CONFIRMED

ACADEMIC BOARD

Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Board held on Wednesday 5 July 2017.

Present: Steve West (Chair), Hadi Abulrub, Sarah Bennett, Martin Boddy, Zain Choudhry (SU), Manuel Frutos-Perez (from AB17.07.3.5), Georgina Gough, Sarah Green, Jane Harrington, Catherine Hobbs (until AB17.07.7.4), Jamie Jordon (SU), Lynne Lawrance, Fiona Lawrence, James Lee, Mandy Lee, Stuart McClean, Jo Midgley, Steven Neill, Paul Olomolaiye, Glenn Parry, Darren Reynolds, Jackie Rogers, Jeanette Sakel, Rachel Sales, Donna Whitehead (until AB17.07.14.4), Aylwin Yafele.

In attendance: Jason Briddon, Tracy Chalk, Rachel Cowie, Chris Gledhill (Clerk), Tracey Horton (for AB17.07.5 and AB17.07.6), Simon Phillips (for AB17.07.9), Fiona Tolmie (for AB17.07.11), Tracy Willis.

Observers: Delia Bean, Edward Burrell (SU), Elizabeth Cleaver, James Longhurst, Helene Scott.

Apologies: Lucy Dumbell, Alex Franklin, Nadine Fry, Nina Higson-Sweeney, Lamine Mahdjoubi, Nicholas O'Regan, Alastair Osborn, Adam Pinfold, Rosie Scott-Ward.

AB17.07.1 Membership

AB17.07.1.1 Students' Union (SU) President
The Chair welcomed the new SU President, Zain Choudhry to his first meeting.

AB17.07.2 Minutes and Matters Arising
Paper AB17/07/01 was received

AB17.07.2.1 Minutes
The correction to the list of attendees to include Lynne Lawrance and Aylwin Yafele were noted.

Subject to this amendment, the minutes of the meeting held Wednesday 17 May 2017 were **approved**.

AB17.07.2.2 Min AB 17.05.9 refers: Update from UWE Student Representatives
Members noted that the details of the Hustings event were circulated to Members via email on 18 May 2017.

AB17.07.2.3 Min. AB17.05.12.4 refers: Access Agreement 2018/2019
Members noted that that the Pro Vice-Chancellor would provide an update on the University's Outreach activity to Academic Board in October 2017.

AB17.07.2.4 AB17.05.13.3 refers: Student Life Board
Members noted that the Student Life Board terms of reference were currently under review.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

AB17.07.3   Vice-Chancellor's Update

AB17.07.3.1   Members received an update from the Vice-Chancellor and noted the following:

Brexit
i.   This remained an important consideration for Parliament over the next two years. UUK, HEFCE and universities were aligned in their message to the Government to confirm the following:
    a.   the ability of staff to retain their rights to work/remain in the UK
    b.   the ability of institutions to attract international and EU staff and students and free movement
    c.   Access to research funding and environments.
    This message was supported by other bodies such as the CBI;
ii. The University would continue to engage with staff and students on developments and would enlist external experts as appropriate to support this;

AB17.07.3.2   *Longitudinal Earnings Outcomes (LEO) Consultation*
i.   Results of the consultation would feed into the raft of data handled by UWE colleagues dealing with DLHE and the tracking of the University's graduates;

AB17.07.3.3   *Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)*
i.   The Higher Education and Research Act 2017 was enacted on 27 April 2017, avoiding the period of purdah before the general election;
ii. The University of the West of England secured a strong, solid Silver category and had been identified as having very strong characteristics. Universities were each benchmarked against their own group of universities;
iii. The University's explanation for the anomaly relating to part-time students following health modules that, due to the manner in which they were registered counted as non-progressing, had only partially convinced the panel from a TEF perspective. However, the same explanation had fully satisfied the Annual Provider Review Group;
iv. The metrics were a solid position to build upon and the University would now focus on improving its position and resubmit when the outcome of the NSS and DLHE data were known;
v.   Four universities (all Russell Group) were appealing against their TEF ratings;

AB17.07.3.4   *Annual Provider Review (APR)*
i.   HEFCE had confirmed that the University fully met its requirement for quality and standards, meaning that:
    a.   Qualification standards are reliable and reasonably comparable to those across the UK;
    b.   The student academic experience is of high quality;
    c.   Student outcomes are generally good or excellent and the provider has demonstrated continuous improvement in relation to them.

AB17.07.3.5   Members also noted that views on tuition fees in light of pledges made during the general election campaign had not been discussed at HEFCE or UUK boards and that there had been no signal of a change in direction from the Minister.

Mr. Frutos-Perez arrived at the meeting.

AB17.07.3.6   Members further noted the announcement earlier that day that Nicola Dandridge, currently UUK Chief Executive, had been appointed as Chief Executive of the new Office for Students (OfS). Also announced was the Vice-Chancellor's appointment to the OfS Board from the HEFCE Board and that the OfS would be seeking to appoint one or two further Board members.

AB17.07.4   Strategy 2030 Horizon Scanning – Digital Transformation and Open Access, Scholarly Communications and Learning Resources and Environments

AB17.07.4.1   Members received a presentation from the Director of Student Success Services.

AB17.07.4.2   Members noted the following highlights of the presentation:

AB17.07.4.3
i.   93% of information resources spend was for digital resources, although level of spend in this regard varied across disciplines;
ii. In 2015/2016:
    a. Almost 6m searches were made across the library interface, 70% of which were made off-campus
    b. 2.3m journal downloads were made, down 14% from the previous year.
    c. Use of physical collections had fallen by 62% since 2010/2011;
    d. Two-thirds of users (68%) had not borrowed anything, although there were disciplinary differences (e.g. Humanities, where borrowing levels were higher);
iii. Use of digital content per student was high and this would grow as access to that content was made easier;
iv. The use of UWE-produced content was encouraged – for example, there had been 640,000 full-text downloads from the UWE Research Repository;
v.   The challenge presented by printed resources in that it was difficult to change these once published. Conversely the ability to change digital resources very quickly presented a different challenge in how the University could keep pace with that;
vi. Digital resources were universal, covered a range of media and the distribution costs were virtually nothing; engagement was therefore swifter and the production of scholarly activity more efficient;
vii. There was a growing sense of the desire for an open access platform for scholarly publications ("unpaywall") and this was likely to be in place by 2030;
viii. The University was keen to explore technology solutions to provide open access to text books;
ix. The mass digitisation of content would mean that most printed out-of-copyright material would be available openly;

x. Likely future:
   a. Less local physical information resources
   b. A transition of funds from traditionally published models to open access
   c. A curriculum that enabled students to create and consume information more productively
   d. An interdisciplinary learning environment.

AB17.07.4.4   The Chair invited Academic Board Members to consider in groups the following two questions:

1. *"When the digital information environment is so rich, what physical "information resources" will be required for learning, teaching and research?"*
2. *"What should our aspirations be for exploiting an increasingly open digital environment to showcase UWE staff and student produced content?"*

AB17.07.4.5   <u>Initial Feedback</u>
Members were invited to share highlights of their discussions. Feedback included:

Question 1
− The flexibility of the environment was a critical consideration – desks or aural/speech recognition? The colour scheme, layout and welcoming nature of the environment was important;
− Learning and safe spaces;
− IT infrastructure – constantly evolving, needed to be flexible; curation of online collections and support should be available through the transition to those who struggled with digital content;
− Facility for staff expertise to be realised and the required IT structure behind it;
− Need for neutral collaborative space.

AB17.07.4.6   *Question 2*
− The need for the REF to recognise the student voice – which it currently ignored - as receivers and consumers of knowledge;
− Use of YouTube to convey information or instructional videos;
− The role of the university press and how publications could be shared/endorsed, although this could be challenging in terms of funding and staff time (UCL and the University of Huddersfield had successfully established their own press);
− Coherent package of activities and signposting the digitisation of networks;
− REF: importance of having articles in high-impact journals;
− Ensure that the work the University shared was valuable and of high quality;
− Co-existence: could physical models be created in digital form to increase accessibility?

AB17.07.4.7   The Chair thanked Members for their comments.

AB17.07.5   **Student Self-Certification – Appraisal of the First Year of Implementation**
Paper AB17/07/02 was received

AB17.07.5.1   Members were reminded that the regulations had been amended for 2016/2017 to enable students to self-certify for one missed assessment a year.

AB17.07.5.2   Members noted the following:
   i. Between September 2016 and June 2017 there had been 255 uses of the self-certification form and 2462 extenuating circumstances applications made during the same period;
   ii. The additional guidance developed and shared with Information Point staff during the year;
   iii. Proposed actions for 2017/2018, namely:
      a. Removal of self-certification from the table of appropriate evidence to accompany an extenuating circumstances application to its own discrete section in the regulations;
      b. Addition of a statements to the draft regulations that self-certification may not be used:
         i. For practice placement assessment
         ii. when withdrawing from a module
         iii. for a late extenuating circumstances application (as a student was required to demonstrate with independent documentary evidence why the application was late before it could be considered under the extenuating circumstances process).

AB17.07.5.3   Members **agreed** that the restriction of self-certification be changed from one assessment to one day.

AB17.07.5.4   Members **approved** the proposed actions for 2017/2018 as detailed above.

ITEMS FOR APPROVAL

AB17.07.6   **Sustainability Implementation Plan and Mid-Point Review**
Paper AB17/07/03 was received

AB17.07.6.1   Members noted the progress made against the ambitions outlined in the original Implementation Plan which was approved in 2013.

AB17.07.6.2   Members noted the following in particular:
   i. the plan had been extensively reviewed – the SU had been very actively involved in its refresh – and staff, students and other key stakeholders had also been involved;
   ii. Students of MSc Sustainable Development in Practice and MSc Environmental Management had provided a foreword to the refreshed plan;
   iii. the original 11 themes of the plan had been updated to provide new targets;
   iv. the addition of 2 new themes: Sustainable Food and Adaptation to Climate Change;
   v. the plan was working well, particularly with students, whose interest in sustainability matters was high (the Green Team within the SU had 1500 members).

AB17.07.6.3   Members were reminded that as the University started to consider its 2030 Strategy, there would be a need to consider how the plan sat within the larger context of health, wellbeing and sustainability and noted that whilst there was a need to be pragmatic about what was done as an institution within the constraints

of affordability, this was equally about cultural shift and individual behaviours to ensure as many people as possible were engaged and mobilised.

AB17.07.6.4   Members noted with pleasure that the University and the SU had submitted 9 stage 1 applications for the UK and Ireland 2017 Green Gown Awards and was now a finalist, having been shortlisted in all 9 categories, as follows:

Institution Categories:	*Individual Categories:*
Community	Sustainability Champion Award Staff
Enterprise	Sustainability Champion Award Student
Facilities and services	Sustainability Professional Award
Food and drink	
Research and development	
Sustainability reporting	

AB17.07.7   Academic Regulations and Procedures

AB17.07.7.1   <u>Update on the Review of the Academic Regulatory Framework</u>
 Paper AB17/07/04 was received

AB17.07.7.2   Members noted the change of name of the University's Regulatory Management Group to the Academic Quality and Regulation Operational Group and the widening of its remit in recognition of the synergies between the review of the Regulatory Framework and the review of the Quality Enhancement Framework.

AB17.07.7.3   Members also noted that the Group had met throughout the year and had an ultimate objective of creating a new framework and set of principles aligned with the timeline for the development of the new Student Information System. Members further noted the need to ensure the current regulations were fit for purpose.

AB17.07.7.4   Members noted the following in particular:
   i.   The 8 overarching principles guiding the new framework, as detailed in the report;
   ii.   There would be only one module type (rather than four) which would be sufficiently flexible to allow staff to adapt assessment within that. Modules would be known as 'units';
   iii. Replacement of components with individual assessments which would contribute directly to the overall module mark;
   iv.   Levels of study: the University would use the Framework for Higher Education Qualification levels (3,4,5,6,7) rather than 0,1,2,3,M;
   v.   The maximum registration periods for programmes of one year in duration and more than one year in duration;
   vi.   Students would no longer apply for extenuating circumstances but would instead apply to request an extension or to defer an assessment;
   vii. Late submission of work – the mark for a piece of work submitted up to 24 hours after deadline would be reduced by 10%. A mark would not be reduced to less than the pass mark;
   viii. Work submitted after 24 hours would be recorded as a non-submission.

   Ms. C. Hobbs left the meeting.

AB17.07.7.5 <u>Updated Academic Regulations and Procedures with effect from September 2017</u>
Paper AB17/07/05 was received

AB17.07.7.6 The Academic Regulations & Policy Manager led Members through the proposed changes to the regulations for 2017/2018.

AB17.07.7.7 Members' attention was drawn in particular to the following:
  i. Major changes to the regulations had been avoided and changes that had been made related to the simplification of the language used in existing regulations and processes, the streamlining of content and removal of duplication to better reflect current practice;
  ii. the main changes to the regulations for 2017/2018 related to:
      a. the accreditation of prior and experiential learning
      b. removal of investigation processes of assessment offences as these were set out in a separate policy
      c. all references to 'extenuating circumstances' renamed to 'personal circumstances' throughout
      d. clarification of existing regulations including
          i. extenuating circumstances section, also retitled to 'Students experiencing difficulties which impact on their ability to meet assessment deadlines'
          ii. applications for five working day extensions
          iii. external examiner attendance at resit field boards
      e. removal of variant regulations for the PG Certificate in Education and Professional Certificate in Education
      f. removal of the process to designate professors as this was covered in HR policy and procedure
      g. changes to the PG Research Degrees regulations.

AB17.07.7.8 Members also noted the changes to the regulations PGR8.1.2R and PGR8.1.3R as detailed in an addendum to the report.

AB17.07.7.9 Members noted the suggestion that PGR8.1.2R(ii) be reworded to:
"At least one ~~UWE based member~~ *member of UWE academic staff* of the supervisory team will have previous experience of successful supervision at all stages through to completion at the appropriate level, either at UWE or at another UK University.

AB17.07.7.10 Members also noted that reference in PGR16.1.1R to the SU facilitating the recruitment and training of student representatives in liaison with the Graduate School should be removed, pending discussions between the SU and the Graduate School.

AB17.07.7.11 Following due and careful consideration and subject to the above amendments, Members **approved** the revised Academic Regulations and Procedures to take effect from September 2017.
ACTION: Academic Regulations and Policy Manager

AB17.07.8 **Annual Report of the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee (LTSEC) 2016-2017**
Paper AB17/07/06 was received

AB17.07.8.1 Members noted the generic content of the report and acknowledged that this did not fully reflect the extensive range of business falling within LTSEC's remit.

AB17.07.8.2   Members **agreed** that the report be enhanced with examples of the work undertaken and supporting evidence to provide assurance that the Committee had discharged its responsibilities in an appropriate manner, for sign-off by Chair's Action.

ACTION: DVC and Provost/Director of Student and Academic Services/ Vice-Chancellor

AB17.07.9   Disabled Student Allowance (DSA) Modernisation
Paper AB17/07/07 was received

AB17.07.9.1   Members received an overview of the University's progressive approach to engaging disabled people in Higher Education and graduate employment.

AB17.07.9.2   Members noted in particular:
   i.   3,000-3,500 students at the University had signified that they had a disability. This equated to 10% of the student population and therefore it was likely that most activities would include a disabled individual;
   ii.   The University had reconceptualised its approach to dis-invest specialist provision by ensuring that mainstream practices and facilities developed more blended approaches that were woven into strategic programmes;
   iii. The new model was a shift in emphasis to provide support and provision to enable individuals to be as independent as possible before they entered the world of employment;
   iv.   The proposal to establish a task and finish group chaired by the Director of Learning and Teaching Enhancement to integrate strand activity within existing UWE developments and strategic programmes;
   v.   The new approach would be monitored during its first year and reported through LTSEC with a report to Academic Board in July 2018.

AB17.07.9.3   Members welcomed this new approach and acknowledged the need to continue to influence UWE's employer partners in improving their practice.

AB17.07.9.4   Members endorsed the strategy and activity strands, as detailed in the report and **approved** the recommendation to establish a task and finish group.

AB17.07.10   Enhancement Framework for Academic Programmes and Practice
Paper AB17/07/08 was received

AB17.07.10.1   Members were reminded that the new methodology was based on six core guiding principles which were designed to frame and enhance programmes of study and the teaching and learning focused activities of the University's academic and professional services communities.

AB17.07.10.2   Members also noted the 3 strands of activity detailed in the report that would be tied in with the planning round:
   i.   *Pedagogic and Curricular Design and Approval Activities –*
         a.   these would be much more aligned to the current strategic planning process
         b.   proposal to create a new University Strategic Curriculum Panel (USCP)

c. proposed delegated authority to Faculty ASQCs to approve low and medium-impact changes;

 ii. *Continuous Improvement (CI)* – Members received a demonstration of the new CI tool and noted:

   a. The tool allowed for quick access to information through an open access system both to programmes 'owned' by the member of staff – provided in a list – and to other programmes

   b. Navigation through various sections: annual programme review, reflections, actions, etc.

   c. The capability to share reports, for example with professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs), external examiners and students

   d. Programme Data – a replacement to Programme on a Page Report – would include comparison data

   e. The tool would direct the user to updated or newly-released information and provide links to a data dictionary, i.e. when it was last updated, when the next update was due, etc. and data would be easily exportable

   f. Programme RAG rating/narrative related to the level of support required to improve/move the programme forward and should be owned by programme teams as a whole

   g. The tool would provide a single place for both data and required actions and the University was exploring how the tool could incorporate NSS action plans.

 iii. Programme Enhancement Review (PER).

AB17.07.10.3   Members noted with concern the attribution of invented data to an actual UWE programme of study and requested that the title of the programme be removed and replaced with that of a fictitious programme.

ACTION: Head of Business Intelligence

AB17.07.10.4   Members welcomed the CI tool and acknowledged its value in empowering programme teams to take responsibility for their activity with the use of real-time data.

AB17.07.10.5   Members questioned the absence of Executive Deans as part of the membership of the proposed USCP and noted that this was intentional given that the process would take place after strategic away days; however the relevant Dean would be engaged in cases of a contentious nature.

AB17.07.10.6   Members also noted that a strategic planning session would be held in the autumn term 2017/2018 and that a fast-track approval process was in development for programmes with a guaranteed market (e.g. degree apprenticeships).

AB17.07.10.7   Members agreed that a report on the outcome of the pilots undertaken be provided at the next meeting.

ACTION: Director of Student and Academic Services

AB17.07.10.8 Members noted the validation methodology as detailed in the report and that recommendations from the University Validation Panels would be made to the Deputy Vice Chancellor, Provost as Chair of LTSEC (the delegated authority of Academic Board) and approvals would be reported to LTSEC as a standing item.

AB17.07.10.9 Members also noted that the University would move to the new framework via a 'soft launch' in September 2017.

AB17.07.11 Enhanced Year Project
Paper AB17/07/09 was received

AB17.07.11.1 Members received an update on the project progress and noted the following in particular:
    i. Since approval by Academic Board in December 2016 of the project's principles, the driving principle had become more clearly that of supporting the '360 degree' nature of the UWE offer;
    ii. The envisaged project strand 'UWE Week' had changed to the concept of 'UWE Challenges' and the proposal to set up a group to scope the feasibility of UWE Challenges and report to Academic Board;
    iii. The consultation process had engaged 80% of undergraduate programmes;
    iv. The flexible calendar:
        a. From 2018/2019 there would be a minimum of 26 weeks activity to begin with, subject to Faculty sign-off and a final check by Academic Services
        b. Start and end dates would remain common
        c. The week numbering system would no longer be used
        d. There would be an induction/transition week for all years
        e. Programme teams would be asked to identify a further week of scheduled activity;
    v. The successor to the Futures Award (SFA):
        a. The consultation signified that some modifications were required to the Futures Award
        b. All programmes should describe how the whole calendar year was used and the SFA would provide a timeline for that
        c. Some programmes were willing to pilot customised SFAs with their first-year intake in 2017/2018 and work was underway to develop these pilots;
    vi. The proposals for approval for Academic Board as detailed in section 4 of the report.

AB17.07.11.2 Members noted that there was a real appetite in the University for the Enhanced Year, which already had gained some momentum.

AB17.07.11.3 Members **approved** that from 2018/2019:
    1. Programmes would be allowed flexibility in their use of the academic calendar in relation to teaching, assessment and other scheduled activity;
    2. The current welcome week would be added to the current standard 24 teaching weeks and an equivalent 'transition week' added to the start of the year for other levels;

3. The calendar for all programmes would be required to include at least 26 weeks of scheduled teaching, assessment for learning activity and scheduled co-curricular activity;
4. All programmes should also, by 2020, describe clearly to their students how they could use the whole calendar year in support of their personal development, aligned to the graduate attributes.

AB17.07.11.4   Members also **approved** the creation of a group to scope the feasibility of UWE Challenges and report to Academic Board.

AB17.07.12   Nominations for Emeritus Professorship

AB17.07.12.1   Professor William Greenslade
Paper AB17/07/10 was received

Members **approved** the recommendation that Professor Greenslade be awarded the title of Emeritus Professor.

AB17.07.12.2   Professor Robert Luther
Paper AB17/07/10ii was received

Members **approved** the recommendation that Professor Luther be awarded the title of Emeritus Professor.

REPORTS AND UPDATES

AB17.07.13   Update from UWE Student Representatives
Paper AB17/07/11 was received

AB17.07.13.1   The VP Education provided Members with the key highlights of the report.

AB17.07.13.2   Members noted:
    i. The SU had been awarded a score of Excellent in the NUS Green Impact Accreditation and had recently created a new Sustainability Committee;
    ii. The new Officer team had started in post at the start of July and was currently working on the SU 2018-2022 Strategic Plan. 2,216 students had responded to the survey and over 400 had volunteered to participate in further focus groups to explore the results;
    iii. The SU continued to work with the Pro Vice-Chancellor, Student Experience and the Student-led Enhancement Manager to progress the work on hidden course costs that was previously undertaken in 2014;
    iv. The SU was working towards the NUS Alcohol Impact Accreditation Scheme which sought to create a social norm of responsible alcohol consumption by students.

AB17.07.14   Updates from Faculty Boards

AB17.07.14.1   *Faculty of Health and Applied Sciences (HAS)*
Members noted that the Faculty Board meeting held on 14 June 2017 had focused on Strategy 2030, its key areas and potential risks and opportunities, with some interesting themes and ideas arising from discussions.

AB17.07.14.2   *Faculty of Business and Law (FBL)*
Discussions at the Faculty Board meeting held on 7 June 2017 included:

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academic pathways and recognition around teaching excellence;
Continuous Improvement;
The visibility of the Law Department
The very high level of satisfaction with the new building and the increased interaction between departments, staff and students.

AB17.07.14.3   Members also noted that the Faculty Board was using its 'feed-forward' lunches to facilitate these ideas.

AB17.07.14.4   *Faculty of Environment and Technology (FET)*
Discussions at the Faculty Board meeting held on 7 June 2017 had explored ways in which the Faculty could continue to motivate staff to continue to strive for excellence and how to improve the visibility of achievement.

Mrs. D. Whitehead left the meeting.

AB17.07.14.5   *Faculty of Arts & Creative Industries and Education (ACE)*
At its meeting on 14 June 2017 the Faculty Board meeting had focused on student retention. The Faculty Board had recognised the critical importance of ensuring continued engagement with students from the point of recruitment/pre-enrolment, the tracking and monitoring of student progress early in the year and providing support to re-sit students post-examination boards. Members had also considered what pathways the Faculty had available to those students who wished to transfer.

ITEMS TO NOTE

AB17.07.15*   **UWE Employability and Enterprise Plan 2017-2020**
Paper AB17/07/11 was received and noted.

AB17.07.16*   **Academic Board Chair's Actions**

Members noted that on behalf of Academic Board, the Chair had approved the following:
<ol type="i" start="1">
renewal of the Partnership Agreement with HKU SPACE, Hong Kong for a further five years from June 2018 to June 2023;
renewal of the Partnership Agreement with the City School of Architecture, Sri Lanka for a further 5 years from June 2017 to June 2022.

AB17.07.17*   **Minutes of Sub-Committees**
Members noted that the latest available minutes of subcommittees were available from the SharePoint Site.

Dates of future meetings
All meetings scheduled to be held from 14:00 – 17:00.

Wednesday	11 October 2017
Wednesday	6 December 2017
Wednesday	28 February 2018
Wednesday	16 May 2018
Wednesday	4 July 2018