

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER
ACADEMIC POLICY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting held on
24 October 2017

Present:

J Scott (Chair)

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| E Clapp | F Deepwell |
| R Dickinson | S Handa |
| C Hewitt | D Lambert |
| L Masterman | B Norman |
| G Oughton (<i>vice A Abdullah</i>) | G Wynn |

In attendance: G Mobbs (for M148), R Fryer and G McIntyre (for M149 and M150), K Pollard and A Petersen (Secretary)

Apologies for absence were received from A Abdullah, G Green, D Lockett, A Moran, R Parry and C Taylor

UNRESERVED BUSINESS

17/M144 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were made.

17/M145 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

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

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

17/M146 **MATTERS ARISING**

The Committee noted that:

- a) Arising from M132 (Learning Strategy) the notes of the Review day had been revised to incorporate feedback from the Students' Union and an initial prioritisation of the range of projects had been discussed. An update on this process would be circulated for discussion at CACs.
- b) Arising from M134 (Degree Outcomes) the format of the internal report had been revised to remove some inaccuracies and this resulted in a slightly revised figure of 76.3% good honours from midsummer 2017.
- c) Arising from M135 (Validation and Franchising) work had commenced on developing a framework and guidance for the operation of validated and franchised provision. The Quality Office was leading this development which was being managed through the Collaborative Partnerships Management Group (CPMG).
- d) Arising from M136 (Education Excellence) a Professional Services Programme Manager and a Project Manager had been appointed.

17/M147 CHAIR'S BUSINESS

The Chair reported that he had taken Chair's action on behalf of the Committee to:

- a) Approve the withdrawal of the Minor in Entrepreneurship. All students initially registered on the pathway had transferred to other options.
- b) Approve the withdrawal of MA Politics and EU. A full teach out arrangement was in place for all currently registered students on the programme.
- c) Approve the introduction of a new Major in Computer Science.
- d) Approve final Curriculum Transformation submissions for the UG Management programmes, UG Economics programmes and UG Engineering programmes
- e) Approve minor amendments to the MBChB fitness to practise regulations.

The Chair also reported that:

- f) The University had submitted an expression of interest to take part in the Subject Level TEF pilot.
- g) The government consultation on the format for the Office for Students had been published. The Chair was working with the Registrar and the Director of Strategic Planning and Performance to draft a response to the consultation.
- h) The University was working with the NOUS consultancy group to run a programme of development and leadership training for Directors of Learning and Teaching.

17/M148 MODULE EVALUATION PROJECT

The Group considered an update on the Module Evaluation project. Following the pilot in 2016/17 the response from both students and departments regarding the Evasys system had been positive. The question set and format had been aligned to the NSS, and also allowed for open text comments. Response rates appeared low in places, but this reflected the timing of the pilot and the scores returned had generally been high.

The procurement process for the full system was underway. The Committee noted that 2017/18 would see an extended pilot of the system with full implementation planned for 2018/19. Discussions were ongoing regarding the appropriate format for the business ownership for the Module Evaluation process.

The Committee noted that there was the opportunity to add specific questions for individual departments, but that the base set of questions would remain consistent for benchmarking purposes. Any additional University level questions beyond the threshold question set would be submitted to the Committee for approval. The associated guidance would make clear where there was flexibility to add questions at departmental level.

The Committee also noted that it would be helpful if departments could run sessions to help students understand the format of module evaluations, and how their responses influence the overall output. The Committee recommended that the project team work with the Student Experience Team in this regard.

17/M149 CAREER DEVELOPMENT SERVICE STRATEGY

- a) Strategy Implementation

The Committee considered an implementation plan for the Career Development Service Strategy. The plan set out a range of activities in three key areas namely 'in curriculum',

‘in timetable’ and in ‘market’. In addition to the embedding of the Leicester Award, Transferable Skills and significant experience options considered below, activities included 1-2-1 appointments for students in the first two weeks of term, and the matching and coaching approach to supporting finalist students.

The Committee noted that the adoption of exit interviews in all departments could assist with promoting engagement, and agreed that it would be helpful to consider how the range of activities might also be able to support the University’s PGR community.

b) Embedding Employability Skills

The Committee considered a series of proposals designed to meet the University’s strategic objectives in the area of developing employability, and build on the work undertaken through Curriculum Transformation.

i) Embedded Leicester Award in a first year core module

The Committee welcomed the progress that had already been made in this area but noted that the inclusion of the Award in a module may not be appropriate for all programmes. The Committee agreed that it would be necessary to provide different models for how the award might be built into year 1. The Committee agreed that it could not approve this recommendation until further proposals were produced to address the above.

ii) Inclusion of the Leicester Award Gold in the second year curriculum

The Committee considered the proposal to include either a second year mandatory but non-credit bearing module, or an optional 15 credit module to incorporate the Leicester Award Gold. Whilst welcoming the overall principle it noted that there was a lack of clarity regarding how this might be achieved, and in particular how this would interact with Regulations given the contribution of the second year to a student’s degree classification. The Committee did not approve this recommendation at this stage, and requested that a more detailed proposal be prepared indicating how this might be developed, operated and align with regulations.

iii) A significant experience option in all undergraduate programmes

The Committee welcomed and **approved** this recommendation, but noted the resource implications associated with the significant expansion of placements for students. The Committee recommended that CDS work with the College of Life Sciences where some funding had been initially identified to support this activity.

iv) Developing all 12 transferable skills in each undergraduate programme

The Committee noted that given the extent of the work undertaken through Curriculum Transformation it would be appropriate to first undertake an audit of the extent of transferable skills already present in transformed curricula. This should then inform proposals for how further embedding might be achieved within a timescale that supports the University’s strategic objectives whilst allowing departments to establish the delivery of their transformed curricula. On this basis the Committee endorsed the overall principle but could not approve the proposed timescale until the above work had been undertaken to inform this.

In conclusion the Committee agreed that, while welcoming the aspirations within the proposal, it was not possible to approve the majority of the proposed actions at this stage. The Committee agreed that the proposed Working Group should be established in order to develop more detail proposals in each area, to be submitted to the Committee for consideration for approval at a later date. The Committee noted that the Academic Directors and CDS would liaise to identify a potential academic lead for this workstream.

The Committee also agreed that as part of this initial review, the Group might wish to undertake a refresh of the Transferable Skills Framework to ensure that the language aligned with the University's strategies around digital learning and internationalisation.

The Committee thanked the Career Development Service for the work to date, and welcomed resubmission of more detailed proposals in due course.

17/M150 **STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICE STRATEGY**

The Committee considered a Student Support Services Strategy implementation plan. The Committee noted and welcomed the range of activities underway, in particular the clear emphasis upon pro-active support for students in the area of mental health and wellbeing. The Committee agreed that the document set out a considered and well-balanced range of activities to help students take a level of responsibility for their own well-being within a safe and supportive environment, whilst ensuring that students had access to timely and appropriate support where it was needed.

The Committee noted that the strategy interacted in several places with the developing role of the personal tutor. The Committee agreed that it would be helpful to strengthen the link between the areas, in particular via the ongoing work to consider how best to record and analyse the types of pastoral issues raised in personal tutors meetings.

The Committee thanked the Student Support Services for the work that had contributed to the development and implementation of the Strategy.

17/M151 **NSS UPDATE**

The Committee received a paper summarising the University and departmental level actions in place to enhance student satisfaction and its reflection within the NSS.

The Chair had met with the Heads of all academic departments with a focus upon establishing a threshold level across all departments to ensure greater consistency and provide the foundation for further enhancement work. Specific actions included establishing greater consistency and timeliness of contacts between staff and students, closing the feedback loop and ensuring consistent application of key institutional policies.

All Heads of Department had been provided with an NSS checklist and would be required to provide an update on progress to the Chair and the Student Experience team through follow up meetings in November and December. The Committee agreed that it would be helpful if Academic Directors could be involved in these meetings and noted that a further report on this process would be provided to a future meeting.

17/M152 **SENATE REGULATION 5**

The Committee considered revisions to Senate Regulation 5 for new students from 2018/19. The proposals built upon the principles agreed at the previous meeting of APC.

The Committee agreed that it would be helpful to model the likely impact of the changes to borderline rules, including the reduction of the available criteria to only those students with mitigating circumstances. This would be particularly valuable for programme teams when considering their approaches towards delivery and assessment of programmes that sat under the revised regulations.

The Committee **approved** the revised regulations for submission to Senate and noted that those amendments to Senate Regulation 5 for current students discussed in the previous meeting (M139) would be presented for approval in parallel.

17/M153 **START OF TERM REPORT**

The Committee received a summary report of the various activities that had taken place in the early weeks of the autumn term in support of new and returning students.

The Committee noted the range of welcome and transition activities that had taken place across the campus, and in particular welcomed the doubling of the number of students that had pro-actively engaged with the peer mentoring scheme.

17/M154 **APPROVAL ROUTES FOR COLLABORATIVE PROVISION**

The Committee considered a proposal to revise the routes of approval for some low risk forms of collaborative partnership, and to expand the support and guidance available to programme teams when developing such partnerships.

After standard risk assessment and business case approval it was proposed that for progression, articulation and certain module delivery arrangements there be a single point of academic approval via CPMG. This would streamline the approval process but ensure that appropriate scrutiny was applied at each stage. The process would be supported by the provision of more detailed guidance for key decision making bodies.

The Committee noted that Colleges would remain central to the strategic and commercial development of such partnerships. It was noted that proposals required approval at both departmental and College level before proceeding to academic approval.

The Committee **approved** the amendments for incorporation into the Code of Practice.

17/M155 **TEF WORKING GROUP**

The Committee considered and **approved** revised Terms of Reference and Membership for the TEF Working Group.

17/M156 **CURRICULUM TRANSFORMATION**

The Committee received a verbal report from Graham Wynn on the Curriculum Transformation Project.

The Committee was pleased to note the volume of programmes that had been considered through the Curriculum Transformation process and were now nearing final approval. The Committee noted that discussions were ongoing regarding the timely inputting of all of the data generated through the project, and that case by case solutions may be necessary in cases where students were required to repeat a year or suspend their studies during the roll out period.

17/M158 **PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT AND APPROVAL**

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

a) BSc/MSci Natural Sciences

The Committee considered the report of the Programme Approval Panel that had met on 15 August to consider the introduction of a BSc and MSci in Natural Sciences. The new programme built upon much of the pedagogic ethos of the previous Natural Sciences degree, but introduced greater efficiency and interdisciplinarity in the core curricula.

The Committee noted that the team had provided a satisfactory response to the conditions set out in the report and the Chair had taken Chair's action to approve the introduction of the programme in September 2018.

b) MRes Clinical Sciences

The Committee considered the report of the Programme Approval Panel that had met on 30 August to consider the introduction of an MRes in Clinical Sciences. This was a closed programme available only to Academic Clinical Fellows and funded through the NIHR scheme.

The Committee considered the request for a derogation from Senate Regulations in order to establish varied normal registration periods depending on the model of study, allowing students to balance their studies with their clinical commitments. The Committee **approved** the report and the derogation from regulations, and agreed that the response should be considered by the Panel and then by the Committee Chair for final approval.

c) BSc Software Engineering

The Committee considered the report of the Programme Approval Panel that had met on 18 September to consider the introduction of a BSc in Software Engineering, including a year abroad and year in industry option. The Committee noted that programme was replacing the BSc Computing Degree to address the demand for graduates with a combination of computing and business skills.

The Committee noted that the team had provided a satisfactory response to the conditions set out in the report and the Chair had taken Chair's action to approve the introduction of the programme in September 2018.

17/M159 **DRAFT ACADEMIC ANNUAL ASSURANCE REPORT**

The Committee received a draft report that would in due course form part of the University's annual assurance process to HEFCE. As part of the Annual Assurance process Council had to provide confirmation that it had seen evidence of the mechanisms in place to manage academic risk and ensure academic standards and quality. The Committee noted the report and **endorsed** it for submission to Senate and Council.

17/M160 **REVIEW OF QAA QUALITY CODE**

The Committee received the consultation document relating to the review of the QAA Quality Code. A significant element of the review was seeking to establish a small and very high level set of expectations in relation to Academic Standards and Quality

Assurance, supported by indicators of good practice and supplementary practices. The Committee noted that a draft institutional response to the consultation would be considered at a future meeting.

17/M161 **STUDENT EXPERIENCE ENHANCEMENT GROUP**

The Committee received the minutes of the meeting of the Student Experience Enhancement Group that had taken place on 22 September 2017. The Committee **approved** the Terms of Reference and Membership of the Group for the 2017/18 academic year.

17/M162 **COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS MANAGEMENT GROUP**

The Committee received the minutes of the meeting of the Collaborative Partnerships Management Group that had taken place on 5 October 2017. The Committee **approved** the Terms of Reference and Membership of the Group for the 2017/18 academic year.

17/M163 **COLLEGE ACADEMIC COMMITTEES**

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

College of Life Sciences, 28 September 2017

College of Science and Engineering, 27 September 2017

College of Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities, 27 September 2017

Arising from the College of Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities report the Committee noted that the Peer Assisted Learning scheme in the School of Business had proven successful and the College was seeking to support uptake of similar schemes in other Schools.

17/M164 **APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS**

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

College of Science and Engineering

Department of Physics and Astronomy

Dr Catriona Jackman, University of Southampton

Period of Office: September 2017 to November 2021

Programme(s): MSc Space Exploration Systems

The Committee approved the above nomination but agreed that as this was Dr Jackman's first external examining appointment she should be provided with a mentor from another department within the College. S Handa agreed to undertake this role.

College of Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities

School of Business

Dr Marco Barassi, University of Birmingham

Period of Office: September 2017 to November 2021

Programme(s): Macroeconomics components of all UG and PGT programmes in Economics

School of Law

Professor William Lucy, Durham University

Period of Office: September 2017 to September 2021

Programme(s): LLB Law (all variants)

Dr Leslie Turano Taylor, Kings College London

Period of Office: September 2017 to September 2021

Programme(s): LLB Law (all variants)

Professor Jing Zhen, Bangor University

Period of Office: September 2017 to November 2021

Programme(s): LLM Law (Campus-based)

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

College of Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities

School of Arts

Dr Ursula Lanvers, University of York

Period of Office: September 2017 to November 2021

Programme(s): MA Applied Linguistics and TESOL

Department of Criminology

Dr Anna Souhami, University of Edinburgh

Period of Office: September 2017 to September 2021

Programme(s): BSc Criminology (including Major and Minor)

School of Law

Ms Zoe Grundy, University of Sheffield

Period of Office: September 2017 to September 2021

Programme(s): LLB Law (all variants)

Dr Mark Walters, University of Sussex

Period of Office: September 2017 to September 2021

Programme(s): LLB Law (all variants)

School of Media, Communication and Sociology

Professor Steven Wainwright, Brunel University

Period of Office: September 2017 to November 2021

Programme(s): Masters in Social Research

Duration of meeting: Two Hours

CHAIR