. The Committee agreed that it would be helpful for the strategy and associated documentation to emphasise that significant progress had already been made in these areas and therefore the priorities as stated represented the continuation of existing themes rather than new projects.

The Committee endorsed the revised Strategy subject to the above amendments, and noted that any further comments received following consideration by College Academic Committees would be fed in directly. The Committee agreed that the revised document should be presented to ULT before submission for approval at the meeting of Senate in Spring 2018.

#### 17/M171 **PLAGIARISM AVOIDANCE TRAINING PROJECT**

The Committee received a report on the work of the Plagiarism Avoidance Working Group. The Group had focussed on five themes of work.

- Draft guidance had been produced to support students prior to their induction to the University. This focussed upon the importance of developing skills in academic literacy and could include a small task for students to undertake in the pre-induction phase to engage with the theme of academic integrity.
- Work had been undertaken to draw together the existing material under the LLI, Library and other websites via a single landing page.
- A regular programme of meetings of Plagiarism Officers had proven a useful forum to address some of the common queries, to disseminate good practice and also to identify and challenge differing approaches across departments.
- The Group was working with the LLI to develop a more standardised model for the embedding of academic literacy practices in academic departments.
- The Group had also collated and provided data on levels and types of plagiarism to College Academic Directors, and this would become an annual process.

The Group was considering the format of communication in this area in order to focus upon the establishment of good academic practice and sources of advice where students are found to have committed plagiarism, and less upon penalties.

The Group noted that the pre-induction materials would complement the existing provision such as study skills modules and the amnesty at undergraduate level for offences committed in the first semester. It was also noted that some student groups may be more vulnerable to the risk of inadvertently committing plagiarism and this guidance may offer additional support to these students as they transition into HE.

The Committee considered the detail of the draft guidance and agreed that it may be helpful to reduce the scope slightly in order to focus on the key theme of defining good academic practice, and then incorporate some of the additional detail into induction

materials for students at departmental level. It was also agreed that the guidance should introduce students to the principles of copyright.

The Committee welcomed the proposal to establish a single landing page for students to access the range of resources in the area of plagiarism avoidance, but agreed that the Group should reconsider the options for the title of the top level URL.

The Committee thanked the Group for its work to date.

#### 17/M172 **LEARNER ANALYTICS**

The Committee noted that due to illness this item would be deferred to a future meeting.

#### 17/M173 **DEROGATION FROM SENATE REGULATIONS**

The Committee considered a request for a series of dispensations from Senate Regulations for the new undergraduate programmes in Nursing and Midwifery that were under development in the College of Life Sciences.

The University had recently undergone a visit from the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC). In order to meet the conditions for approval as a provider a number of dispensations were required from Senate Regulations in terms of assessment, progression, aegrotat awards and returning from a period of suspense. The Committee queried whether in the NMC requirements it would be helpful to specify that failure to maintain DBS status or inform the University of any changes in this regard may be regarded as a Fitness to Practise issue and referred this to the programme teams.

The Committee approved all of the requests noting that detailed scrutiny of the academic proposals would be undertaken by a Programme Approval Panel as standard. Given the importance of ensuring the clarity of public information the Committee agreed that the Approval Panel should be asked to review those elements of the programme specification that articulated these dispensations to ensure that they were clear for students.

#### 17/M174 **DIGITAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

The Committee received an update on the development of the Digital Learning Environment (DLE) project from Ross Parry.

A fund had been established within the DLE project to support a small number of programme teams achieve a step-change in their engagement with digital practice, and to create a series of case studies for wider dissemination. Academic Directors would be working with the project team to identify and evaluate potential candidates.

The Committee was pleased to note that refurbishing work was underway in the Library Reading Room to develop it into a space where students and staff could explore and showcase digital methods. The Committee also noted the establishment of Digital Innovation Partnerships within which students and staff members would work together to encourage the use of digital learning and teaching methods within the curricula.

Arising from the above, the Committee noted the importance of establishing the boundaries and interdependencies of both the DLE and the Education Excellence programme, and welcomed the work underway to clarify this.

**17/M175 CURRICULUM TRANSFORMATION**

The Committee received an update on the Curriculum Transformation project from Graham Wynn.

The current focus of the project was upon supporting the small number of remaining undergraduate programmes through the final stages of transformation. A number of taught postgraduate programmes had also submitted for consideration and these would be scheduled over the coming months. The Committee also noted the development of the communication plan for current first year students in 2017/18 who would enter the second year of transformed programmes in 2018/19.

The Committee wished to record its gratitude to the Quality Office in particular, for the considerable support these colleagues had provided in managing such a complex and high volume of programmes through the transformation process.

**17/M176 PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT AND APPROVAL**

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

a) BSc Physiotherapy

The Committee considered the report of the Panel that had considered the introduction of a new BSc Physiotherapy on 31 October 2017. The programme would take the place of the recently terminated arrangement with Coventry University, and lead to a UoL award.

The Committee noted that the proposal included a request for a dispensation from Senate Regulation 5 in order to meet the accreditation requirements of the Chartered Society for Physiotherapy. This established a threshold requirement for students to pass every component of every module, without compensation, and that all modules must be passed to progress and to achieve the overall award. The Committee approved the dispensation, but agreed that this must be clearly stated in the programme specification and that the Quality Office should work with the programme team to ensure this.

The Committee noted that a response had been submitted to the conditions set out in the report and that this had been approved by the Panel. The Committee **approved** the report and approved the introduction of the programme from September 2018

b) Addition of a Year Abroad to LLB Law with Criminology and LLB Law with Politics

The Committee considered the report of the Panel that had considered the addition of a Year Abroad to existing joint LLB programmes. This brought these programmes into line with the single honours provision in all of the related Schools. The Committee noted that the team had submitted a response which had been approved by the Panel, and that the Chair had taken action to approve the variants for introduction.

**17/M177 DEVELOPMENT OF AFGHAN QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK**

The Committee received a presentation from Professor Hadji Naimi who was one of a group of academics from Afghanistan establishing a new quality assurance structure for Higher Education within their country. Professor Scott had been supporting the group in this work and Professor Naimi expressed his gratitude for this input.

The Committee noted that the establishment in 2012 of the Directorate of Academic Quality Assurance (DAAQ) within the Afghan Ministry of Higher Education had provided the platform for this work. DAAQ had the aim of promoting and enhancing quality improvement in higher education institutions with the goal of meeting international standards in all areas.

The DAAQ had established a national framework for Universities to achieve accreditation. Institutions were required to submit a self-evaluation document and then underwent a peer review exercise, with the final output considered by a national Quality Assurance Board. Following this, the Directorate had developed a system of regular monitoring which required accredited institutions to reflect annually on their provision. 8 Universities had taken part in the pilot with a further 12 in summer 2017.

The Committee congratulated Professor Naimi and his team on the remarkable achievement of starting to embed a robust framework for quality assurance under such challenging circumstances. It was recognised that there was still a need to further engage leaders in Higher Education within the country with the role of quality assurance, and that the limited resources available to the Directorate would impact upon the speed with which this could be achieved. Overall, the Committee welcomed the clear commitment, notably at national level, to establish a consistent and transparent framework for accreditation and review across all institutions.

#### 17/M178 **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**

Ms Lorna Smith, University of Bristol

Period of Office: September 2017 to November 2021

Programme(s): PGCE Secondary English

University Wide

##### **International Study Centre**

Dr Marie Bassford, De Montfort University

Period of Office: September 2017 to August 2021

Programme(s): International Foundation Year pathways in Engineering and Technology, and Science

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

College of Life Sciences

##### **Leicester Medical School**

Dr Duncan Cole, Cardiff University

Period of Office: September 2017 to October 2021

Programme(s): MBChB Phase I

**School of Psychology**

Dr Edward Redhead, University of Southampton

Period of Office: September 2017 to September 2021

Programme(s): BSc Psychology, BSc Psychology with Cognitive Neuroscience,  
BSc Applied Psychology and BSc Psychology with Sociology

DURATION OF MEETING: 1 hour and 40 Minutes

CHAIR