

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER
ACADEMIC POLICY COMMITTEE

**Minutes of a meeting held on
13 September 2017**

Present:

Professor J Scott (Chair)	
Ms A Abdulla	Dr A Cameron
Dr F Deepwell	Mr G Green
Dr S Handa	Dr C Hewitt
Professor D Lambert	Dr D Lockett
Mrs L Masterman	Ms A Moran
Professor B Norman	Dr R Parry
Ms C Taylor	Professor G Wynn

In attendance: Mr N Cooper (for M128) and Mr A Petersen (Secretary)

Apologies for absence were received from Dr E Clapp and Dr R Dickinson

UNRESERVED BUSINESS

17/M126 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

17/M127 TERMS OF REFERENCE AND MEMBERSHIP

The Committee considered its Terms of Reference and Membership for the 2017/18 academic year.

Subject to minor typographical amendments the Committee **approved** its Terms of Reference and Membership for submission to the upcoming meeting of Senate.

The Chair welcomed new members to the Committee.

17/M128 RISK MANAGEMENT

The Committee considered a report and extracts from the University's Strategic and Corporate Risk Registers which highlighted those risks aligning with the remit of the Committee. These would be submitted to Audit Committee and the following meeting of Council in November.

The Committee noted the strategic level risk associated with the impact of the recent TEF outcome for the University. The Committee noted that there were opportunities to further engage with the Students' Union in this area, particularly in implementing NSS partnership plans and through the student voice.

The Committee noted the relevant entries on the Corporate Risk Register, in particular the risk around comparative performance in the area of graduate employability. The Committee noted the addition of a risk associated with CMA compliance, but that the risk

associated with the potential impact of industrial action on the student experience would shortly be removed. The Committee noted that the allocation of career coaches to finalist students was welcome and graduate employment rates could potentially be further enhanced through the allocation of coaches at an earlier point in students' studies.

Subject to the above, the Committee **endorsed** the extracts for submission to the Audit Committee.

17/M129 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Committee considered the minutes of the meeting that had taken place on 14 July 2017.

The Committee **approved** the minutes as an accurate record, noting the addition of Dr F Deepwell to those who had been present.

17/M130 **MATTERS ARISING**

Arising from M111 the revised Lecture Capture Policy had been reviewed by the University legal team and had subsequently been approved by Chair's Action.

Arising from M112(d) the Committee noted that a paper on teaching indicators for consideration within the PDD process would be considered at a future meeting.

Arising from M117 the Quality Office had been working with a number of stakeholders to review and revise the Programme Development and Approval Form and this would be presented to the Committee for consideration alongside a review of the operation of the relevant Code of Practice at a future meeting.

Arising from M120 the Chair noted that he had taken action on behalf of the Committee to approve a revised Attendance Monitoring Policy for immediate implementation.

Arising from M122 the Committee noted that the programme team had submitted a response to the second set of conditions arising from the Programme Approval process for the Leicester International Institute, Dalian University of Technology. These were under consideration by the Approval Panel.

17/M131 **CHAIR'S BUSINESS**

The Chair reported:

- a) That he had taken Chair's Action to approve the withdrawal of the PGCert in Effective Middle Leadership and the suspension of the Minor in Educational Studies.
- b) That he had taken Chair's Action to approve the transformed curricula for undergraduate and taught postgraduate campus based programmes in the School of Ancient History and Archaeology. The revised curricula had been subject to detailed scrutiny through the Curriculum Transformation approval process.
- c) That two members of the University had been awarded National Teaching Fellowships in 2017; Dr Dawn Watkins and Dr Dylan Williams. Dr Sarah Gretton had also been shortlisted for the National Collaborative Teaching Excellence Awards. The Committee congratulated all colleagues on their success.

- d) That he was meeting all Heads of Department to discuss the actions to be taken as part of the action plans in response to the 2017 NSS feedback.
- e) That 2017/18 would be a Peer Observation of Marking and Feedback year, and that this should be conducted between, as opposed to within, individual schools and departments.
- f) That the TEF Working Group was considering whether to recommend that the University take part in the subject level TEF pilot.

17/M132 **LEARNING STRATEGY**

The Committee received the output of a recent Learning Strategy Review session. The purpose of the session had been to review the progress of strategy implementation and refresh future priorities in light of changes to the internal and external environment. In addition to internal developments such as Curriculum Transformation, enhanced transition and induction processes and the growth of international partnerships the Committee also noted the range of external factors that had already or would soon impact upon this area of provision. These included the TEF, changes to the national Quality Assurance review processes, the impact of Consumer Rights legislation and new models of provision such as apprenticeships and two year degrees.

The review group had identified the key achievements of the Learning Strategy to date, where there was further progress to be made and where areas may have been superseded by new developments. The Committee welcomed the outcome of the review day and noted that a further workshop would shortly be held with the Students' Union to feed in the student perspective.

The Committee considered a draft revised vision statement for the overall strategy, noting in particular a clearer emphasis upon excellence and references to the community between staff and students. The Committee endorsed the revised statement with one minor amendment to highlight the importance of 'promoting' social mobility.

The Group agreed that it would be helpful for the output of the review meeting to be shared with College Academic Committees, but further agreed that the format of the document would need to be revised to make it a more concise summary for those who did not have the benefit of having attended the event. The Group agreed that the document should be revised in line with this and then circulated to CACs for information.

The Committee noted that a full revised Learning Strategy on the basis of this and other feedback would be considered by the Committee at a future meeting.

17/M133 **CURRICULUM TRANSFORMATION**

The Committee received an update on the Curriculum Transformation Project from Professor Wynn. The Committee noted the status of the range of programmes proceeding through the Curriculum Transformation approval process. The Committee was pleased to note that all undergraduate submissions had been received and that postgraduate submissions were also proceeding well.

The Committee noted the many benefits and examples of good practice arising from Curriculum Transformation. The work to date had created a baseline dataset in areas such as teaching efficiency, assessment variation and sustainability and had also led to a programmatic view of the University's provision. The Committee was pleased to note the

range of good practice that had been identified particularly in the areas of enhancing teaching resiliency and the clearer alignment of undergraduate curricula with specific elements of the Transferable Skills Framework.

The focus of the project in the 2017/18 academic year would be the completion of the remaining approval processes, supporting the roll out of the new academic year and producing an interim report which would draw together a reflection on the progress of the project so far with consideration of how the good practice generated through the project might feed wider University processes. This would include longitudinal studies with student focus groups regarding the impact of Curriculum Transformation. The Committee considered how the output of the project would interact with other ongoing work, in areas such as Annual Developmental Review and curriculum management. It was noted that the Programme Management Task and Finish Group was working with associated groups in these areas to involve feedback from Curriculum Transformation.

The Committee thanked Professor Wynn and other colleagues within the Curriculum Transformation Project Team for all that had been achieved to date.

17/M134 **DEGREE OUTCOMES, 2016/17**

The Committee received the degree classification outcomes for undergraduate students completing their programmes in midsummer 2017.

The Committee noted that the overall proportion of 1 or 2:1 classified degrees was 71.8% in midsummer 2017, which represented an increase of 1.2% from the 2016 cohort. The Committee noted some significant departmental variation in the rate of good honours. The Committee agreed that the underpinning data should be further analysed to identify any factors which may have impacted upon the figures.

17/M135 **FRANCHISING AND VALIDATION**

The Committee considered a paper which outlined a broad potential academic model for the operation of an expanded portfolio of validated and franchised provision. The institution did not at present operate a significant portfolio in this area but the University Leadership Team had agreed to explore the potential to expand provision.

The paper set out an overview of provision at a range of peer institutions with regard to validated and franchised provision. The Committee noted that the majority of the institutions sampled did not undertake significant provision in this area, and many were further reducing their partnerships. Although such provision did provide the potential for increased student recruitment, support mobility and could enhance the University's profile in individual markets and internationally, it also carried significant risk. The Committee noted that there was the potential for significant exposure in reputational and quality assurance terms, and that the financial returns were often reduced by the resource requirements associated with mitigating these risks. The Committee agreed that any expansion in this area should only be undertaken within a robust and managed framework.

The Committee **agreed** that the statement in the Code of Practice regarding franchising should be removed to allow the potential for such arrangements to be developed in the future. The Committee agreed that any such developments should be undertaken on a strategic and focussed basis, and that individual proposals should require consideration

by the Committee at risk assessment stage, supported by full due diligence. The Committee also agreed that the business case for any such proposal should also take full account of the full range of academic, Professional Services and infrastructure costs.

The Committee considered the proposed principles for validated and franchised programmes set out in the paper. The Committee agreed that it was essential to establish a baseline threshold for consideration of potential partners and models of provision, but that following this each case would need to be considered individually. The Committee agreed that the broad range of issues set out in the paper for consideration were appropriate, but that further work would be required with individual stakeholders to develop detailed guidance and requirements in each area.

The Committee agreed that further work should be undertaken through the Collaborative Partnerships Management Group to develop the framework. The Committee also agreed that detailed notes of guidance would be required for programme and project teams developing such proposals to ensure that the full range of issues articulated in the paper were considered in the development phase.

17/M136 **EDUCATION EXCELLENCE PROGRAMME**

The Committee considered a proposal to establish an Education Excellence Programme. The programme was intended to provide a more structured approach towards the range of activities that were underway to support the University's aspiration to achieve a TEF Gold rating by 2020.

Establishing a portfolio management framework would serve to bring together the various projects underway within the University's key strategic themes of 'Discover, Transition, Progress and Success'. The Committee noted that there were a significant range of projects at different stages of maturity and that this would benefit from both clearer co-ordination and more structured communication to demonstrate how these aligned with the wider strategic aims with relation to the TEF. The Committee noted in particular the importance of effective communication of the role of the programme and how it both aligned and interacted with the work of other major change initiatives such as Curriculum Transformation or the Digital Learning Environment.

The Committee **approved** the proposal in principle noting that more detailed proposals for the scope and operation of the programme would be brought to a future meeting.

17/M137 **LECTURE CAPTURE**

The Committee received a report which reviewed the operation of the Reflect Lecture Capture policy and system during the first full year of operation in 2016/17.

The Committee noted the usage data which demonstrated an average of 17 hours of content viewed per student, and an average of 67 unique views per student. The Committee also noted the detailed feedback from students and staff on use of the system, and the indicative calculations on the value for money from the initial investment.

The Committee noted that the initial data indicated that 54% of captured sessions had been published to students. The Committee noted also that there was significant variation across subject areas in this regard. It was noted that further analysis of the data

and engagement with the Academic Directors was required in order to understand the variation. The Committee also noted that there were still a significant number of staff that had not given consent to waive performance rights. The Committee strongly supported the recommendation in the paper that the LLI continue to engage with colleagues in academic departments to understand these issues and offer further education on the rationale, benefits and practicalities of using Lecture Capture to enhance publication rates. The Committee noted that the University had hosted a successful conference on Implementing Lecture Capture in September 2017.

The Committee noted the potential areas for further developments including the capture of board based teaching, expansion into further teaching spaces and the use of Reflect beyond the class room. Finally, the Committee noted that evaluation of the Reflect system and projects to widen its pedagogic application would also be supported through submissions to the Teaching Enhancement Project Fund, and that LLI would work with IT Services to complete a campus wide qualitative and quantitative review.

The Committee agreed that it would be helpful for a summary review to be shared with the College Academic Committees. It was agreed that once the further analysis outlined above had taken place to inform this discussed a revised and more focussed paper should be drafted to circulate to CACs.

17/M138 **DIGITAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

The Committee received a report from Dr Parry on the ongoing development of the Digital Learning Environment.

The Committee noted that a Steering Group had been formed and was meeting regularly. There were 5 key work streams each of which had an associated lead, that were currently scoping and developing resource requirements.

Work was also underway with Blackboard in order to support the enrichment activities planned for the next academic year, which involved the creation of a new partnership agreement to articulate how both the University and Blackboard would work together in this regard. Finally, the Committee noted that the social learning space on the ground floor of the Library would also host a range of innovative projects and events under the umbrella of enhancing the digital learning environment.

17/M139 **SENATE REGULATION 5**

The Committee considered a paper which provided an update on the review of Senate Regulation 5 and made a series of recommendations for the timing of implementation of various aspects of the proposed Regulation. It had not yet been possible to conclude the detailed modelling exercise necessary to assess the impact of the revised regulatory requirements on overall student progression rates and therefore it was proposed to phase the introduction of different elements of the regulations.

The Committee **approved** the proposal to introduce unclassified interim awards of Diploma of Higher Education and Certificate of Higher Education for all students graduating from 2017/18 onwards. The Committee **approved** the proposal to remove the requirement for all level 4 credits to have been passed in order to graduate, with immediate effect.

The Committee considered a proposal to introduce elements of the revised regulations relating primarily to the classification of awards, for students entering in the 2018/19 academic year. These included the reweighting of contributing years, the raising of the borderline threshold and the reduction of the criteria available for consideration in borderline decisions, and the requirement for a proportion of credits at level 6 when classifying on the basis of CWA/Preponderance. Pass for credit would also be renamed Compensated Fail. The Committee **approved** all of the amendments for 2018/19 entrants.

The Committee noted the amendments set out above would be submitted to the meeting of Senate in November 2017 for final approval.

The Committee noted that a number of further elements of the new Senate Regulation 5 relating specifically to progression between levels of undergraduate programmes were subject to further consideration and modelling, and that these would be presented for consideration at a later date, for potential introduction in 2019/20.

17/M140 **PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT, APPROVAL AND WITHDRAWAL**

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

a) MSc Social Science Research

The Committee considered the report of the meeting that took place on 24 July 2017. The programme had been developed as part of the University's membership of the Midlands Doctoral School. The programme represented part of the training for PhD students and a potential exit route for students who did not proceed onto a PhD at this point. The Committee noted that the team had provided a response to the conditions set out by the Panel and this had been approved by the Panel and by the Chair on behalf of APC. The programme was therefore **approved** for introduction in September 2017.

b) Addition of Year Abroad to UG programmes in Psychology

The Committee received a report of the approval process that took place over the course of July 2017. The Committee noted the support that would be in place for students transferring onto a year abroad variant. The Committee **approved** the report and authorised the Chair of the Approval Panel to approve the introduction of the programme, subject to receipt of a satisfactory response.

17/M141 **STUDENT EXPERIENCE ENHANCEMENT GROUP**

The Committee received a report of the meeting of the Student Experience Enhancement Group that had taken place on 10 July 2017.

17/M142 **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, 26 July 2017

17/M143 **APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS**

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

College of Science and Engineering

Department of Chemistry

Professor Mark Winter, University of Sheffield

Period of Office: September 2017 to September 2021

Programme(s): BSc/MChem Chemistry, BSc/MChem Pharmaceutical Chemistry
BSc/MChem Chemistry with Forensic Science

The Committee noted that this nomination would cover both campus based variants of the programmes and the variants delivered at Dalian University of Technology, Panjin Campus through the Leicester International Institute.

College of Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities

Department of Criminology

Dr Nathan Hughes, University of Sheffield

Period of Office: September 2017 to September 2021

Programme(s): BSc Criminology, BA Criminology, Majors and Minors in Criminology

The Committee noted that the following nominations had been considered and **approved** by Chair's Action:

College of Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities

School of Arts

Dr Sarah Waters, University of Leeds

Period of Office: September 2017 to September 2021

Programme(s): French components of all BA, Majors and Minors in Modern Languages

School of History, Politics and International Relations

Professor Neil Carter, University of York

Period of Office: September 2017 to September 2021

Programme(s): BA Politics, BA International Relations, BA History and Politics,
BA Politics and International Relations, BA Politics and Economics
BA Politics and Sociology, BA International Relations and History

Duration of meeting: Two hours and ten minutes

CHAIR